



## **WILDLIFE VIEWING ACTION PLAN (WVAP) for public review**

According to the 2006 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, 1.2 million wildlife viewing participants spend \$838 million in Arizona annually. Despite this comparatively large demographic, there is a significant gap between the Desired Future Condition, as it relates to wildlife viewing recreation, and current conditions. The following action plan outlines objectives and strategies to narrow the gap.

### **Desired Future Condition**

The Department has used its expertise to build a broad, informed citizenry that values wildlife and provides financial and political support for hunting, angling, wildlife viewing, and shooting sports, ensuring the Department's fiscal stability and authority to manage wildlife through the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation. The Department's IEWR leads a suite of successful programs that recruit, develop, and retain an engaged and diverse wildlife recreation customer base.

### **Challenges**

There are challenges to achieving the DFC with respect to wildlife viewing. Some challenges are related to societal trends, such as increased urbanization and the documented shift in wildlife value orientations. Other challenges are related to program implementation and existing internal and external processes. Continuous evaluation and modification of programs will be critical to the success of meeting the challenges to wildlife viewing recruitment and retention.

There is currently no adequate mechanism to allow wildlife viewers to contribute financially to wildlife conservation.

The IEWR structure identifies the need for a watchable wildlife program manager. Department financial conditions dictate indefinite delays on the hiring of this position.

Wildlife viewing programming currently is not embedded throughout Department strategic planning documents.

Wildlife viewers, as a demographic, are not well identified and understood compared to the demographics of hunters and anglers.

Implementation of this action plan, in whole or in part, will require support and participation from every work unit in the Department. Current employee workload dictates that if additional duties and responsibilities are added, others will have to be removed.

The WVAP identifies programs, products, and services the Department is currently providing. It also identifies new approaches that, if implemented, should help achieve the

DFC. With the exception of the Commission-approved marketing position (fiscal year 2010), Director-sanctioned grant-writing position, and a potential angler recruitment and retention position in the future as funding allows, there are no additional funding or personnel requests associated with this plan in light of statewide budget conditions. Careful prioritization of existing funding and human resources toward top-priority programs, products, and services is currently the only avenue for enhancing wildlife viewing recruitment and retention efforts until budgetary conditions allow expansion

## **Action Plan Objectives and Strategies**

### **Objective #1: MAINTAIN ARIZONA'S DIVERSE WILDLIFE AND HABITATS BY PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE WILDLIFE VIEWING PRACTICES AND OPPORTUNITIES.**

#### ***Strategy 1.A: Assess the public's desires, needs, and level of support for a Watchable Wildlife Program.***

Collect stakeholder input in support of the development of this program.

Design and implement survey instruments through the Department's human dimensions coordinator to define value sets, attitudes, and satisfaction levels of wildlife-watching customers and track the progression of their engagement.

Engage stakeholders to garner support, input, and guidance and to enhance cooperative relationships and program strengths.

Develop tools to evaluate the Department's success at meeting the public's expectations.

#### ***Strategy 1.B: Engage hunters and anglers in wildlife viewing opportunities.***

Introduce and cross-promote wildlife viewing recreation into hunting and angling recruitment and retention activities where appropriate.

Emphasize to hunters and anglers the important role wildlife viewing programs play in maintaining the public's connection to nature.

#### ***Strategy 1.C: Engage active wildlife watchers.***

Increase awareness and expand wildlife viewing opportunities through targeted marketing.

Promote managed wildlife viewing opportunities.

Encourage active participation in wildlife conservation projects as a result of interest in wildlife viewing (e.g., condor program, elk habitat improvement, bighorn habitat enhancement, etc.).

Partner with wildlife advocates to build relationships that benefit the Department, themselves, and wildlife.

Emphasize to wildlife watchers the important role sportsmen/women play in conservation efforts.

***Strategy 1.D: Engage people who have a casual interest in wildlife, such as watching wildlife programs on television, but who do not actively seek wildlife-related recreation.***

Publicize and market workshops or events for this level of interest based on human dimensions data.

Promote wildlife viewing as a positive family experience that can be enjoyed anytime, anywhere, at any age.

Create local wildlife viewing guides and materials to target urban population centers.

Attend expos, events and other related activities to strategically promote wildlife viewing.

Recruit wildlife watchers through the use of basic materials that promote the virtues of outdoor and wildlife-related recreation.

Remove barriers that prevent the public from participating in wildlife viewing (e.g. lack of equipment, distance, etc.).

Develop urban area wildlife viewing opportunities.

***Strategy 1.F: Cross-promote wildlife viewing to constituents who do not actively seek wildlife-related recreation but who are already connected to Department programs (e.g. OHV and watercraft recreation, shooting sports, etc.).***

Identify and cross-promote outreach opportunities to outdoor recreation audiences.

Market the unique wildlife viewing opportunities associated with OHV and watercraft ownership (e.g. bighorn sheep along rivers, over-water nesting rookeries, peregrine nesting cliffs, bald eagle nesting sites, neo-tropical migratory bird, or Geocaching).

Use IEWR marketing plan - to be developed

***Strategy 1.G: Broaden exposure of wildlife viewing through the Department's use of technology and social media.***

Continuously update Web pages and blogs and use Twitter and Facebook for outreach and public interaction about the latest wildlife recreation opportunities.

Expand the use of Twitter and Facebook to include reference to the Department's "Get Outside" web site portal.

Use the “Get Outside” web site portal as a source for expanding wildlife viewing opportunities.

Use IEWR marketing plan - to be developed

**Objective #2: INCREASE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF AND SUPPORT FOR THE DEPARTMENT’S ROLE IN MANAGING ALL WILDLIFE.**

***Strategy 2.A: Ensure that all Department properties have informative signage that relays important Department messages.***

Implement recommendations of the Department Signage Standardization Team.

Implement Department strategic messages on signage (e.g. AGFD is responsible for managing wildlife, AGFD not funded through general fund or taxes, conservation efforts, etc.).

***Strategy 2.B: Ensure that wildlife watching venues in ethnically diverse urban population centers have interpretive signs.***

Identify potential wildlife watching venues within urban centers.

Pursue partnerships with tribal governments for opportunities to use signage on reservations (using culturally appropriate language) for awareness.

***Strategy 2.C: Increase public appreciation for wildlife conservation.***

Continue to enhance and refine the Department’s wildlife viewing Web page with upgrades that highlight dynamic and exciting wildlife viewing opportunities.

Develop an e-newsletter available through subscription that is dedicated to the promotion of wildlife viewing programs, emphasizing wildlife recreation and conservation throughout Arizona.

Develop and expand wildlife viewing programs and workshops for target groups.

Use IEWR marketing plan - to be developed

**Objective #3: DEVELOP MECHANISMS THAT GENERATE FUNDING FROM WILDLIFE VIEWING RECREATION.**

***Strategy 3.A: Conduct comprehensive feasibility analysis of potential funding mechanisms.***

Encourage stakeholder input for ideas of potential funding mechanisms

Consider alternative funding that requires statutory changes.

Determine events/activities the AGFD could offer to the public as pay-to-use activities

Identify and pursue external grants to support wildlife viewing recreation.

Promote wildlife viewers to purchase hunting licenses as a way to support wildlife conservation.

Consider changing the name of the hunting license to “wildlife conservation license”.

Promote the Arizona Fund Income Tax Check-off and its ability to enhance wildlife viewing recreation in AZ

Revise and implement Arizona Fund Income Tax Check-off communications plan for future efforts.

**Objective # 4: LEVERAGE THE DEPARTMENT’S CAPACITY TO PROVIDE WILDLIFE VIEWING RECREATION.**

***Strategy 4.A: Increase partnerships.***

Engage nontraditional – including industry – partners.

Develop joint programs with municipal and county parks and recreation departments.

Offer workshops targeted at local, state, and federal agencies to inform staff about wildlife viewing opportunities.

Promote new wildlife viewing opportunities with community leaders and legislators.

Engage partners in funding efforts and identify unique opportunities for wildlife viewing tourism.

Provide parks and recreation departments, NGOs and youth organizations with portfolios detailing the value of providing outdoor recreation programming.

Train the trainers - partner with parks depts., conservation organizations, resorts/bed and breakfast lodging, youth organizations, etc. to train in managed wildlife viewing recreation and its relationship with economic development.

Conduct an inventory of inner-city schools that have afterschool programs funded through parent contribution or grants. Give them examples of watchable wildlife programs and facilitate the connection between these schools and qualified naturalists for potential expansion of watchable wildlife programs in the city.

Cooperate with federal and state agencies to develop and enhance potential wildlife viewing opportunities on their lands.

Develop wildlife viewing opportunities in urban areas.

Continue professional relationship with the Arizona Office of Tourism to prepare and fully integrate an entire suite of wildlife recreation materials, to attract nature tourists, hunters, and anglers to the state.

Prepare and disseminate a concise portfolio regarding the economic impacts of wildlife-related recreation, highlighting the benefits to municipalities, counties, and regions of promoting and providing programming about wildlife-related recreation in their communities.

Establish professional relationships with municipal, county, and regional chambers of commerce, and NGOs such as Audubon Society, to fully integrate the entire suite of wildlife recreation materials to attract nature tourists, hunters, and anglers to communities in the state.

Build an easy-to-understand template, including PowerPoint presentation, for external organizations, including an unambiguous outline explaining why it is in the best interest of their communities and businesses, socially and economically, to provide outdoor recreation and watchable wildlife programming.

***Strategy 4.B: DEVELOP ENTREPRENEURIAL WATCHABLE WILDLIFE PROGRAMMING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH PRIVATE BUSINESS OWNERS, NGOS, MUNICIPALITIES, DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES, AND QUALIFIED NATURALISTS WHO LIVE IN EVERY COMMUNITY.***

Encourage chambers of commerce, parks and recreation departments, private tour-related businesses, hotels, and resorts to provide wildlife viewing programs by identifying qualified naturalists, arranging a venue, charging a small enrollment fee to participants, and then passing the enrollment fee directly, or in part, to the naturalist.

Explore opportunities within the Department to allow AGFD employees to teach watchable wildlife programs while off-duty. Potential venues include parks and recreation departments, youth clubs, YMCAs, church camps, scout camps, NGOs (such as Audubon Society), hotels and resorts, and any other organization that can arrange a venue and administer a small enrollment fee for pass-through to the off-duty Department employee.

Establish relationships with concierge services at resorts and hotels in destination communities to introduce the idea of providing package deals for hotel and watchable wildlife events.

**Objective #5: INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN WILDLIFE VIEWING RECREATION.**

***Strategy 5.A: Develop programs to recruit and develop responsible wildlife viewers.***

Develop wildlife viewing education course formatted similar to hunter education.

Develop wildlife viewing field trips and camps.

Develop and conduct wildlife viewing and natural history workshops.

Pursue development of school wildlife photography clubs.

Create wildlife viewing equipment loaner program.

Attend meetings at civic organizations to promote wildlife viewing recreation and conservation.

Incorporate wildlife viewing into boating and OHV education and recreation.

***Strategy 5.B: Determine appropriate method for collecting and compiling customer data and establish centralized database to allow human dimensions and marketing staff to identify gaps in data sets. Mine existing data sets for marketing and license sales opportunities.***

Collect comprehensive customer data from all participants.

Mine data sets to target marketing efforts and forecast participation projections.

Develop customer profiles for every person who participates in a Department program.

***Strategy 5.C: Enhance wildlife viewing opportunities/experiences.***

Create electronic methods (e.g. podcast or “guide by cell phone”, GPS, etc.) to guide people through wildlife viewing areas, beginning with those venues prepared to host more visitors.

Develop sites specifically for wildlife viewing. Priority management for the wellbeing of the wildlife...

Focus prudent wildlife viewing enhancements on areas where animals congregate to feed, breed, or go to water. Improve and/or manipulate habitat to improve wildlife viewing opportunities without disturbance to the wildlife.

Develop feeding and watering sites for wildlife experiences in areas that lend themselves to responsible viewing (live from a prudent distance, remote viewing, etc.).

Manage for different types of experiences (e.g. birders, photographers, artists, occasionalists, generalists, etc.).

Manage for different settings (e.g., types of wildlife resources the viewer is seeking, or tolerances for crowds, human behavior, the preference for wilderness-type experience or urban experience, etc.).

Manage for different activities: (e.g. viewing from vehicles or bicycles, water trails, hiking, boating, OHV riding).

**Objective #6: BRAND THE AGENCY AS THE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY WITHIN ALL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEMOGRAPHICS IN GEOGRAPHICALLY DISPERSED REGIONS.**

***Strategy 6A: Incorporate strategic messages into all appropriate outreach materials and activities.***

Leverage the Department's access to thousands of Arizonans reached via the web site, e-news, fishing clinics, hunter clinics, education programs, wildlife viewing workshops, newspaper articles, festivals, expos, and other events.

Develop wildlife viewing outreach materials that incorporate Department strategic messages to increase awareness of the Department's role in conservation.

Partner with wildlife-related destinations to inform the public of mutual conservation goals (e.g. zoos, wildlife exhibitors, etc.).

Promote brand identity through consistent messaging from all employees.

***Strategy 6.B: Incorporate signage on Department properties and wildlife viewing areas to deliver strategic messages and promote wildlife conservation in Arizona.***

Promote safe, and emphasize ethical wildlife viewing practices.

Promote "brand" identity through comprehensive and consistent messages and formats.

Inventory sign needs on Department properties.