

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Strategic Plan

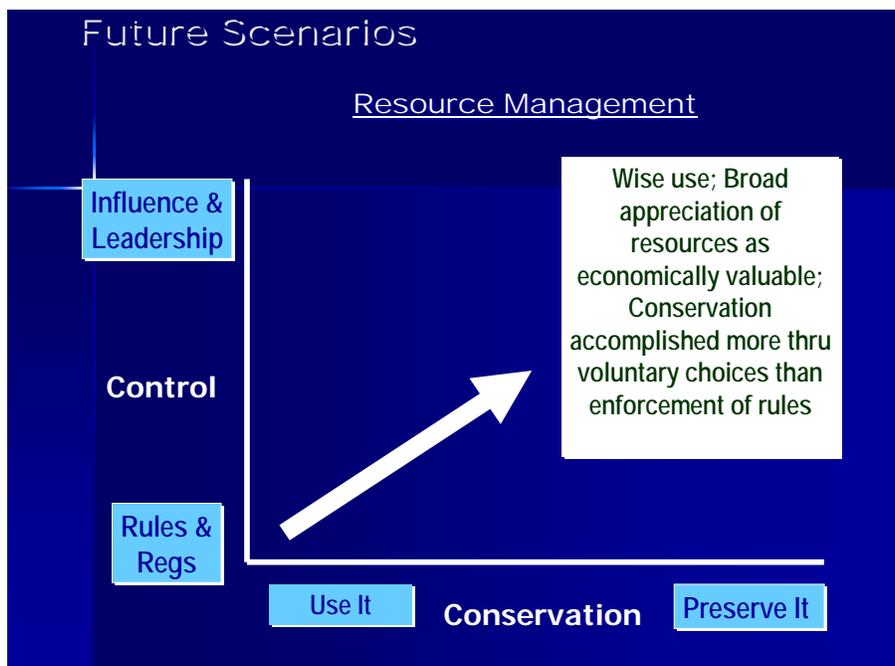
January 2007

This Plan contains the key strategies that will guide the FWC over the long term and sets forth the behaviors that are essential to successfully achieving our mission. We have taken this long-term view to better ensure the conservation of Florida's fish and wildlife resources.

We are expanding the role of management to place greater emphasis on management through leadership, education and influence. Under this approach, people do what is best for fish and wildlife of their own volition, rather than by the threat of regulatory or enforcement actions.

Regarding the work itself, we want to move from reacting to situations to being more proactive. This entails identifying and working on emerging issues before they overtake us. We are intent on moving from single focus planning where one division or office works on an issue to planning that brings all relevant disciplines of the agency to bear in a coordinated way. We want to keep our eye on the bigger landscape.

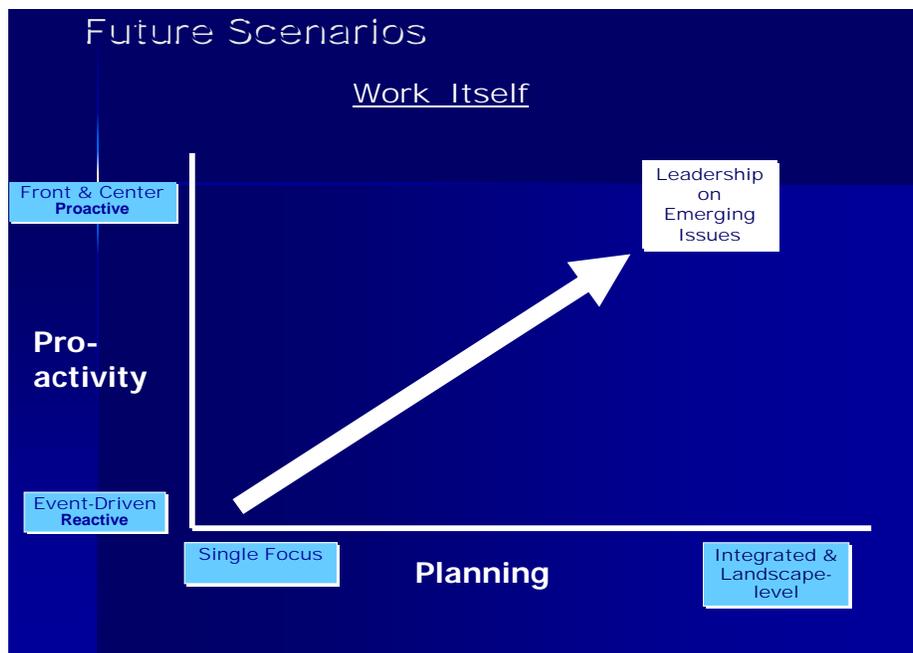
For More Information:



A shift in the direction we are going on two fronts is fundamental to this Plan – how we manage the resource, and how we do our work.

Over the next 15-20 years we want to move away from management driven primarily by rules and regulations to where others help us conserve the resource because of our leadership and influence. This kind of influence is one where others do right by fish and wildlife of their own volition rather than by the threat of regulatory or enforcement actions by us.

Regarding work itself, we want to move from reacting to situations to being more proactive. This entails identifying and working on “emerging” issues before they overtake us. We also want to move from a single focus planning approach where single divisions or offices work on an issue to bringing all relevant disciplines of the agency to bear in a coordinated way, and doing so with an eye on a bigger landscape-level view.



Our Vision

Powered by science-based leadership, we will create a sustainable and healthy future for Florida's fish, wildlife, water and habitat resources.

FWC envisions a future where the people who live in or visit Florida care for and contribute to the stability of our fish and wildlife resources and the quality of our environment. FWC will be the recognized leader in the science and management of Florida's fish and wildlife. Residents and visitors will fully support and fund efforts to maintain the resources that provide recreational opportunities for fishing, hunting, wildlife viewing and boating.

Our Mission

To manage fish and wildlife resources for their long-term well-being and the benefit of people.

Our mission is a concise statement of what we do to achieve this vision. This statement captures the concept that humans are an integral part of the equation and that balancing competing public interests, concerns, and uses of natural resources is at the heart of our mission.

Our Goal

To provide healthy resources for safe, satisfied customers.

This is the end result we hope to accomplish through our mission.

Agency Strategies

In this section we describe the strategies we will employ to accomplish our mission. Divisions and offices have plans that specifically address implementation of these strategies. These strategies are not in priority order.

1. Develop proactive, integrated research that anticipates emerging issues and ensures positive resource outcomes.
2. Develop leading-edge resource management programs.
3. Develop proactive, preventative enforcement programs that enable FWC to avoid potential and emerging problems.

4. Develop fish and wildlife recreation opportunities and programs that foster resource stewardship.
5. Improve our resource leadership position by clearly communicating where we are headed, why it is important, and how we plan to get there.
6. Increase stakeholder involvement and interaction on emerging issues to proactively reduce resource conflicts.
7. Initiate partnerships as a means of addressing the big resource issues facing Florida.
8. Integrate human dimensions insights into management planning and decision making.

For More Information:

Human dimensions is about recognizing humans as part of the fish and wildlife management equation and considering human issues in management planning and decision making. Insights come from understanding how people value fish and wildlife, how they want fish and wildlife to be managed and how they affect or are affected by fish and wildlife and fish and wildlife management decisions. Activities involving human dimensions include social science research, public participation, stakeholder involvement and policy analysis. This strategy is about learning more about the human part of the management equation and integrating those insights into our management planning and decision making, including setting objectives and designing management interventions.

9. Integrate our activities to better achieve sustainable populations of species, protect critical habitat and high quality environmental resources.
10. Foster and develop the multi-disciplinary expertise of the FWC needed to ensure strategic, integrated solutions that address and solve resource problems.
11. Build a collaborative workforce built on professionalism, with the skills and resources needed to maximize effectiveness.

Agency Code of Conduct

As we implement this Plan, we will do so in a manner consistent with the following. These are not in priority order.

Lead and Make Informed Decisions

The following codes of conduct are about leading and making decisions. FWC leadership is about: creating a vision, aligning agency resources to accomplish the vision, and empowering people to do the work. We will work with our employees, customers and stakeholders to set the vision for Florida's fish and wildlife future, align the resources and empower people to make this vision a reality.

1. Balance the needs of citizens with the needs of the resource, putting the resource first in our decisions and actions.

For More Information:

The paramount objective of resource management decision-making is to maintain the long-term well-being of the fish and wildlife resources of our state for the benefit of our citizens. We seek to base decisions on the best information available, including biological, sociological, economic, cultural, historical and other information deemed relevant by the Commission. The biological basis for decision-making includes stock assessments, biological surveys, management plans and other science-based studies or information.

With respect to harvested populations, we seek to permit reasonable means and quantities of harvest, consistent with optimum sustainable populations. Optimum sustainable populations shall mean the highest degree of population productivity within available habitat to sustain fish and wildlife for the long term use or enjoyment of citizens.

2. Make resource decisions based on the best available science with a balance of enforcement and management practicality.

For More Information:

Our goal is effective decision-making at all levels of the FWC. We believe that decisions should be guided by objective scientific information and that subject-matter experts are integral in framing decisions.

Decision-making can be broadly categorized as: (1) operational or programmatic, (2) public policy development, and (3) regulatory. It should be recognized that all FWC employees are expected to have a role in making operational or programmatic decisions. This perspective is reflected in our desire to push decision-making to the level closest to the issue. To do this, agency leadership must facilitate informed decision-making rather than making all of the decisions. The process is to: (1) delegate more decisions, (2) identify the appropriate level for making the decision, and (3) convey any constraints, terms and conditions that should be considered when making a decision. If successful, this will break the decision bottlenecks and improve the timeliness of decisions.

Decision-making related to public policy development and regulations is the prerogative of the Commissioners. In formulating these decisions, the Commission must assess and evaluate a broad array of data and information based on biological science, social science, and public preference. The role of FWC employees is to use the best available science to recommend baselines, thresholds, or a range of values that will serve as the constraints for decision-making. In doing so, it needs to be recognized that many decisions are made with incomplete or less than perfect science and that some decisions are time-sensitive. The desired outcome is to use science to provide the framework within which decisions are made

3. Make consistent, thoughtful and timely decisions that keep pace with the needs of the resource.

4. Seek first to influence others rather than regulate them.
Develop collaborative approaches to address conservation needs.

5. Be proactive in our actions, anticipating emerging issues and getting out in front of them.

For More Information:

To be proactive means recognizing our responsibility to make things happen. It's taking the initiative and getting out in front of issues before they run us over. It means identifying potential issues and acting upon those most likely to need our attention soonest. By being proactive, we are better able to commit time and energy to our priorities and do less "fire-fighting".

6. Adopt a landscape or big picture approach that uses interdisciplinary teams to address complex resource-management issues.

For More Information:

The Landscape or Big Picture perspective recognizes that we cannot examine or manage complex systems one component at a time. We must focus on how species, habitats, and human influences are interconnected, in addition to understanding specific attributes of each. Our perspective cannot be restricted to a specific temporal or spatial scale and must take into account the actions of other agencies with missions that potentially overlap FWC's. There are institutional and ecological components to this perspective. We cannot accomplish our mission without understanding how our decisions fit into and integrate with those of other natural resource agencies. Also, we must understand how our management actions impact the structure and function of natural systems as a whole with humans considered as part of those systems.

7. Effectively involve citizens and staff who are closest to an issue in the decision-making process.

8. Use teamwork and collaboration to integrate our work effort.

For More Information:

Integration is the act of forming into a functioning or unified whole (Merriam-Webster Online dictionary). Prior to Restructuring in 2003, we had merged but not integrated. In the Restructure we achieved some integration by combining like functions together in divisions and offices. Examples: we had licensing & permitting in 3 divisions and an office. But this only gets us part way to full integration – teaming, i.e., working in cross-functional groups, gets us the rest of the way.

When you look at our Agency-level and DOI plans, a lot of our work is cross-functional, i.e., cuts across more than one DOI (remember each DOI has a different function, e.g., enforcement, research, habitat & species management, etc.). So we want staff available to work on whatever work is most needed and that they could contribute to, in effect, making them available to the entire organization. Teams are an important way to do this.

That said, teamwork is more than just being on a formal team. Teamwork is also about all of us working together to plan and to implement because we can do a better job if we bring all FWC's

expertise to bear. We want to use our multi-disciplinary strengths to create better decisions and better results.

As you make decisions, think “who else other than me is affected by these decisions and who among those affected needs to be aware of or involved in them?” Here’s the checklist:

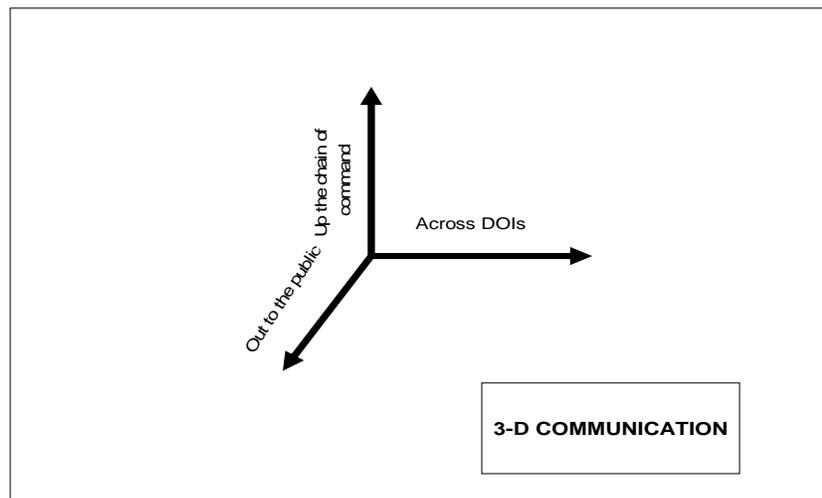
- *Do you need the assistance of others? Do others need your assistance?*
- *Does your work significantly affect the work of others?*
- *Do others depend on your output?*
- *Has everyone affected by your work been informed and involved in the planning process?*

Figure out who you need to integrate with and do it. Use DOI operational priorities as a guide.

9. Communicate well up and down the organization, across the organization, and externally with others.

For More Information:

Communication is about exchanging information – clearly, concisely and with no loss of content or meaning. We use the term “3-Dimensional communication” to refer to communication up and down your division, office, or institute chain of command, across divisions and offices, and from FWC to those outside FWC. FWC staff tells us we need to do a better job of listening to their issues and letting them know they have been heard. Communication is a two-way street: don’t forget to listen. You have to take some initiative. Speak up when you have issues and come with ideas on possible solutions.



Provide Excellent Service

Providing the best possible service to the public and one another is essential to gathering the support we need to achieve our mission. These are not in priority order.

10. Provide consistent, high-quality service to citizens.

For More Information:

To achieve our mission we must have the support of our citizenry. An essential element of building this support is to provide excellent customer service.

To provide high quality customer service means that we will always listen, treat each other and the public with patience and respect and explain the reasons for agency actions, rules and regulations. It also means striving to make complying with agency requirements such as obtaining permits as convenient as possible. A commitment to customer service builds support and improved compliance even when customers disagree with agency actions.

Remember: customer contacts are moments when a person's opinion of us is formed. These contacts should be as positive an experience as possible, regardless of who initiates them or how the contacts occur.

11. Be collaborative and respectful in interactions with fellow employees.

For More Information:

A spirit of collaboration is an essential ingredient of successful integration. This collaborative spirit is built by treating one another with courtesy, patience and respect and by exhibiting fairness, compassion, and honesty in all we do. We can each work to build this collaborative workplace by promoting cooperation and teamwork to meet goals, by mentoring employees and by acknowledging and taking pride in each other's successes. When problems occur, we must work to maintain open lines of communication and strive to solve them in a proactive, positive manner.

12. Seek input from and listen to citizens; understand and try to meet their needs.

For More Information:

Understanding the knowledge, opinions, motivations, needs and expectations of stakeholders and customers is vital to successful conservation strategies. Asking, listening and involving citizens early and regularly is critical to developing and implementing successful projects and effectively addressing issues before they become intractable problems.

13. Proactively engage stakeholders and management partners in planning and decision-making; strive to continuously inform affected parties of plans and actions.

14. Work with all parties on issues in a fair and balanced way; create forums for dialogue and seek the middle ground. Focus on conflict resolution and collaboration.

For More Information:

An important component of our future stakeholder relations is to stop taking stakeholder issues on as our own. A stakeholder issue may or may not rise to the level of being an agency issue. We will create an environment where stakeholders represent their interests to each other rather than FWC staff trying to represent them. Our role needs to be one where we bring the parties together and create an environment where the parties can work toward issue resolution. Each stakeholder is responsible for presenting and arguing for their own point of view.

15. Partner with others.

For More Information:

We value the power of partnerships. We seek to build partnerships with other agencies and organizations to leverage limited resources,

to achieve better resource outcomes and to provide better services to the public.

Stakeholders are a big part of how we can move to being more influential. Through stakeholders we can positively impact fish and wildlife conservation in ways that go well beyond our limited legal authority.

Partnerships result in more resources going towards our projects than we alone can provide. We're sharing other people's resources to get the job done. And, it's the same for the partner, i.e., they are getting more resources to get their job done, too. It's that we've agreed on the same job.

Given the realities of future state budgets, partnerships are where we should look for more human and dollar resources for projects. While it's nice to be able to do it all ourselves and to control it ourselves, that greatly limits what can get done and our Mission suffers.

Healthy partnerships lead to partners making decisions and doing agreed upon work with their staff and dollars.

16. Communicate the reasons for our actions and state a consistent FWC point of view (speak with one voice).

For More Information:

We have to do a better job of communicating among ourselves and with the public so we all understand where we are going, why, and what we're doing to get there. And when we communicate we need to all "speak with one voice", i.e., all have the same message on a given issue so the recipients of the messages are not confused by different variations of the message. Communication is a 2-way street: don't forget to listen.

17. Continually improve agency processes, operations and cost-effectiveness.

For More Information:

Given the limited resources we have to accomplish our Mission, we need to use them wisely and well. This involves: (1) being innovative in our problem solving, (2) evaluating priorities and adjusting them as needed, and (3) continually improving in what we do and how we do it. Improvements in processes can free-up resources to devote to other efforts.

Measurement

We will measure progress on implementing this Plan using an agency-level scorecard. This scorecard is under development and includes specific and measurable objectives for judging how well we're doing on the end results of our actions.

For More Information:

The FWC is developing a Scorecard that will translate the Agency Strategic Plan (ASP) into performance measures and track, on an on-going basis, progress toward accomplishing these measures.

Think of the Scorecard as the "gauges" in an airplane cockpit. For the complex task of navigating and flying an airplane, pilots need detailed information about many aspects of the flight: fuel, air speed, altitude, bearing, destination, and other indicators that summarize the current and predicted environment. Reliance on one gauge can be fatal. Similarly, the complexity of managing an organization requires that managers be able to view performance on several gauges that represent the key operational areas, simultaneously. The Scorecard improves management oversight by providing FWC the ability to know if we are on course, with the added ability to catch problems before they become critical.

There will be an agency-level Scorecard and one for each division and office. The gauges on the agency-level Scorecard are shown below. Example measures are shown in parenthesis.

- *Marine Fisheries: the status of marine fisheries (annual status & trends of key species, fishery closures, license sales, economic impacts, law enforcement effort)*
- *Freshwater Fisheries: the status of freshwater fisheries (status of species in selected lakes, law enforcement effort)*
- *Wildlife: the overall status of wildlife (annual status & trends of wildlife populations, law enforcement effort)*
- *Habitat & Water: the overall status of fish and wildlife habitats, both aquatic and terrestrial (GIS inventories and law enforcement effort).*

- Public Health and Safety: human health, safety and welfare (boating injuries, deaths, and property damage; nuisance animal encounters such as alligator attacks; crimes against persons on lands we manage)
- Use Opportunities: number of users of all types and access to the resource (acres of lands open to the public, license sales)
- Leadership and Communication: overall performance on improving leadership and communication (employee assessment of internal communications)
- Teaming: overall performance in improving teaming and integration (number of teams successfully completing their tasks)
- Employment Quality: overall improvement in employee's workplace quality and satisfaction (employee satisfaction)
- Model & Plan Implementation: overall performance in implementing models and plans
- Senior Leadership Team Performance: overall performance of the SLT; includes its leadership and management responsibilities and its functioning as a team
- Regional Leadership Team Performance: overall performance of the 5 Regional Leadership Teams; includes their leadership and management responsibilities and their functioning as a team
- Division Performance: overall performance of the divisions; a roll up of all the divisions' performance as fed by their dashboards
- Office Performance: overall performance of the offices; a roll up of all the offices' performance as fed by their dashboards
- Financial Performance: overall performance in financial aspects of FWC (status of trust funds, performance as indicated by audits, ratio of state vs. grant funding)

- Internal Efficiency: efficiency of FWC's internal operations. Examples: productivity increases, improved efficiencies due to process improvements, energy use?
- Commissioner's Areas of Emphasis: overall performance on the annual Commissioner's Areas of Emphasis selected at the beginning of each calendar year.
- Process Improvement: overall performance in improving processes
- Customer Service: overall performance in improving internal and external customer service
- Stakeholders and Partnering: overall performance in meeting stakeholder needs