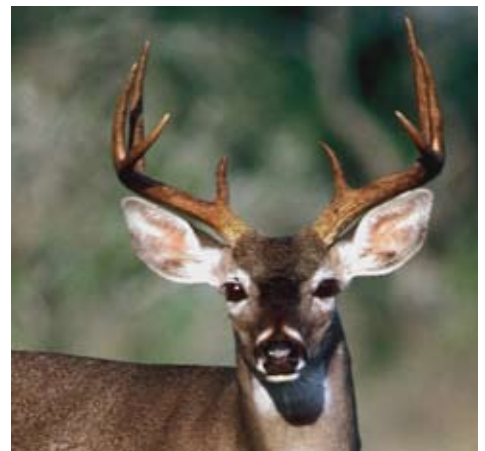


# Wildlife Division Strategic Plan 2011

TEXAS  
PARKS &  
WILDLIFE





# Wildlife Division Strategic Plan 2011

## **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department Mission Statement**

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations

## **Wildlife Division Mission Statement**

To foster on-the-ground conservation of diverse native wildlife and their habitats through sound science and land stewardship for the benefit of the resource and our hunting and outdoor heritage.

## **Wildlife Division Statement of Values**

Wildlife Division employees are passionate about wildlife and proud of our commitment to provide excellent service with integrity, teamwork and determination.



Cover photos: TPWD  
© 2011 TPWD CS RP W7000-1855 (3/11)

## Executive Summary

At no time in the history of the Wildlife Division have we faced such daunting landscape-level conservation challenges. Achieving success as the state's leader in wildlife conservation requires the use of numerous land and wildlife management programs and strategies. In Fiscal Year 2010 alone, the division successfully conducted over 120 separate management programs through the combined efforts of 300 plus personnel within the division. Staff spent nearly 600,000 hours on these programs, ranging from providing technical assistance to private landowners; establishing hunting regulations based on biological surveys of game species; operating 51 wildlife management areas for public hunting and other recreational activities, research and demonstration; conservation and recovery of threatened and endangered species; and many other tasks.

Over the years, the dedication of staff, coupled with the demand for more intensive wildlife conservation efforts, has resulted in new programs, projects, and activities being added to the already full schedules of division staff around the state. This burgeoning workload, in the absence of formalized priorities, has resulted in diminished focus and declining morale. We recognize the need to return to our central, threefold purpose: (1) to conserve the diversity of wildlife found within the state; (2) to provide technical assistance to private landowners as stewards of the resource; and (3) to sustain the hunting and outdoor heritage of Texas. In reality, none of these pursuits could be accomplished without the single most important ingredient: conservation and management of habitat at the landscape level.

During the summer of 2009, leaders from the Wildlife Division met to discuss current and future priorities in wildlife conservation and management. Using the book *Good to Great* as a starting point, the team began a year-long strategic planning process that was based upon three primary questions: (1) What does the Wildlife Division do better than any other organization? (2) What are our employees passionate about? and (3) Where does our support come from? Based on the responses to these questions, and the need for Wildlife Division efforts to align with TPWD's *2010 Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan*, Wildlife staff developed and agreed on a division mission statement along with clearly defined goals and objectives. Recognizing the importance of engaging all division staff in the process, 20 regional and Austin Headquarters meetings were conducted over a three-month period to solicit ideas regarding strategies and actions required to meet the objectives. This process resulted in over 4,000 ideas and 250 pages of input. These ideas were organized and ranked by division leadership and used to develop a draft strategic planning document. Subsequently, the draft document was vetted through the Executive Office and revised accordingly.

The result is a strategic plan for the Wildlife Division, with direction set by leadership, and the "how to" developed by all division staff. The plan is integrated with and supports the *2010 Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan* through an annual Division Operating Plan. Finally, to articulate and emphasize division and agency priorities at the individual level, employee performance plans will be modified to reflect each employee's contribution to key strategies, objectives and goals. This strategic plan is intended to be a dynamic, longer-term document that will be used along with the Division Operating Plan to prioritize the division's operations and to improve the programs and services we provide our constituents. Wildlife Division leadership is extremely grateful for all the time and effort staff have contributed to this process, which will ultimately result in a more strategic use of limited funding and personnel to conserve wildlife and habitat in Texas.



© EARL NOTTINGHAM, TPWD

## **Goal I: Foster on-the-ground conservation of diverse native wildlife and their habitats utilizing sound science.**

### **Objective I.1: By 2013, allocate 80 percent of non-administrative staff time to on-the-ground conservation.**

**Strategy I.1.1: Dedicate additional non-administrative staff time to on-the-ground conservation.**

Action I.1.1.1: Identify and eliminate projects that are not directly related to conservation.

Action I.1.1.2: Hire additional non-administrative field staff, including private lands and technical guidance biologists.

Action I.1.1.3: Hire additional administrative staff to transfer administrative duties from technical staff.

**Strategy I.1.2: Reduce frequency of repetitive regulatory surveys (e.g., spotlight lines, age, weight and antler data).**

**Strategy I.1.3: Develop regional project priorities on an annual cycle consistent with the Division Operating Plan (DOP).**

Action 1.1.3.1: Allocate resources according to top priorities.

**Strategy 1.1.4: Reduce non-administrative staff reporting and paperwork requirements.**

Action 1.1.4.1: Simplify reporting and eliminate purchasing barriers not mandated by law.

Action 1.1.4.2: Move to fully electronic reporting (i.e., Texas Wildlife Information Management Services [TWIMS]).

Action 1.1.4.3: Train staff on proper reporting procedures to increase efficiency by minimizing mistakes.

**Strategy 1.1.5: Capitalize on the full potential of all Full Time Employees (FTE) assigned to the Division.**

Action 1.1.5.1: Evaluate the relevant workload and distribution of FTEs and redistribute as needed to accomplish mandates and position the Wildlife Division for future success.

Action 1.1.5.2: Improve training and mentoring for new staff.

**Objective 1.2: Implement native habitat restoration/enhancement practices on an additional 3 million acres by 2015.**

**Strategy 1.2.1: Increase landowner participation through written wildlife management plans and wildlife cooperatives.**

Action 1.2.1.1: Expand wildlife co-ops and provide incentives (e.g., supplies, equipment) to members for habitat restoration on their land.

Action 1.2.1.2: Develop agency and Non-governmental Organization (NGO) partnerships to reach more potential cooperators.

Action 1.2.1.3: Improve efficiency of field staff by targeting larger tracts for individual wildlife management plans and addressing smaller tracts and less active landowners through wildlife co-ops.

Action 1.2.1.4: Continue to develop wildlife management plans that are ecologically based.

Action 1.2.1.5: Work with absentee landowners through urban programs and on site.

Action 1.2.1.6: Develop a list of contractors by conservation practice to provide to cooperators.

**Strategy 1.2.2: Reconstruct the Managed Land Deer Permit (MLDP) Program to increase focus on improving and maintaining quality wildlife habitat.**

Action 1.2.2.1: Require that minimal habitat management practices are implemented and verified through a compliance system.

**Strategy 1.2.3: Facilitate increased use of prescribed fire on public and private lands.**

Action 1.2.3.1: Provide burn trailers that can be used in strategic areas throughout districts to assist landowners with prescribed burns.

Action 1.2.3.2: Simplify and/or clarify the process for private landowners to conduct prescribed burns on their property.

Action 1.2.3.3: Increase departmental ability to burn on private lands by partnering with organizations and initiatives already in place (i.e., Texas Forest Service [TFS], The Nature Conservancy [TNC], burn co-ops).

Action 1.2.3.4: Develop and maintain prescribed fire cooperatives in all ecoregions of the state.

**Strategy 1.2.4: Use the Texas Conservation Action Plan (TCAP) to target restoration and recovery areas of greatest conservation need.**

Action 1.2.4.1: Coordinate with conservation partners in use of TCAP.

**Strategy 1.2.5: Use Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote-sensing technology to identify high potential restoration areas.**

**Strategy 1.2.6: Create and promote training and educational opportunities for landowners.**

Action 1.2.6.1: Provide hands-on training and field days for landowners on habitat management and restoration practices.

Action 1.2.6.2: Utilize Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs) as demonstration areas for landowners.

Action 1.2.6.3: Spend more time with landowners to implement recommended management practices.

Action 1.2.6.4: Show landowners the economics of good habitat management.

Action 1.2.6.5: Provide TPWD literature to landowners on acceptable habitat practices for each region.

**Strategy 1.2.7: Identify and support wetland restoration projects.**

Action 1.2.7.1: Support shoreline protection projects that protect coastal marshes and bays.

Action 1.2.7.2: Identify critical marsh habitats for conservation opportunities.

Action 1.2.7.3: Develop and assist with management plans to control noxious aquatic plants.

Action 1.2.7.4: Develop public use and access fees as well as other revenue sources to help fund projects.

Action 1.2.7.5: Utilize the permitting process to encourage beneficial use of dredged materials for marsh development projects.

**Strategy 1.2.8: Create, promote and fund incentive programs for private landowners to conduct native habitat restoration and enhancement.**

Action 1.2.8.1: Evaluate the cost of establishing restoration and enhancement practices for native habitat.

Action 1.2.8.2: Maximize the delivery of conservation practices in the Farm Bill.

Action 1.2.8.3: Develop local corporate sponsorship for local habitat improvement.

Action 1.2.8.4: Expand the "Texas Prairie Wetlands Program" to provide cost-share incentives and technical guidance for native prairie restoration projects.

Action 1.2.8.5: Increase the number of management practices required to meet landowner incentive program goals and weigh the ones that are known to restore native habitat.

**Strategy 1.2.9: Develop partnerships with NGOs, state and federal partners to work on public and private lands.**

**Strategy 1.2.10: Strengthen laws to prevent introduction of additional exotic plants and wildlife.**

Action 1.2.10.1: Create incentives for landowners to implement exotic control practices.

**Strategy 1.2.11: Improve habitat on existing WMAs.**

Action 1.2.11.1: Seek additional funding mechanisms to address critical habitat restoration programs on WMAs.

**Strategy 1.2.12: Restore and enhance native habitats to enhance ground water recharge.**

Action 1.2.12.1: Work with cities and municipalities to implement large scale habitat restoration projects to increase water supplies in aquifers.

**Strategy 1.2.13: Expand Categorical Exclusions from cultural resources clearance for mechanical operations, such as contour plowing, brush control and removal, burial of water line, seeding, etc.**

**Strategy 1.2.14: Develop eco-region specific Best Management Practices (BMPs).**

### **Objective 1.3: Identify and prioritize five million acres of landscape conservation opportunities by 2013.**

**Strategy 1.3.1: Create a comprehensive priority list of conservation areas at scales sufficient for habitat or species in question.**

Action 1.3.1.1: Use all available partner data for on-the-ground planning.

Action 1.3.1.2: Use the Land and Water Plan (LWP), TCAP and the Joint Venture Plans to guide our conservation priorities.

Action 1.3.1.3: Use GIS, the Texas Natural Diversity Database (NDD) and the vegetation mapping project to identify and map vegetation communities and associated wildlife species.

Action 1.3.1.4: Define priorities through the use of Global and State rankings for both species and communities, and prioritize by ecosystem function, endemic species, risk of loss, or other factor.

Action 1.3.1.5: Train volunteer biological inventory teams to help gather data on distribution of priority species and habitats.

Action 1.3.1.6: Identify quality wildlife co-ops and expand conservation activities.

Action 1.3.1.7: Identify key areas in priority ecoregions that have the most conservation potential, considering the rate of development pressure.

Action 1.3.1.8: Identify habitats adjacent to protected areas for inclusion, partnership or purchase.

Action 1.3.1.9: Monitor availability of Timber Investment Management Organizations (TIMO) and other non-traditional landholdings.

**Strategy 1.3.2: Expand partnering opportunities with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and Farm Service Agency (FSA) farm bill programs.**

**Strategy 1.3.3: Increase the use of conservation easements.**

Action 1.3.3.1: Work with land trusts, cities, counties, private sector and other interested parties.



**Objective 1.4: Recover at least three State-Listed Threatened or Endangered Species by 2020.**

**Strategy 1.4.1: Train all Wildlife Division employees on regional priority species, ecosystems and recovery strategies.**

- Action 1.4.1.1: Encourage and provide appropriate technical guidance tools to employees to educate landowners.
- Action 1.4.1.2: Wildlife Diversity Program will provide training to all appropriate staff on TCAP.
- Action 1.4.1.3: Involve all stakeholders in the recovery plans and training opportunities.

**Strategy 1.4.2: Focus on-the-ground conservation efforts in high-priority habitats/ecoregions.**

- Action 1.4.2.1: Identify and prioritize species of concern at the ecoregion level that are proposed for down-listing.
- Action 1.4.2.2: Develop criteria at the landscape scale to provide protection of habitats and population connectivity.
- Action 1.4.2.3: Develop and implement a survey strategy to assess presence/absence of target species.

**Strategy 1.4.3: Increase efforts to partner with federal, state agencies, universities, NGOs and joint ventures.**

- Action 1.4.3.1: Work with NRCS to better leverage Farm Bill dollars.
- Action 1.4.3.2: Identify specific benchmarks every 5 years to measure progress.
- Action 1.4.3.3: Increase use of volunteers to support recovery process.

**Strategy 1.4.4: Review current status of threatened or endangered species and recovery potential.**

- Action 1.4.4.1: Review listing criteria, and prioritize recovery species by ecoregion and recovery potential.
- Action 1.4.4.2: Inventory, survey and monitor listed and rare species/communities of concern, including population distributions.
- Action 1.4.4.3: Create work groups for each of the taxonomic groups to craft recovery and status improvement objectives and activities, potential recovery partners and/or leads, and timelines.

**Strategy 1.4.5: Provide adequate financial resources and staffing for threatened or endangered species recovery, habitat and research.**

- Action 1.4.5.1: Increase staff time to assist landowners.
- Action 1.4.5.2: Identify critical research by staff and external partners and use results that will directly aid in management and delisting decisions.
- Action 1.4.5.3: Seek new sources of federal, state, and private funding through partnerships or "friends groups."
- Action 1.4.5.4: Simplify the current grants applications process and establish new and improved funding/programs (cost-share) for landowners and cooperators who participate in recovery of species listed as high priority in the TCAP.

**Strategy 1.4.6:** Establish new and stronger partnerships with private landowners who have threatened or endangered species on their property.

Action 1.4.6.1: Simplify current and new cost-share incentive programs.

Action 1.4.6.2: Implement necessary surveys on managed lands to aid in updating species status.

**Objective 1.5: By 2015, acquire one WMA with habitat characteristics of at least one of the following two ecoregions: Cross Timbers or High Plains.**

**Strategy 1.5.1:** Identify and develop funding sources to acquire additional WMAs.

Action 1.5.1.1: Pursue corporate and/or NGO partnerships, private donations, or land trust partnerships to raise funds for acquisition or leases.

Action 1.5.1.2: Seek mitigation funding possibilities.

Action 1.5.1.3: Allocate a percentage of stamp, license, Annual Public Hunting Permit (APHP), or other license fees for acquisition.

Action 1.5.1.4: Develop a trust fund for acquisition and management of properties.

Action 1.5.1.5: Develop a mechanism to involve non-consumptive users in funding wildlife conservation at a level equal to or surpassing that of consumptive users.

Action 1.5.1.6: Assist the Executive Office in working with the state legislature to generate and appropriate funds for land acquisition.

Action 1.5.1.7: Partner with General Land Office (GLO) for revenue generation and/or land transfer possibilities.

**Strategy 1.5.2:** Use local resource professionals and realtors to identify acquisition opportunities and desirable properties for future purchase and lease, specifically near existing WMAs, State Parks, private conservation lands, and federal property.

Action 1.5.2.1: Prioritize cost-efficient properties of sufficient size for ecosystem management and recreation purposes.

Action 1.5.2.2: Partner with other agencies and NGOs for acquisition or long-term lease potentials.

Action 1.5.2.3: Utilize conservation priorities in the TCAP to prioritize acquisition.

Action 1.5.2.4: Target larger and more efficient land holdings and assure staffing levels are appropriate.

**Strategy 1.5.3:** Identify non-monetary land acquisition resources and staffing needed to obtain or manage desirable properties.

Action 1.5.3.1: Educate/instruct staff on procedures to deal with landowners willing to donate or sell land to TPWD.

Action 1.5.3.2: Explore opportunities to advertise for willing land donations.

Action 1.5.3.3: Acquire additional FTEs to manage new lands.



Panhandle Rancher Jim Bill Anderson • 2010 Leopold Conservation Award for Texas Winner

© CHASE FOUNTAIN, TPWD

## Goal 2: Foster land stewardship for the benefit of the resource and the people of Texas.

### Objective 2.1: Ensure that by 2015, 50 percent of all landowners with active wildlife management plans are implementing 75 percent of the recommended practices.

Strategy 2.1.1: Spend more time providing technical assistance to landowners with TPWD management plans that are willing to implement recommendations.

- Action 2.1.1.1: Ensure that “quality of service” philosophy is supported at all levels.
- Action 2.1.1.2: Encourage all biologists to schedule annual follow-up visits in advance.
- Action 2.1.1.3: Improve working relationships with current landowners.
- Action 2.1.1.4: Increase the number of field staff and operating budgets and assign staff to a smaller area (i.e., one FTE per one or two counties) to promote landowner relationships, improve logistical efficiency (time spent traveling to properties) and increase community presence.

**Strategy 2.1.2: Train and refresh staff in the development of wildlife management plans and associated practices. Educate and empower biologists to make sound recommendations and provide a level of service and assistance necessary to enable landowners to implement the written recommendations.**

- Action 2.1.2.1: Revise and retrain staff on technical guidance procedures including dealing with co-operators, management plan preparation, technical guidance/consultation reporting, MLDP requirements.
- Action 2.1.2.2: Develop district training experts to provide advanced training to field biologists in calibrating and operating pesticide applicators and seed drills, brush sculpting, herbicide application and pasture reseeding, erosion control techniques, and grazing management.
- Action 2.1.2.3: Conduct training for staff on data collection and monitoring projects on WMAs involving management practices recommended to private landowners.

**Strategy 2.1.3: Utilize WMAs to demonstrate habitat management to landowners.**

- Action 2.1.3.1: Ensure adequate funding to conduct habitat management practices on WMAs, emphasizing Research and Demonstration Sites.

**Strategy 2.1.4: Streamline or transform current MLDP and Trap, Transport and Transplant (TTT) programs.**

- Action 2.1.4.1: Audit current records and develop criteria to delete “active wildlife management plans” for landowners who are no longer implementing recommended practices.
- Action 2.1.4.2: Develop better MLDP guidelines to define compliance (i.e., review “incentive” versus “reward” motivation).
- Action 2.1.4.3: Evaluate the efficacy of the three-level MLDP system for white-tailed deer.

**Strategy 2.1.5: Provide an incentive-based program for landowners who implement recommended management practices.**

- Action 2.1.5.1: Create an equipment loan program where landowners meeting certain requirements are allowed to use equipment such as fire suppression units, disks, seed drills, etc. from TPWD.
- Action 2.1.5.2: Create incentives that will increase in value as more of the recommended management practices are implemented. For example, eligibility for additional grant funds once the 75 percent mark is reached or passed.

**Strategy 2.1.6: Base success on implementation of conservation practices, instead of acreage under wildlife management plans.**

- Action 2.1.6.1: Complete development of the TWIMS wildlife management plan application or other tools (i.e., photo documentation) to allow the division to track progress of wildlife management plan implementation.
- Action 2.1.6.2: Convince Legislative Budget Board to accept management practice implementation as a performance measure instead of “acres in management plans.”

**Strategy 2.1.7:** Expand landowner/general public workshops, seminars, field days, 1-d-1 ag valuation, and outreach events that provide on-the-ground examples of habitat management and their benefits.

Action 2.1.7.1: Partner with AgriLife Extension to provide Continuing Education Units (CEUs) that agricultural landowners need for various licenses.

**Objective 2.2: By 2015, work with cooperators and conservation partners to achieve permanent conservation on an additional 100,000 acres of land under wildlife management plans or recommendations.**

**Strategy 2.2.1:** Work with other conservation partners to acquire more land for conservation.

Action 2.2.1.1: Work more closely with water districts, Corps of Engineers (COE), US Forest Service (USFS), TFS, mitigation banks, municipalities, and other land holding agencies with the goal of permanent conservation on their lands.

Action 2.2.1.2: Allocate funding to purchase the development rights of pristine habitats in high priority ecoregions to prevent development and place into perpetual conservation easements.

Action 2.2.1.3: Provide competitive grants for land trusts to acquire funding to purchase development rights.

**Strategy 2.2.2:** Use GIS to quantify all conservation programs in Texas that develop long-term or permanent conservation easements.

Action 2.2.2.1: Utilize GIS data to identify focus areas or corridors where large scale conservation efforts are most feasible based on traditional land use and land ownership.

Action 2.2.2.2: Develop a landscape evaluation system to identify high value conservation area locations and types within each ecoregion, working with external partners and following TCAP priorities.

Action 2.2.2.3: Create a GIS database of lands with conservation easements, mitigation banks and Farm Bill incentive program cooperators.

**Strategy 2.2.3:** Work with partners and allow TPWD to accept and manage conservation easements.

Action 2.2.3.1: Provide training to staff to connect interested landowners to land trusts.

Action 2.2.3.2: Better educate landowners about the opportunities and benefits of conservation easements and other permanent conservation opportunities.

Action 2.2.3.3: Provide assistance to NRCS to better utilize programs such as the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), Grassland Reserve Program (GRP), and Farm and Ranchland Protection Program (FRPP) to incorporate more lands.

Action 2.2.3.4: Encourage TPWD biologists to assist land trusts with the land management practices conducted on conservation easements.

- Action 2.2.3.5: Improve interagency cooperation (i.e., NRCS, US Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS], NGOs) to identify and map current conservation enrollment locations and landscape level efforts.
- Action 2.2.3.6: Cultivate additional land trusts in the Post Oak Savannah and Northeast Texas ecoregions.
- Action 2.2.3.7: Work more closely with TPW Foundation to identify private funding partners.
- Action 2.2.3.8: Analyze and prioritize properties in high priority ecoregions to target for easements.
- Action 2.2.3.9: Provide information to legislators developing policies that provide additional incentives for conservation easements.
- Action 2.2.3.10: Partner with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) or other NGOs to implement conservation buyer programs.

**Strategy 2.2.4: Acquire land via fee title or donation to be added to our WMA system.**

- Action 2.2.4.1: Accept donated lands or purchase lands (including low maintenance small acreage) that have been or are offered to the Wildlife Division.

**Strategy 2.2.5: Work with Communications to create a marketing plan advertising Wildlife programs and highlighting their successes.**

- Action 2.2.5.1: Promote wildlife tax valuation and impact on local conditions.

**Objective 2.3: By 2013, promote awareness of diverse native wildlife systems by developing an outreach plan and implementing initiatives to target the diverse citizenry of Texas.**

**Strategy 2.3.1: Work with TPWD Communications staff, partner organizations, and division advisory committees to develop and deliver key conservation messages that support our mission and resonate well with target audiences.**

- Action 2.3.1.1: Examine the core concepts and conservation education messages developed by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and incorporate key concepts into Wildlife outreach programs.
- Action 2.3.1.2: Deliver key messages regarding the value of ecosystem services such as water quality/quantity, air quality, wildlife, storm surge protection, flood reduction, open space and recreation.
- Action 2.3.1.3: Train Wildlife staff on how to deliver messages effectively to diverse audiences.
- Action 2.3.1.4: Increase message delivery through emerging social media such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, etc.
- Action 2.3.1.5: Work with Information Technology and Communications to make the TPWD Web site user-friendly and useful in providing timely information.
- Action 2.3.1.6: Develop collaborations between urban biologists and the Communications Division to develop more educational opportunities for Texas citizens.
- Action 2.3.1.7: Increase message delivery through traditional media such as magazines, newspaper, TV, radio, billboards, and Internet.

Action 2.3.1.8: Work with Communications to make our current videos, publications, media outlets, etc. more visible to the urban and suburban populations through mainstream advertising.

**Strategy 2.3.2: Utilize existing networks in cities (parks departments, city planners, urban biologists, etc.) to help deliver our conservation messages.**

Action 2.3.2.1: Support regional planning to enhance local natural habitat education, viewing, and demonstration areas in urban centers.

Action 2.3.2.2: Increase the presence of our biologists in urban areas and provide additional outreach to urban-based landowners as well as provide increased urban cross-training for field staff.

**Strategy 2.3.3: Promote the awareness and use of WMAs and private land as outdoor education centers.**

Action 2.3.3.1: Increase field trips to WMAs or landowner properties that provide hands-on activities and/or invite the public to work days. Require staff to host a certain number of field days each year.

Action 2.3.3.2: Target specific WMAs adjacent to major metropolitan areas as outdoor education centers for inner city school systems.

**Strategy 2.3.4: Support/expand hands-on, activity-based programs that facilitate new relationships between constituents and the Department.**

Action 2.3.4.1: Empower landowners and citizen scientist volunteers to identify species, assess communities, and conduct habitat management through a variety of training methods, including landowner workshops and volunteer biological assessment teams.

Action 2.3.4.2: Encourage Master Naturalist chapters to provide field days for the general public with TPWD staff involvement designed to educate the general public on wildlife resources.

Action 2.3.4.3: Promote backyard habitats (Wildscapes) to connect constituents to habitat conservation concepts.



©MICHAEL WATTES

## **Goal 3: Promote the hunting heritage of Texas and associated outdoor recreation.**

### **Objective 3.1: By 2015, increase licensed hunter numbers by 10 percent over FY 2008 levels.**

**Strategy 3.1.1: Better equip staff with knowledge and tools to promote the hunting heritage message.**

- Action 3.1.1.1: Ensure all agency employees understand and support the role of hunting and fishing in achieving our conservation initiative.
- Action 3.1.1.2: Ensure that the Wildlife Division identifies itself, from top to bottom, as a hunter-supported organization.
- Action 3.1.1.3: Properly train TPWD personnel in all areas of hunting safety and ethics to implement public outreach.

**Strategy 3.1.2: Work within the Division and with other appropriate divisions (e.g., Communications Division) to market and advertise hunting and hunting opportunities to recruit and retain hunters.**

- Action 3.1.2.1: Promote the special late season hunts.



- Action 3.1.2.2: Enhance advertising for existing hunting opportunities (seasons, locations, etc.), including web-based information.
- Action 3.1.2.3: Invest in finding out **how** to reach new constituents.
- Action 3.1.2.4: Partner with sporting goods outlets to develop a “Lets Go Hunting” campaign.
- Action 3.1.2.5: Increase the number of Public Service Announcements (PSAs) educating the public on the use of hunting license revenue.
- Action 3.1.2.6: Track license sales to determine the number of hunting licenses sold to youth or adults who have hunted less than 5 years.
- Action 3.1.2.7: Develop “learn to hunt/shoot clinics” at gun ranges, WMAs or other locations.
- Action 3.1.2.8: Reinstate “opening day” mentality for such things as squirrel season in East Texas.
- Action 3.1.2.9: Design messages to capitalize on cultural trends, i.e., wild game is healthy protein for your family.

**Strategy 3.1.3: Work within the Division and with other divisions (e.g., Communications Division) to develop education/outreach materials targeting non-traditional/non-hunting groups.**

- Action 3.1.3.1: Produce more bilingual hunting information and events. Promote involvement in the Hispanic Community
- Action 3.1.3.2: Develop outreach/education on the importance of hunting and wildlife management to target school teachers.
- Action 3.1.3.3: Develop a standard educational packet to be used as supportive curriculum in wildlife classes, Future Farmers of America, 4-H, etc.
- Action 3.1.3.4: Partner with youth camps to provide education on hunting and fishing (Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire and YMCA).
- Action 3.1.3.5: Develop targeted outreach programs to enhance the image of hunting.

**Strategy 3.1.4: Identify and address the major barriers to hunter recruitment and retention.**

- Action 3.1.4.1: Implement a reward system for landowners and hunters who mentor new hunters.
- Action 3.1.4.2: Scrutinize all current and future TPWD permitting programs as to their possible impact on hunting opportunity.
- Action 3.1.4.3: Allow more flexibility for TPWD hunt managers to maximize additional hunting opportunity on our WMAs.
- Action 3.1.4.4: Streamline and simplify public hunting procedures on the website with point and click contact information.
- Action 3.1.4.5: Work with other state wildlife agencies to develop strategies and share ideas to increase hunter recruitment.
- Action 3.1.4.6: Work with conservation groups to offer hunting seminars/field days. Use WMAs or MLDP cooperators for locations.
- Action 3.1.4.7: Pay for increased access with a “Land Acquisition Stamp.”
- Action 3.1.4.8: Develop mentored hunting opportunities for families with a focus on small-game and woodsmanship.

- Action 3.1.4.9: Create a web-based license sales system allowing users to print off their license.
- Action 3.1.4.10: Develop and implement a “how to hunt” or “Hunting 101” course for prospective hunters.
- Action 3.1.4.11: Create a mentoring program that allows potential hunters an opportunity to hunt with knowledgeable hunters across the state.
- Action 3.1.4.12: Encourage the Legislature to develop 100 percent liability protection for landowners that lease their property for public hunting.
- Action 3.1.4.13: Provide downloadable maps of Annual Public Hunting Permit (APHP) lands when permit is paid.
- Action 3.1.4.14: Improve access to WMAs by enhancing facilities and signage. Where accessible by water, make routes easy to find.
- Action 3.1.4.15: Make APHP and Small Game Lease Booklets available at Point of Sale locations.

**Strategy 3.1.5: Develop incentives to retain licensed hunters.**

- Action 3.1.5.1: Provide significant incentives to MLDP properties to allow youth and public hunting.
- Action 3.1.5.2: Sponsor an “Introduce a Buddy to Hunting” program on WMAs similar to youth hunts.
- Action 3.1.5.3: Establish an “Adopt a New Hunter” campaign where seasoned hunters are recognized for bringing and mentoring new hunters into the sport.
- Action 3.1.5.4: Enroll everyone who purchases season-long hunting, fishing, or combination licenses in an annual drawing for a lifetime license.
- Action 3.1.5.5: Implement a one-time reduced cost hunting license to attract new or lapsed hunters.
- Action 3.1.5.6: Include the APHP for a reduced rate within the Super Combo.
- Action 3.1.5.7: Establish a family APHP permit that will allow all members in the immediate family to hunt.
- Action 3.1.5.8: Give a discount or other reward for hunters that have purchased a license for a defined consecutive time frame.

**Objective 3.2: By 2015, increase the number of public hunters by 25 percent over FY 2008 levels.**

**Strategy 3.2.1: Provide more public hunting opportunity.**

- Action 3.2.1.1: Pay a higher lease payment to landowners to acquire quality leases.
- Action 3.2.1.2: Provide significant incentive(s) to wildlife management plan cooperators to allow youth and public hunting.
- Action 3.2.1.3: Offer incentives to wildlife management associations to develop public hunting programs.
- Action 3.2.1.4: Significantly increase the number of hunts in the Public Hunting Program in Texas by establishing a Pittman Robertson (PR) grant for public hunting
- Action 3.2.1.5: Allow people to apply for more than one hunt area in each category.

- Action 3.2.1.6: Acquire more WMA/Public Hunting Areas and leased property within proximity to large urban areas.
- Action 3.2.1.7: Offer more family type hunting opportunities to get families outdoors.
- Action 3.2.1.8: Secure long term corporate funding for public lease lands to obtain higher quality leased hunting lands.
- Action 3.2.1.9: Create a web based on-line drawn hunt system to provide additional convenience, more choice and a preference point system that provides reasonable chances of being drawn.
- Action 3.2.1.10: Hire additional staff (interns) to locate, negotiate, and place proper signage on dove leases.
- Action 3.2.1.11: Expand efforts for leasing private land and provide flexibility to meet landowner needs.
- Action 3.2.1.12: Work through federal farm bill programs to provide incentives to landowners for allowing public access.
- Action 3.2.1.13: Increase lands available for public hunting by providing long-term conservation easements.
- Action 3.2.1.14: Evaluate all public lands (GLO, University of Texas Lands, River Authorities, Bureau of Land Management [BLM], COE, USFS, TFS, State Parks) for public hunting opportunities.
- Action 3.2.1.15: Allow unrestricted feral hog hunting under APHP permits on appropriate WMAs.
- Action 3.2.1.16: Charge for MLDPs, unless landowner is willing to enter into a special permit system for public use.
- Action 3.2.1.17: Promote small game hunting to recruit new hunters.
- Action 3.2.1.18: Offer "first time" and "women only" hunts on WMAs.
- Action 3.2.1.19: Provide incentives for the public who find additional hunting leases for the Public Hunt Program.
- Action 3.2.1.20: Acquire and develop intensively managed dove hunting areas all over the state, especially areas near large metro centers.
- Action 3.2.1.21: Create a lottery for a premium buck hunt for people purchasing an APHP for ten years.
- Action 3.2.1.22: Determine the point of contact on selected reservoirs and actively pursue access for waterfowl hunting.

**Strategy 3.2.2: Better utilize the Texas Youth Hunting Program (TYHP) to effectively recruit youth hunters.**

- Action 3.2.2.1: Change the focus of the TYHP to target 80 percent or greater of youth hunts to small game, squirrels, upland birds, waterfowl, rabbits, and feral hogs.
- Action 3.2.2.2: Sponsor urban youth hunting opportunities for squirrels by legalizing pellet rifles.
- Action 3.2.2.3: Investigate impacts of establishing a free hunting license for youth.



## **Goal 4:** Ensure use of efficient business practices to achieve our mission.

### **Objective 4.1: By 2020, double the amount of funding used to support wildlife conservation programs to \$56 million.**

**Strategy 4.1.1:** Maximize use of federal dollars and state match that are currently available.

- Action 4.1.1.1: Evaluate project codes so that more activities are federally reimbursable.
- Action 4.1.1.2: Educate Wildlife staff to properly code charges to appropriate federal projects.
- Action 4.1.1.3: Write research and management programs so that they qualify for federal funding.
- Action 4.1.1.4: Move public hunting activities from a non-reimbursable to a reimbursable activity.
- Action 4.1.1.5: Create a Wildlife Division workgroup to identify potential methods to maximize and identify match.
- Action 4.1.1.6: Fully utilize eligible volunteer hours as match.

**Strategy 4.1.2:** Ensure efficient use of limited state dollars (Fund 9).

- Action 4.1.2.1: Work with the Administrative Resources Division to gain authorization for local purchases of items when local purchase will save time, money and administrative costs.

**Strategy 4.1.3: Broaden public support for the agency, its programs and budgets.**

Action 4.1.3.1: Promote high profile activities of the Division such as technical guidance, youth hunts and wildlife restoration.

Action 4.1.3.2: Craft targeted messages for citizen and non-governmental organization advocacy.

Action 4.1.3.3: Recruit celebrities to be ambassadors for wildlife conservation.

**Strategy 4.1.4: Work with the Executive Office and other Divisions to develop additional revenue streams.**

Action 4.1.4.1: Implement a long term strategy to educate the constituents of Texas about the various models of dedicated funding for wildlife conservation that exist elsewhere in the nation and support the efforts of the Teaming with Wildlife Coalition to implement applicable models in Texas.

Action 4.1.4.2: Establish a fee for all new energy sources or industries that draw from the environment with proceeds to go directly to wildlife conservation programs.

Action 4.1.4.3: Institute an optional \$10 donation at time of hunting license purchase for wildlife conservation.

Action 4.1.4.4: Promote tax deductible contributions to the TPW Foundation.

Action 4.1.4.5: Secure a percentage of the Texas Lottery.

Action 4.1.4.6: Secure a portion of general revenue funds to be used for wildlife management.

Action 4.1.4.7: Increase funding for Minor Maintenance and Repair funds, Grazing Lease funds, and Texas Department of Criminal Justice projects, providing resources to develop or maintain facilities and habitat projects.

Action 4.1.4.8: Require out-of-state hunters to purchase a land-acquisition stamp.

Action 4.1.4.9: Create a Habitat Stamp for everyone that buys a hunting license or uses department lands recreationally.

Action 4.1.4.10: Develop corporate sponsorships for individual WMAs.

Action 4.1.4.11: Create a statewide mitigation program for all habitat loss.

Action 4.1.4.12: Sell TPWD-branded gear like the universities do.

Action 4.1.4.13: Use the TPW Foundation to raise funds for a conservation endowment.

Action 4.1.4.14: Develop a marketing campaign to sell hunting licenses as a means of supporting conservation.

Action 4.1.4.15: Dedicate a percentage of the state gasoline tax to conservation.

Action 4.1.4.16: Create a tax on supplemental wildlife feeds: bird feed, deer corn/chow, etc.

**Strategy 4.1.5: Work with the Executive Office and other divisions to gain full appropriation of funds generated by the Wildlife Division (i.e., Big Time Texas Hunts, license plate sales and dedicated stamp funds).**

**Strategy 4.1.6: Obtain additional Fund 9 for Wildlife Division projects to ensure adequate matching funds for available federal funds.**

**Objective 4.2: Decrease the time spent on administrative duties by 25 percent by 2013.**

**Strategy 4.2.1: Work with Administrative Resource Division and internally to streamline operations, purchasing and contracting procedures.**

- Action 4.2.1.1: Critically review new administrative processes that add to staff work load.
- Action 4.2.1.2: Ensure that current accounting system provides real-time information.
- Action 4.2.1.3: Eliminate redundancies in the purchase entry reconciliation.
- Action 4.2.1.4: Identify state- versus department-mandated purchasing procedures to determine what can be eliminated.
- Action 4.2.1.5: Create a purchasing task force to develop a better purchasing procedure.
- Action 4.2.1.6: Provide specialized training to administrative assistants to handle workloads associated with purchasing and budget management.
- Action 4.2.1.7: Promote and facilitate more webinar training and meetings to reduce travel costs.
- Action 4.2.1.8: Provide training to staff in using technologies such as TWIMS, Business Information System and other new initiatives.
- Action 4.2.1.9: Evaluate the need for annual harvest surveys.
- Action 4.2.1.10: Expand contract vendor selection.
- Action 4.2.1.11: Work with comptroller to increase spot purchase limits to a reasonable level.
- Action 4.2.1.12: Simplify eAppraisal system.
- Action 4.2.1.13: Re-assign purchasing duties to minimize time spent by biologists on purchasing.
- Action 4.2.1.14: Add links to pictures on contract item descriptions to identify products easily.
- Action 4.2.1.15: Develop a briefing for department and legislative leadership on current contracting and procurement hurdles affecting the division along with recommended adjustments.
- Action 4.2.1.16: Re-evaluate the contract purchasing system as opposed to competitive local bids.
- Action 4.2.1.17: Work through the Administrative Resource Division to have State Purchasing provide better descriptive terms for contract items.
- Action 4.2.1.18: Create a searchable web-based database that provides all necessary information to make a purchase.
- Action 4.2.1.19: Provide laptops with broadband service to field staff and increase budgets to cover cost of high speed internet for all field staff.
- Action 4.2.1.20: Re-evaluate the need for Historically Underutilized Business procedures.
- Action 4.2.1.21: Streamline current cultural resources process and turnaround time for project approvals.
- Action 4.2.1.22: Simplify the travel voucher form.
- Action 4.2.1.23: Remove purchasing from field responsibilities, except for local purchases.
- Action 4.2.1.24: Add column on class/item web page to correct contract number and column for item "on contract" or "not on contract" and keep these updated.
- Action 4.2.1.25: Automate permitting systems for all wildlife species to the extent feasible.

- Action 4.2.1.26: Identify the source (legislative, department, division) and current need for all administrative duties.
- Action 4.2.1.27: Make staff aware of time management techniques and training.
- Action 4.2.1.28: Decrease the number of project codes and make them easier to locate.
- Action 4.2.1.29: Review Legislative Budget Board measures and relate them to the LWP and Wildlife Strategic Plan.
- Action 4.2.1.30: Ensure that staff has voicemail with a uniform message and self-directed service.
- Action 4.2.1.31: Reevaluate the purpose, costs, and benefits of the MLDP Program.
- Action 4.2.1.32: Develop a manual on administrative procedures and processes and update annually.
- Action 4.2.1.33: Improve accessibility and mobility by providing cell phones for all biologists.
- Action 4.2.1.34: Evaluate the feasibility of an incentive program encouraging landowners to enter their own harvest data in TWIMS.
- Action 4.2.1.35: Assign contract management to administrative staff.
- Action 4.2.1.36: Involve purchasing and contracting staff in purchases over \$5,000.
- Action 4.2.1.37: Conduct a "cost-benefit" analysis on any new reporting requirement that emerges.

**Strategy 4.2.2: Improve communication between management, administrative staff and field level personnel.**

- Action 4.2.2.1: Communicate to staff what projects/tasks are the most important and how much time to allocate to them.
- Action 4.2.2.2: Train staff on effective use of email.
- Action 4.2.2.3: Develop a communication framework for direct field input into procurement policy.
- Action 4.2.2.4: Use weekly bullets, and other internal communication techniques more effectively.

**Strategy 4.2.3: Streamline revenue handling procedures.**

**Strategy 4.2.4: Hire additional administrative staff.**

- Action 4.2.4.1: Increase salaries to recruit and maintain quality administrative staff.
- Action 4.2.4.2: Request additional FTEs for administrative positions to reduce administrative burdens on biologists, technicians and existing administrative personnel.

**Objective 4.3: By 2015, increase the number of qualified job applicants by at least 100 percent compared to the 2005-2009 average.**

**Strategy 4.3.1: Increase outreach and recruitment activities.**

- Action 4.3.1.1: Work with Communications to develop a video that documents the type of projects wildlife biologists are involved in.
- Action 4.3.1.2: Provide varied experiences for interns to help them evaluate the work and culture of the Wildlife Division.
- Action 4.3.1.3: Examine the perception of the Wildlife Division culture.

- Action 4.3.1.4: Offer 12-month part-time “apprentice” type positions for college seniors so that when they graduate they have actual experience.
- Action 4.3.1.5: Promote the importance of “getting back to the field” in wildlife management courses at universities.
- Action 4.3.1.6: Survey university students to assess attitudes and impediments toward employment with Wildlife Division and TPWD.
- Action 4.3.1.7: Make the 24-12 hour class requirement list available with the other application materials to clarify the types of course work preferred.
- Action 4.3.1.8: Target the top natural resources colleges in the U.S.
- Action 4.3.1.9: Create a targeted recruitment messages that every employee can use for potential recruitment.
- Action 4.3.1.10: Recruit wildlife professionals directly out of accredited degree programs at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Action 4.3.1.11: Place Wildlife Division staff in wildlife departments on university campuses.
- Action 4.3.1.12: Recruit applicants from a broader range of academic backgrounds that meet the basic requirements, while bringing new perspectives, in wildlife management.
- Action 4.3.1.13: Provide funding to recover expenses for volunteers to assist in approved projects.

**Strategy 4.3.2: Work with others divisions and the Executive Office to provide competitive salary and benefits.**

- Action 4.3.2.1: Implement a permanent merit pay raise system to reward top performing personnel.
- Action 4.3.2.2: Ensure salary equity for positions of like responsibility.
- Action 4.3.2.3: Avoid salary compression especially at supervisory and/or managerial level.
- Action 4.3.2.4: Provide incentives for jobs in remote locations, (i.e., housing, moving expenses or cost of living adjustments).

**Strategy 4.3.3: Hire biologists at full spectrum (NRS Ia-NRS III) based on experience.**

**Objective 4.4: By 2015, reduce the FY 2010-2014 average employee turnover rate by 50 percent from the 2005-2009 average.**

**Strategy 4.4.1: Work with other divisions and the Executive Office to provide competitive salary and benefits.**

- Action 4.4.1.1: Utilize merit raises, bonuses and other financial incentives for excellent job performance.
- Action 4.4.1.2: Supply housing on WMAs when in remote locations.
- Action 4.4.1.3: Increase employee compensation to level of the top 5 states and/or private sector.
- Action 4.4.1.4: Offer more pay grade classifications like the federal system so that employees don't top out in non-managerial positions.
- Action 4.4.1.5: Ensure salary equity across all divisions within the agency.



- Action 4.4.1.6: Offer incentives for appropriate advanced degrees.
- Action 4.4.1.7: Offer salary incentives for biologists who increase scientific credentials, certifications, publish papers, present research, etc.
- Action 4.4.1.8: Create a job classification for purchasers/budget analysts at the District and Region level.
- Action 4.4.1.9: Provide better promotion opportunities through career ladders.

**Strategy 4.4.2: Provide non-monetary compensation.**

- Action 4.4.2.1: Allow more flexibility in assigned living and office locations.
- Action 4.4.2.2: Focus field staff activities on biology/science/management.
- Action 4.4.2.3: Encourage cross training opportunities within the division.
- Action 4.4.2.4: Include mandatory comp time as part of non-monetary compensation package.
- Action 4.4.2.5: Allow greater access to flexible work schedules for staff (i.e., 4-10 hour days).

**Strategy 4.4.3: Provide for professional development opportunities**

- Action 4.4.3.1: Offer increased advanced training opportunities for employees.
- Action 4.4.3.2: Allow one training of choice for each employee every year.
- Action 4.4.3.3: Develop job-specific new employee handbook.

**Strategy 4.4.4: Provide appropriate equipment to conduct business.**

- Action 4.4.4.1: Seek additional revenue sources to supplement purchase of equipment and vehicles.
- Action 4.4.4.2: Provide quality computers, vehicles, internet and phone connectivity to all field employees.

**Strategy 4.4.5: Improve ability and supervisory skills of managers.**

- Action 4.4.5.1: Use formal evaluations of each supervisor from the employees' perspective.
- Action 4.4.5.2: Increase appropriate training of first line managers to reduce employee/supervisor conflicts.
- Action 4.4.5.3: Develop specific training for supervisors in mentoring new employees.

**Strategy 4.4.6: Maintain and enhance communication at all levels.**

- Action 4.4.6.1: Provide feedback regularly to employees doing a good job.
- Action 4.4.6.2: Clarify career ladder to ensure an understanding of the process and qualifications necessary to advance.

**Strategy 4.4.7: Determine the areas of high turnover for the Wildlife Division.**

- Action 4.4.7.1: Use exit interviews to determine why employees leave and develop strategies to address this.

**Objective 4.5: Develop a standardized process for making science-based management recommendations by 2013.**

**Strategy 4.5.1: Establish standard regulations setting process.**

Action 4.5.1.1: Evaluate current and new regulations for effectiveness and assess cost benefit ratio.

**Strategy 4.5.2: Use Technical Committees that represent Regions and Programs.**

Action 4.5.2.1: Develop a standard process for presenting science-based recommendations to executive management and the TPW Commission.

Action 4.5.2.2: Develop specific research priorities through Technical Committees, prioritizing opportunities and maximizing resources.

Action 4.5.2.3: Ensure review of management recommendations by local biologists.

Action 4.5.2.4: Review other states, NGOs, and university research programs to design an efficient and effective research program.

**Strategy 4.5.3: Increase research capabilities within the Wildlife Division.**

Action: 4.5.3.1 Develop clear connection between research needs and the *Wildlife Strategic Plan*, the LWP, and the TCAP.

Action 4.5.3.2: Use department-owned research and demonstration sites.

Action 4.5.3.3: Promote in-house research activities to save money.

**Strategy 4.5.4: Increase communication of research results and future needs within the Wildlife Division.**

Action 4.5.4.1: Demonstrate science based management techniques on WMAs and better promote field days.

Action 4.5.4.2: Communicate top needs to universities through the requests for proposals process.

Action 4.5.4.3: Disseminate current research results to field staff.

Action 4.5.4.4: Facilitate better online access to professional journals/publications for all employees.

Action 4.5.4.5: Assign program specialists (i.e., ornithologist, mammalogist, game bird, etc.) to serve as point of contact for information disseminated to field staff and working group members.

Action 4.5.4.6: Implement/improve staff training on current research methodology.

Action 4.5.4.7: Ensure peer review of all internal publications.

Action 4.5.4.8: Develop CD/DVD of science based management practices to distribute to landowners and land managers.

**Strategy 4.5.5: Review research and literature for methods and management recommendations and make available to staff.**

Action 4.5.5.1: Assure that current management plans are science based.

Action 4.5.5.2: Create a division-wide repository to compile and continuously update peer-reviewed publications related to habitat and wildlife management. Repository should be a searchable database based on species and/or ecoregion.

## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to Marla Bays, Karen Blizzard, Gary Calkins, John Davis, Chuck Kowaleski, Kevin Mote, and Elishea Smith for their extra efforts during this process.



4200 Smith School Road  
Austin, Texas 78744  
[www.tpwd.state.tx.us](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us)