



Direction 2007

Issues, Accomplishments, & Priorities



The Director's Message



Direction 2007 is our second “direction” document – and our first opportunity to clearly connect **priorities and accomplishments**. I am proud to say that we have accomplished a great deal of what we set out to do in 2006. It is encouraging to see how the small steps we take in a year’s time lead toward a legacy of abundant wildlife and an outdoor heritage for all generations.

Direction 2007 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 the **Department’s budget development** for the next fiscal year. *Direction 2007* 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 alluded to in *The Compass* as well as unforeseen circumstances, new legislation, or the existing management situation. Second is a list of highlights the Department has accomplished during the past year and a guide to our priorities for this year. This section is organized by the four goals in *The Compass*.

***Direction 2007* 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. Each day Fish and Game employees listen to the public, monitor populations, review and comment on projects affecting 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.

This year, I retire from the Department to spend more time fishing and hunting with my grandkids. Leaving a rich wildlife heritage for our future generations doesn’t happen by chance - it requires diligence and small but consistent steps to ultimately create that legacy. I have the utmost confidence that you will continue to provide excellent service to the people of the state in managing their fish and wildlife.

Steven M. Huffaker

The Landscape 2007: Timely Issues

- **DOMESTIC CERVIDS** – The proliferation of elk ranching and high fence hunting threaten the health and genetics of Idaho’s wild ungulate populations and the public’s perception of hunting and hunters.
- **DEVELOPMENT**—Rapid, poorly-planned growth and development is diminishing wildlife habitats and reducing wildlife populations and public access.
- **INVASIVE SPECIES** – Exotic and invasive plants and animals may alter or convert fish and wildlife habitat and compete, hybridize, or prey on native and other desirable fish and wildlife.
- **ACCESS**—Private lands – once open to public access – are being closed to public access for hunting and fishing and fees increasingly are being charged for the privilege to hunt on private lands.
- **OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLES**—The use of off-highway vehicles has increased dramatically in the past decade, creating new challenges for wildlife and public land management.
- **HABITAT FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE**—As Idaho’s population grows and land and water use practices change, greater emphasis will have to be placed on conserving and improving habitat.
- **WOLF AND GRIZZLY BEAR MANAGEMENT** —The proposed delisting of wolves and grizzly bears brings controversy and increased duties to the Department.
- **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.
- **IDAHO WILDLIFE CONSERVATION STRATEGY**— Conserving species that are at risk, and thereby avoiding regulatory burdens of the Endangered Species Act, will require new funding sources and broader stakeholder involvement.
- **CUSTOMER SERVICE**—Customers want more from the Department, they want different things, and they want it faster.
- **MULE DEER MANAGEMENT** – Mule deer populations are not meeting objectives in the southern and eastern parts of the state, and management direction could be affected by the results of the Mule Deer Hunter Opinion Survey.

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.

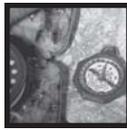
GOAL—Fish, Wildlife, and Habitat

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

2006 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2006* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Seeded and planted shrubs and forbs on private land, established the Aspen Working Group, and mapped aspen and winter ranges to improve and protect mule deer habitat.
- Monitored 100 radio-collared wolves, authorized removal of more than 40 wolves, assisted USDA Wildlife Services in responding to 103 wolf complaints and 26 wolf deaths, proposed to reduce the wolf population in the Lolo Zone to increase elk populations, and continued efforts to expedite the delisting of the wolf in Idaho.
- Implemented *Enforcement Action Plans* to address regional resource priorities such as the illegal harvest of westslope cutthroat trout on the Coeur d'Alene River.
- Provided technical assistance on species listed under the Endangered Species Act including Kootenai River sturgeon, bull trout, woodland caribou, grizzly bears, wolves, North and South Idaho ground squirrels, slickspot peppergrass, Ute ladies'-tresses, and bald eagles.
- Used "citizen scientists" to help monitor birds at five Important Bird Area sites and bald eagle and peregrine falcon nests.
- Completed and began implementing the *Idaho Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan* in cooperation with hunters, ranchers, conservationists, Tribes, and state and federal agencies.
- Initiated new research studies on fisher, a statewide critically-imperiled species.
- Transplanted 63 Columbian sharp-tailed grouse and 101 mountain quail into suitable, historical habitats.
- Completed a conservation agreement for Columbia spotted frogs in Owyhee County.
- Drafted the *2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan*, including a new section identifying strategic enforcement/protection goals.
- Participated in almost all 29 Cooperative Weed Management Areas, the Eurasian Watermilfoil Control Project, the Hells Canyon Weed Prevention Project, the Idaho Weed Coordination Committee, and the Saltcedar Control Working Group.

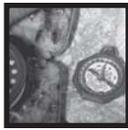


- Completed the *Brucellosis Action Plan* and tested animals for Chronic Wasting Disease, West Nile Virus and Avian Influenza in collaboration with several organizations.
- Removed 11,500 lake trout and 5,900 rainbow trout from Lake Pend Oreille to help recover kokanee.
- Developed a list of Department lands to sell and/or exchange to reposition the Department's assets.
- Participated in Senator Crapo's Elk Collaborative to increase elk populations in the Clearwater Basin.
- Worked with more than 150 Habitat Improvement Program participants to enhance 24,400 acres of wildlife habitat on public and private land across the state.
- Worked with Planning & Zoning in several counties on amendments to their *Comprehensive Plans* to protect and/or reduce impacts on fish and wildlife.
- Revised elk population monitoring strategies to streamline survey protocols and make monitoring more efficient and cost effective.
- Completed 17 anadromous fish passage and screening projects and reconnected two major tributaries in the Salmon and Lemhi River drainages.
- Developed 116 projects and enhanced 4,000 acres under the Clearwater Pheasant Initiative through the Farm Bill and the Department's Habitat Improvement Program.
- Restored Yellowstone cutthroat trout to over six miles of stream following brook trout eradication.
- Recommended protection, enhancement, and mitigation measures for Idaho Power Company's license application for Hells Canyon Hydropower Complex.
- Collaborated with BLM to rehabilitate 15,000 acres of fire-affected big game habitat.
- Worked with Farm Services Agency to require native seeding instead of crested wheatgrass for Conservation Reserve and Enhancement Program (CREP) set-aside lands.
- Purchased 41 acres of forested wetlands to mitigate the impacts of Albeni Falls Dam.
- Increased use of covert and surveillance work to target unlawful commercialization of fish and wildlife.
- Developed a wildlife monitoring and mitigation plan, in collaboration with others, for the Cotterel Mountain wind farm project that established a new national standard for energy development on BLM land.
- Received a grant from Shikar-Safari International to fund a new DNA sequencer to investigate wildlife crimes.

2007 Priorities

- Support the delisting of wolves, implement the *Idaho Wolf Conservation and Management Plan*, and develop a wolf species management plan.
- Focus wildlife research on the impacts of predators on big game populations and the interactions between deer and elk.
- Expand successful efforts of the Clearwater Pheasant Initiative to other parts of the state by working with the Natural Resource Conservation Service and private landowners.
- Work with the Idaho Invasive Species Council to establish a statewide Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan.
- Participate in all regional Cooperative Weed Management Areas to combine expertise, energy, and resources to develop and execute integrated weed management plans that deal with common weed problems at the watershed scale.
- Implement the *Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy* with a focus on expanding inventory and monitoring efforts and cooperative conservation species at risk.
- Protect mule deer winter range habitats from development and noxious weeds and enhance/rehabilitate mule deer winter ranges.
- Identify priority conservation areas for fish, wildlife and associated recreation, and reposition the Department's land assets for more effective fish and wildlife conservation.
- Implement the *Brucellosis Action Plan* and monitor Avian Influenza and West Nile Virus.
- Continue Lake Pend Oreille kokanee recovery efforts.
- Implement the consensus recommendations of Senator Crapo's Clearwater Elk Collaborative.
- Identify opportunities to use the Idaho Bird Inventory and Survey program to address high-priority wildlife and fish management issues.





- Engage the public in citizen science-based monitoring projects at Important Bird Areas through the new Adopt-an-IBA program.
- Implement the *Idaho Sage-Grouse Conservation Plan* using 13 local sage-grouse working groups to identify and complete on-the-ground projects.
- Support the delisting of Yellowstone grizzly bears and the implementation of *Grizzly Bear Conservation and Management Plans*.
- Provide technical assistance to counties as they revise their comprehensive plans.
- Investigate habitual and commercial wildlife offenders who target fish and wildlife species and populations of special concern (e.g., bull trout).
- Negotiate a relicensing settlement agreement with Avista Corporation that mitigates for impacts of the Post Falls hydropower project.
- Provide technical assistance and habitat improvement cost-share to private landowners enrolled in Access Yes!, Magic Valley Pilot Project, CREP, and other Farm Bill programs.
- Continue cooperative efforts to reconnect dewatered tributaries to mainstem streams, and improve fish passage to benefit native and anadromous fish.



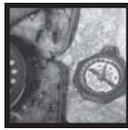
GOAL—Fish and Wildlife Recreation

MEET THE DEMAND FOR
FISH AND WILDLIFE RECREATION.

2006 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2006* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- *Access Yes!* provided access to 620,000 acres of private land and to an additional 689,000 acres of public land for hunting and fishing.
- Developed the *Access Yes!* Magic Valley Pilot Project to evaluate non-monetary incentives for landowners to enroll in the program.
- Renovated 11 fishing/boating access sites in 6 regions.
- Purchased two new fishing/boating access sites, including 200 acres and two miles along the Pahsimeroi River providing the first significant public access along this river.
- Evaluated the use of mobile blinds by disabled hunters.
- Reduced the northern pikeminnow population in Lake Cascade by 75 percent and completed the third and final year of transplanting yellow perch into the lake for a total of 850,000.
- Exchanged lands around Vickery/Falk Bridge on the Payette River and Lawyer Creek near Kamiah to improve access for fishing and boating.
- Expanded the urban fishing program to include more than 20 public fishing ponds in the Treasure Valley.
- Created the statewide Idaho Birding Trail, recognized through state legislation, and published a guidebook.
- Worked with the US Forest Service, in collaboration with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, as they implement the Travel Management Rule for the Boise, Payette, Sawtooth, and Panhandle National Forests.
- Implemented *Enforcement Action Plans* addressing OHV rules and travel plans to monitor compliance and provide outreach to OHV users in five regions.
- Evaluated hunter satisfaction with the Department's motor vehicle restriction rule in the Southwest Region and evaluated expanding the rule to more Game Management Units.
- Conducted the statewide Angler Opinion Survey, receiving responses from 3,790 resident and 571 non-resident anglers.



2007 Priorities

- Provide and evaluate non-monetary incentives for Access Yes! participants and maintain more than one million acres available for hunting and fishing under the program.
- Implement recommendations from the *Five-Year Statewide Fishing/Boating Access Facilities Plan 2005-2009*.
- Reposition the Department's land and wildlife mitigation assets to enhance the Department's ability to provide public access.
- Evaluate effectiveness, public understanding, and compliance with the Commission's motor vehicle restriction rule and develop a clear, concise, and consistent message about the rule.
- Conduct a statewide mule deer hunter survey to understand opinions and determine preferences for managing mule deer.
- Develop the Idaho Fishing Planner – an internet-based search engine for anglers wanting information on regulations, travel, services, printable maps, fish stocking, and more.
- Launch an interactive website for the Idaho Birding Trail that will help wildlife enthusiasts build their itineraries for bird-watching trips.
- Develop and promote new urban fishing opportunities in the Southwest Region and in Idaho Falls.
- Provide technical assistance and input as the US Forest Service Travel Management Rule is implemented.
- Evaluate efforts that encourage youth to hunt and fish.



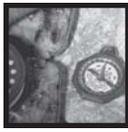
GOAL—Working With Others

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

2006 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2006* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

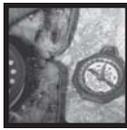
- Distributed new publications, including the *Annual Enforcement Program Report*, a regional fisheries report, and *Idaho Important Bird Area News*.
- Released numerous articles written by field staff – such as “Ask the Officer” column in the *Times-News* – to increase awareness about fish and wildlife management.
- Held a Commission workshop to learn about hunting equipment technology and gathered input from hunters about potential changes to equipment restrictions.
- Distributed a quarterly Mule Deer Initiative publication and displayed Initiative efforts at county fair booths.
- Revised the process for involving the public in Department decision making to improve the variety and convenience of opportunities for citizens to be involved and to clarify timelines for conducting public involvement.
- Designed all Department regulation booklets with a consistent format.
- Brought diverse sportsmen's groups together by hosting sportsman breakfasts and banquets and by creating working groups and task forces.
- Presented economic information on hunting and fishing to Adams, Washington, and Valley County commissioners, and supported a person from the Idaho Department of Commerce and Labor, Tourism Development Division, to attend the National Watchable Wildlife Conference.
- Two new Citizens Against Poaching display trailers were donated and equipped for public education and information.
- Published an article about the *Idaho Wildlife Conservation Strategy* in the *Fish and Game News*.
- Created/sponsored/hosted events for hundreds of Idaho children, including the new “CSI-Wildlife” by the Forensics Lab for fifth – eighth graders, youth-based events during Free Fishing Day, school-sponsored field trips and outdoor days, *Trout in the Classroom*, and Salmon and Steelhead Days.



- Initiated and developed an online bowhunter education class, making Idaho the only state with online hunter and bowhunter education.
- Received a grant award to produce a teacher's guide to accompany three wildlife education DVDs.
- Produced the video "Care-Share" in cooperation with the Idaho Rangeland Resources Commission to promote responsible and respectful use of Idaho's rangelands.
- Produced the video "A Sense of Place" describing Idahoans' connections to the land for the Idaho Land Use Summit.



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2007 Priorities

- Implement and evaluate the Department's revised public involvement process.
- Inform the public about the risks of elk ranching and high-fence hunting to wild ungulates and to the public's perception of hunting and hunters.
- 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.
- Enhance the public's knowledge of Department activities, goals, and management programs.
- Develop an educational and communication effort about balancing the legacy of fish, wildlife, and associated recreation with growth and development in Idaho.
- Emphasize programs and events that get children interested in fish, wildlife, hunting and fishing.
- Develop an outreach campaign called "Make The Call" to celebrate 25 years of the Citizens Against Poaching program and its successes.
- Promote the use of Department web resources, particularly the Idaho Hunt Planner and the upcoming Idaho Fishing Planner.
- Develop a pilot Master Naturalist program to educate and train citizen scientists who will assist the Department in a variety of survey, inventory, and monitoring projects.
- Distribute information on access management, hunter access, and OHV rules and regulations with special emphasis on mule deer and motorized access.
- Continue improving the consistency and format of the regulation booklets.





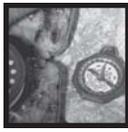
GOAL—Management Support

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

2006 Accomplishments

The accomplishments below correspond to the priorities in last year's *Direction 2006* and generally are listed in the same order. Other significant accomplishments also are noted.

- Reported five new, high-level performance measures as required by State Law 67-1904.
- Awarded contract to Outdoor Central for a new automated license system.
- Replaced the antiquated and malfunctioning telephone system in the Panhandle Regional Office.
- Constructed a new law enforcement training facility in cooperation with the city of Salmon and Lemhi County.
- Developed a Conservation Officer recruiting brochure, sent officers to their *alma maters* to recruit job applicants, and created career development plans for officers.
- Reduced Fleet Operations by 31 vehicles by consolidating primary vehicle fleets, sharing more equipment among employees, and extending the replacement cycle for off-road vehicles.
- Presented Department budget information and concerns to sportsmen's groups, legislators, and others throughout the state.
- Implemented the P-Card system throughout the Department, reducing the number of invoices processed by about 30 percent and thereby eliminating two part-time positions.
- Supported an aggressive training program for employees including sending 10 mid-level managers through the Certified Public Manager Program; sending all 175 supervisors through the State of Idaho performance management training; and providing Myers-Briggs Temperament Assessment and customer service, workplace diversity, and civil rights training to all 31 new employees.
- Increased fishing license sales in the Panhandle and Southwest Regions presumably from media campaigns aimed at encouraging first-time and infrequent anglers to take up fishing.
- Received a grant from AmeriCorps to hire temporary volunteer coordinators in the Upper Snake and Magic Valley Regions.



- Developed statewide fisheries databases, streamlining data management and improving the Department's ability to share information with other agencies and the public.
- Converted a full time position in headquarters administration to a field biologist on Farm Bill programs and converted a full time secretarial position to a programmer for fisheries databases.

2007 Priorities

- Increase public awareness of the Department's revenue and budget system and the effects of rising business costs on services, management, and activities.
- Install the new automated license system and train all vendors in its operation. Enhance and refine after initial roll-out in Spring 2007.
- Use the *2007-2012 Fisheries Management Plan* as the vehicle to design a Department-wide model for management planning.
- Develop statewide fish and wildlife databases and corresponding GIS systems.
- Continue to offer the Certified Public Manager Program to Department employees.
- Continue to improve strategies for recruiting job applicants and retaining a well qualified workforce.
- Move to a two-year cycle for developing deer, elk, and antelope regulations.
- Continue aligning annual work plans with priorities in *The Compass and Direction 2007*.
- Evaluate increased media efforts to recruit new anglers and to increase retention of casual anglers.
- Formalize the accounting of donated efforts by volunteers/reservists and standardize the program statewide.
- Continue to improve customer service and employee work environments by upgrading facilities.



Our Mission

(Idaho Code Section 36-103)

All wildlife, including all wild animals, wild birds, and fish, within the state of Idaho, is hereby declared to be the property of the state of Idaho. It shall be preserved, protected, perpetuated, and managed. It shall only be captured or taken at such times or places, under such conditions, or by such means, or in such manner, as will preserve, protect, and perpetuate such wildlife, and provide for the citizens of this state and, as by law permitted to others, continued supplies of such wildlife for hunting, fishing and trapping.



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