

# Keeping the Trust:

## Conservation and New Hampshire's Quality of Life

As the 1800s drew to a close, this state and nation faced a decline in fish and wildlife populations. This crisis spawned a conservation movement that launched many initiatives, including the New Hampshire Fisheries Commission in 1865, the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests in 1901, and the Audubon Society of New Hampshire in 1914. Reflecting the expanding scope of our work, the Fisheries Commission first became the Commission of Fisheries and Game and later, in 1935, the Fish and Game Department.

Using the new science of wildlife management, we successfully restored moose, deer, bear, wild turkey and beaver. Hunter education programs were developed and land protected through acquisition and the purchase of easements. We expanded our knowledge of fisheries management through research, improved public access, sustained our coldwater fisheries through a system of hatcheries and stocking, began an aquatic resources education program and developed our existing warmwater angling opportunities.

This mix of fish and wildlife and all the opportunities they present is part of what makes New Hampshire such a special place to live, work and spend a vacation.

This has always been an effort — and a Department — of people. Whether biologists, conservation officers, engineers, commissioners, educators, receptionists or volunteers, we are just like you: people who fish, hunt, trap, enjoy wildlife, and are committed to caring for the resource.

Many more challenges and opportunities lie ahead. To find ways to address them, Department staff and Commissioners in 1996 asked New Hampshire people about the agency's operation and focus for the future. Together we developed a 17-point plan approved by the Commission in January 1998.

Our vision for New Hampshire's future shows a state endowed with scenic beauty and abundant fish and wildlife resources. We are working hard to be a Department that's recognized by the public as a leader in conservation, and one of the country's most effective fish and wildlife agencies. We will protect and enhance our diversity of fish and wildlife — and particularly the habitats they need — through sound scientific research and management, judicious law enforcement and education for all ages. In our vision, we provide the public with an array of opportunities to enjoy New Hampshire's fish, wildlife and marine resources.

Working together we can achieve this vision for New Hampshire, maintaining our natural resources and quality of life well into the future.

### Our Mission:

As guardian of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources, the New Hampshire Fish and Game Department works in partnership with the public to:

- Conserve, manage, and protect** these resources and their habitats;
- Inform and educate** the public about these resources;
- Provide** the public with opportunities to use and appreciate these resources.

# A Resource-Rich Future

## Vision for the future:

*New Hampshire has healthy and abundant fish, wildlife, and marine populations, and the diversity of habitats they depend on for survival. As stewards of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine resources, we use sound science-based management and judicious enforcement of conservation laws to ensure these resources will be sustained at desired levels for generations to come. Species whose populations were once considered threatened or endangered are restored and no additional species are in danger of declining to that status.*



PHOTO BY JON CHAMBERLAIN

## Homes for Wildlife

One of the top concerns identified by the public and the Department's staff is the status of New Hampshire's fish and wildlife habitats. The state's human population has doubled in the last 30 years, causing major

also have an impact upon fisheries and marine habitats.

To secure healthy and diverse habitats, the Department will define critical habitats and develop strategies for those needing extra attention. Working with many agencies, organizations and individuals, the Department will improve its educational programs, communications links, and policies that benefit the state's habitats.

### Goal 1:

*New Hampshire has a wide range of naturally occurring habitats and healthy, naturally functioning ecosystems.*

changes in land use. For each year between 1982 and 1992, an average of 13,000 acres was converted from forest to development. Land use changes

## Managing the Numbers

The Fish and Game Department manages all fish, game and nongame species in New Hampshire, which number more than 400. This array of wildlife offers a multitude of ecological, recreational, economic and aesthetic value to the state.

Caring for these populations will require the best scientific and management practices available. Among the strategies will be selecting certain species needing particular management; implementing recovery plans for threat-

ened and endangered species; and coordinating research, education and

### Goal 2:

*New Hampshire has abundant and varied fish, wildlife, and marine species at levels that ensure sustainable, healthy populations.*

enforcement to protect populations.

## Living with Wildlife

### Goal 3:

*New Hampshire has fish, wildlife, and marine populations that support desirable levels of hunting, trapping, fishing, and wildlife viewing.*

case of some coldwater fish, stocking may be the appropriate response.

Human activities put pressure on fish and wildlife resources. Large-scale land and water activities that affect those resources must be monitored carefully. Some human impacts will require

It is crucial that populations of fish and wildlife species are maintained at levels in the public interest and that the ecosystem can sustain. Maintaining those levels will, at times, involve balancing public desires and biological potential. When the ecosystem can't meet the desired levels, as in the

### Goal 4:

*Human activities and land uses are compatible with desired population and recreational goals for fish, wildlife, and marine species and the e-ecosystems that sustain them.*

a variety of mitigation strategies or other steps in the review process. We advocate laws protecting fish and wildlife resources that are easily understood, enforceable, and have broad public support. Via education, the public's capacity to avoid conflicts with wildlife can be improved.



PHOTO BY CHARLES R. WULLEY

# Involving New Hampshire's People

## Vision for the future:

*We are responsive to the people we serve. We maintain and enhance the public's access to New Hampshire's land and water resources for a wide range of activities. We instill a strong conservation ethic among residents and visitors by providing high-quality information, education, and safety programs that foster understanding, appreciation, and enjoyment of the outdoors.*

## The Path to the Outdoors

### Goal 5:

*Access to New Hampshire's public and private lands and waters is maintained and enhanced to provide appropriate opportunities for recreational and commercial use of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine resources.*

will be strengthened to ensure adequate information is made available to the public. Access sites will be easier to find with the aid of signs and maps that point the way.

#### **PUBLIC AND PRIVATE LAND**

The 28,000 acres (29,477 including easements) of Fish and Game land are an integral part of New Hampshire's recreational opportunities for residents and visitors. Even more importantly, state ownership provides crucial protection for wildlife habitat.

We will work hard to maintain New Hampshire's proud tradition of private lands/public use for all recreationists. Working with landowners to identify and solve problems, programs will encourage users to respect and care for all land as though it were their own. Sharing land with care will ensure lasting opportunities for all to enjoy the outdoors.

#### **PUBLIC WATERS**

It's easy to understand why boating and fishing are so important to Granite Staters and visitors. New Hampshire is well-known for its beautiful lakes, ponds and rivers — for their views, fishing and as places for fun and relaxation. As the state agency with the lead responsibility for providing access to public waters, the Department builds and maintains a variety of facilities that connect people with the water for fishing and boating. We combine our access development responsibilities with our environmental stewardship role to ensure that all facilities comply with state and federal regulations.

Access information and communication programs



PHOTO BY NEIL PEGGLEN

## Public Input is Essential

We have one of the most active and involved constituencies of any state agency. This and many other plans for our work are crafted with the help of the public. When rules are established that are binding on the public, nothing is final until the people interested in the issue have an opportunity to say what's on their mind. In some cases, survey research gathers additional input.

Using public advice to develop policies on public resources results in better decisions, better management and improved understanding for all involved. The Department will continue to explore new ways to provide opportunities for the

### Goal 6:

*The public's desires and concerns are collected, understood, and integrated into the Department's decision making.*

public to suggest, inform, educate and advocate for their point of view. Our regional offices can play a key role in this effort.



PHOTOS BY ALAN EBELT



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## Education Gains Importance

### Goal 7:

*Participants in outdoor recreation activities are knowledgeable about safe, skilled, and ethical enjoyment and use of the state's fish, wildlife, and marine habitats and resources.*

Much of the public input we received during the meetings around the state focused on the need for increased education efforts. We hope that over the next 10 years many more people will know about and take advantage of the programs we offer.

Among our efforts to improve outdoor skills are Let's Go Fishing, Hunter Education, OHRV Safety Education and Becoming an Outdoors-Woman. We also reach the public via our magazine (*New Hampshire Wildlife Journal*), broadcast media and appearances at clubs and organizations. We reach thousands of teachers and students through such

programs as Project WILD and Project HOME. We periodically assess and update program contents to ensure that students of all ages are gaining knowledge and skills with our help. New technologies to augment the traditional classroom methods will be explored.

Surveys tell us that more than 90 percent of N.H. residents have a medium to high interest in wildlife. We will provide that interested audience with information in print, on radio and television. This will accomplish two objectives

### Goal 8:

*New Hampshire residents understand, support, and act to benefit the management of fish, wildlife and marine resources and their habitats.*

— first, to meet their need for information and second, to assist people in making wise choices about wildlife, habitat and conservation.

## Safety in the Outdoors

As recreation goes — hunting, fishing, snowmobiling and wildlife watching are among the safest activities, according to the National Safety Council. Safer than golf, skiing and ping pong, to be precise. Safety, as they say, is no accident. The Department has nearly 1,000 volunteers who deliver education and training to achieve and maintain this excellent record.

The Department will address safety in the outdoors by supporting

### Goal 9:

*Increase the safety of outdoor recreation activities and compliance with safety-related laws and regulations.*

laws and rules that are easily understood and enforceable; by providing high-quality search and rescue; and by continuing and expanding educational and outreach efforts.

## Building Strong Relationships

### Goal 10:

*The public, government officials, and relevant organizations understand, support, and partner with the Department and its activities.*

The Department's activities are so diverse — from restoring endangered species to regulating deer hunts, from building access sites to managing wildlife habitat — it's not surprising that few people have a clear picture of the breadth of our mission. In communicating, we must focus on key messages, delivered consistently over time, always providing ways for people to contact the Department for more information.

We also recognize that volunteers accomplish many important tasks and are crucial to the Department's mission. We will increase the number and diversity of opportunities, and recognize the contribution of volunteers.



PHOTO BY WILLIAM F. CAHNEY

## Let's Step Outside

### Goal 11:

*The public makes optimal use of New Hampshire's fish, wildlife, and marine resources.*

The more we know and understand about wildlife, the more we value it. The more it is valued, the better care we take to conserve it, whether we're people who hunt, fish, watch wildlife or own land.

One of the little understood benefits of hunting and fishing is the financial support these licensed activities and the sale of related equipment has provided to every state in this country. In New Hampshire, anglers and hunters finance fish and wildlife research, monitor-

ing and management; land acquisition; access development; fish hatcheries; and education programs. License buyers can also aid these activities by making Supersportsman donations. Purchases of everything from T-shirts to limited edition art prints also help support our conservation

### Goal 12:

*The public makes optimal use of Fish and Game's products and services.*

efforts. Hikers and wildlife watchers — whether they hunt or not — may be able to help fund conservation in the future through the Teaming With Wildlife program now being prepared for introduction to Congress.

# Your Wildlife Agency

## Vision for the future:

*The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department is an efficient and effective organization, staffed by highly skilled employees guided by the Department's mission, vision, and values. All divisions and employees communicate effectively and work cooperatively to achieve department goals. Our work environment emphasizes integrity, honesty, and respect for fellow employees. Everyone's opinion is valued. Staff development programs are readily available to ensure continued growth and excellence in job performance.*

## Reaching our Goals

Because Fish and Game's conservation work is so varied, and there are many options for achieving goals, it's important to keep in mind the Department's overall mission. A comprehensive management plan, which reflects that mission, will guide the Department's long-term and day-to-day decisions about fish and wildlife management and allocations of money and resources. Decisions will be based on the best technical and professional information available, consideration of public input and

### Goal 13:

*We achieve our mission through planning, a well-defined decision-making process, teamwork, and continual assessment and evaluation. Priorities are chosen and resources are allocated based on agreed-upon criteria.*

peer review. The Department is committed to a team approach.

## Communicating Conservation

### Goal 14:

*The Fish and Game Department has efficient and effective internal communication.*

To do our best, all employees follow the Department's mission, vision, values and strategic direction. We are therefore able to communicate consistent messages

about the Department's activities and policies. Fostering better internal communications will include expanding the use of technological advances, such as e-mail, and broadening interdivisional participation in decision making.



## It's a Great Place to Work

### Goal 15:

*The Fish and Game Department has a working environment and appropriate staff development opportunities for achieving its goals and promoting employee productivity and fulfillment.*

Fish and wildlife is not only the vocation of this Department's staff, it is also their avocation. The work doesn't bring financial riches; but it brings riches of other kinds: the knowledge that their efforts serve to conserve the resources they love. To advance this ethic, our human resources strategy provides meaningful ways to recruit, recognize, retain and develop our personnel.

## Information, Please

In this information age, speed is everything. The staff — and the public — need easy and quick ways to store and find everything from obscure research data to hunting and fishing regulations and wildlife fact sheets. The Department will expand its current systems, including databases, the internet and library.

### Goal 16:

*The Department has an efficient and convenient process for archiving, handling, retrieving, and sharing accurate data and information.*

## Strong Financial Foundations

Managing fish and wildlife populations and providing opportunities for recreation doesn't happen without money. We offer our current programs and services with funds from hunters, anglers and private donations. We will explore many innovative ways to increase revenues

### Goal 17:

*The Fish and Game Department has sufficient funding from a variety of sources and adequate staffing to complete priority programs and projects. The Department makes the most efficient and effective use of all of its resources.*

to finance intensified programs and rising expenses. New funding mechanisms will be explored that allow opportunities for all who benefit from Department programs to contribute.