



# STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

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*July 2022 Progress Report*

## *Serving People, Conserving Fish and Wildlife*

It is more than a catchphrase. It is our commitment. Our commitment - to you and to the fish and wildlife resources of our Commonwealth. The 2020-2022 Strategic Plan for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources reflects that commitment.

On the following pages, we are pleased to report on the department's progress toward the overarching goals and more specific, strategic initiatives and actions described in the plan.

Despite the emergence of the global COVID-19 pandemic that required substantial adaptation to agency operations statewide in 2020 and 2021, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources remained true to its mission and continued pressing forward despite the challenges.

Hunting. Fishing. Trapping. Boating. Shooting sports. Wildlife viewing. Interest and participation in these activities and outdoor recreation in general soared during the entire year of 2020. Social distancing became a motivation to connect or reconnect with the outdoors. In light of cancellations and other effects of the pandemic, many people had more free time and fewer distractions, leading to increased enjoyment of the Commonwealth's fields, woods and waters. Our staff rose to the occasion and enhanced our video and other digital resources to meet demands. Although participation and license sales began to normalize in 2021 in Kentucky and nationwide, we are diligently working to keep the outdoors top of mind for the many new and reactivated customers.

We appreciate your interest in our mission and programs, and the work we've undertaken to accomplish it as described in this report. We hope as you read this update that you'll be impressed with the extent of accomplishments of our staff and partners, all with the financial support of license customers, boating registrants, recreational shooters, and Kentucky Wild members and sponsors.

**Rich Storm**  
*Commissioner*



# Strategic Plan Initiatives: 2020-2022

Strategic Plan Initiatives: 2020-2022			
Goal 1	Manage for sustainable fish and wildlife populations and habitats		
Initiative 1	Expand the use of 'active management' conservation practices on public lands and waters.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
1.1.a.	Manage 5,000 acres of forests annually on WMAs with the use of prescribed fire, selective harvest, and forest stand improvement	In progress	Staff manage more than 4,000 acres of forestland currently each year. Staff initiated or completed over 1,500 acres of timber harvest activities at Clay WMA, Yatesville Lake WMA, Dewey Lake WMA, Fleming WMA, Grayson Lake WMA, and Taylorsville Lake WMA.
1.1.b.	Manage 13,000 acres of open lands on WMAs annually with prescribed fire, disking, herbicide treatments and other methods	In progress	Staff managed more than 10,000 acres of open land habitats on WMAs annually. Staff completed over 100 prescribed burns managing approximately 6,905 total acres including over 1,000 acres of prescribed burning completed in SE KY as part of a focused initiative to improve elk foraging habitat.
1.1.c.	Manage 4,500 acres of wetlands on WMAs annually using water management, disking, planting and other methods	Completed	Complete. Ballard and Boatwright WMAs comprise about 4,000 acres of this total.
1.1.d.	Update WMA management plans on higher density WMAs* by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Agency priority response to Chronic Wasting Disease response has delayed tiering planning. Staff are in progress of planning rollout of tiering for the fall of 2022 with staff critically evaluating High Level WMA plans moving forward.
1.1.e.	Update lake-specific management plans for all major public waters by June 30, 2021	Delayed	The species-specific management working groups within the Fisheries Division are currently working on their species management plans. Once these plans are complete, lake-specific management plans will be updated using the directives of the species-specific plans.
<p>* WMAs are currently being categorized by WMA Management Levels to help public users determine places they wish to visit. "High" level WMAs will generally be staffed and intensively managed areas, whereas "Moderate" level WMAs will typically have no staff housed on the area and will receive some active habitat management for wildlife, and "Low" level areas will receive little to no active management other than maintenance of marked boundaries, parking areas, roads and gates, and enforcement patrols. All areas will continue to be available for hunting, fishing (where applicable), wildlife watching, etc.</p>			
Initiative 2	Expand research on species and habitat management efforts statewide.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
1.2.a.	Conduct research on elk populations to better understand their population and management needs. Establish more precise population models, population estimates and long term growth rates. Determine hunting and viewing goals by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Two seasons of field work on adult/yearling natality rates and calf survival estimates research have been completed; the final season will begin in January 2022. These data will be incorporated into a statistical population reconstruction model that is slated for completion in early 2023.
1.2.b.	Conduct research on bear populations to monitor their population growth across the state and develop long term population goals, harvest strategies and objectives by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	The fieldwork portion of a major mark-recapture project to determine the abundance and density of black bears in the core of the population was completed in the summer of 2019. Final results were presented in the spring of 2021 and have been utilized to amend the bear hunting regulations. The amended regulations will allow for greater hunting opportunity while ensuring sustainable bear harvest into the future.
1.2.c.	Conduct research on non-game species to determine management needs and population trends for the states most at risk species	In progress	This work continues on bats, mussels, and several other Threatened and Endangered species.





1.2.d.	Conduct research on hunter effort for various wildlife game species to help us better set population models, season dates and bag limits on hunted species by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	The turkey program conducted surveys of eligible license customers after spring turkey season in 2020 and 2021. Staff have developed estimates of total turkey hunter effort derived from the survey data, including take per unit effort, proportion that hunted, number of turkey hunters, success rates, and total harvest independent from telecheck data. Another method involved collecting hunting effort data from successful turkey hunters online harvest reporting; resulting data provided a different but real-time measure of turkey hunting effort valuable for comparison to raw harvest totals.
1.2.e.	Conduct research on WMA use methods (electronic check-in, WMA permit, etc.) to better determine needs for resource allocations, habitat management levels and season structures by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	The Commission reviewed a proposal by the department involving a modernized licensing system that may encompass electronic check-in and allow for enhanced data collection.
1.2.f.	Initiate a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of different fish habitat structures and materials by June 30, 2021	Completed	The Fisheries Division Habitat Branch is currently assessing catch rates of different sport fish species found associated with different types of habitat structure types and materials. This is occurring at several lakes across the state.
1.2.g.	Evaluate the effects of bass tournament exemptions and make a recommendation to the Commissioner for future exemptions by June 30, 2021	Completed	Fisheries recommended generally discontinuing tournament exemptions for consistency across user groups.
<b>Initiative 3</b>	<b>Evaluate native fisheries species restoration efforts.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.3.a.	Monitor and evaluate project success of lake sturgeon restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	Lake sturgeon reintroductions have proved to be successful thus far. Relative abundance during Department sampling has increased gradually in recent years, with record high catch rates for the Cumberland River and Big South Fork in 2021. Survival of all stocked year-classes appears to be good as 10 out of 12 possible year-classes were captured.
1.3.b.	Monitor and evaluate project success of alligator gar restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	A total of 43,841 individuals have been stocked since 2009, with stockings occurring at various locations throughout far western Kentucky. Tracking of released individuals and obtaining eggs/fry have proven challenging. Project will continue as designed through 2025.
1.3.c.	Monitor and evaluate project success of native walleye restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	Survival of native walleye in streams, particularly in southeast Kentucky, seems to be sufficient as noticeable increases in relative abundance and the presence of all year classes are apparent in Department sampling and broodstock collection.
<b>Initiative 4</b>	<b>Expand reservoir fish habitat initiatives.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.4.a.	Initiate 1 new large-scale reservoir fish habitat project by Dec. 31, 2020	Completed	A large-scale habitat project was initiated at Barren River Lake and is currently in its 3rd year of progress. It is projected for all work to be completed by 2023.
1.4.b.	Enhance fish habitat sites on 3 existing reservoirs by end of June 30, 2021	Completed	Fish habitat projects have been ongoing on Nolin River Lake, Rough River Lake, and Lake Barkley. Work has included planting cypress trees, installing bass spawning structures, placing concrete reef balls, and creating various fish habitat structure sites.
<b>Initiative 5</b>	<b>Carefully prioritize projects, evaluate effectiveness and adaptively manage agency Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.5.a.	Critically evaluate WMA plans based on short term and long term goals, staffing levels and operational budgets by June 30, 2021	In progress	WMA Working Group visited Clay WMA. Further discussions with the group will be forthcoming. High Level WMAs will be working on management plans for 2022.



1.5.b.	Implement a concise WMA naming criteria based on the level of active management activities being implemented by June 30, 2021	In progress	Plans are moving forward for categorizing WMAs using "management levels" and communicating these to the public in the Fall of 2022. Informational update was provided to the Commission at its June 3, 2022 quarterly meeting. Additionally, staff are developing a dedicated page for communicating the WMA management levels on the Department's website.
1.5.c.	Evaluate additional forestry and open lands management through contracting to maximize wildlife habitat management objectives	In progress	Northeast Region lands management staff attempted to develop a RFP to conduct an approximately \$65,000 forest management project in late 2021. Unfortunately only one bid was received and deemed non-responsive due to technical deficiencies in the bid proposal. An updated RFP will be re-advertised in 2022.
<b>Initiative 6</b>	<b>Identify critical needs for enhancing Kentucky Wild species diversity consistent with the State Wildlife Action Plan.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.6.a.	Begin updating revision to the State Wildlife Action Plan (fully complete by 2023)	In progress	Revision continues and is on track for completion in 2023. Accomplishments include: full review of species and selection of Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN), interface development for SGCN summaries, and initial data input for SGCN and habitat associations.
1.6.b.	Plan 12 Kentucky Wild member experiences in 2020	Completed	Pandemic considerations required postponement or cancellation of some 2021 member experiences and events. Seven small group activities were held in 2021: Spring Herp Hike, Monarch Monitoring Workshop, Songbird Nest box Build, Purple Martin Roost viewing, State Fair 'In the Field', Fall Songbird banding, and Perryville Monarch tagging.
1.6.c.	Begin revising the State Wildlife Action Plan to reflect changes in fish species status by June 30, 2021	Completed	All fish species were evaluated as part of SWAP revision above.
<b>Initiative 7</b>	<b>Improve facilities at fish hatcheries and WMAs to allow staff to better manage fish and wildlife populations.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.7.a.	Renovate 3 office buildings by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Peter W. Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery office facilities re-design was completed and work is underway. Murray Fisheries office construction was completed. Fish and Wildlife Diversity Annex (Fisheries Annex) remodel was completed.
1.7.b.	Facilitate sediment removal from 2 hatchery ponds annually	Completed	Two ponds have been successfully renovated through sediment removal.
<b>Initiative 8</b>	<b>Revise and update species management plans.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
1.8.a.	Review and update the 2030 Elk Management Plan and identify next step goals and objectives by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	The population model as mentioned in Initiative 1.2.a will allow greater insight into the future of the elk herd and thus allow for a more thoughtful revision of the elk management plan.
1.8.b.	Publish the final report for the existing 10-year quail plan by Dec. 31, 2020	Completed	The final report was published in July 2020.
1.8.c.	Work to identify priority areas to achieve 15% of selected habitat goals set forth in the 2017 grouse plan by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	During 2020-2021, tangible progress was made on 5 of 8 (62.5%) visionary goals outlined in the grouse plan. Examples include over 17,000 acres of forest management, including over 1,500 acres of timber harvest, drumming surveys in the 2012 tornado zone to estimate grouse occupancy, development of a multi-year agreement for a partner forester position with Ruffed Grouse Society; multi-partner grants to foster habitat improvement and monitoring, presentations to nongame groups, facilitating grants for monitoring songbirds, stimulating forest industry by presentation at industry meetings and fostering multi-state coordination of state agencies.
1.8.d.	Form 5 internal fisheries management committees by June 30, 2020, which meet at least quarterly through 2021	Completed	Eight committees have been formed and include: black bass, trout, muskie, percid, morone, catfish, aquatic nuisance species, and strategic planning committees.



<b>Goal 2</b>			
<b>Increase opportunities for and participation in fish and wildlife recreation</b>			
<b>Initiative 1</b>	<b>Increase and promote boating and fishing opportunities on underutilized waters.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
2.1.a.	Write at least one Kentucky Afield magazine article annually about a fishing or boating opportunity on underutilized waters	Completed	An article about fishing opportunity at Falls of the Ohio was published in the magazine's Fall 2021 issue.
2.1.b.	Host an R3 event on one underutilized waters location annually	Completed	A Hook and Cook class was taught on Gunpowder Creek in Boone County in August 2021.
2.1.c.	Produce two segments on Kentucky Afield television detailing opportunities on underutilized waters	Completed	7 segments were completed highlighting Beaver Lake, Linville Lake, Salem Lake, Drennon Creek, Goose Creek, Ohio River and Cedar Creek Lake.
2.1.d.	Produce a Kentucky Afield podcast with fisheries and wildlife biologists detailing opportunities on underutilized waters and WMAs by June 30, 2021	Completed	3 episodes were completed highlights waterbodies and WMAs. On episode 85 we highlighted the lower Kentucky River, WMA stocked ponds and Ohio River pools/feeder creeks. On episode number 76 and 77 we highlighted Yellowbank WMA, bear hunting on public land, Sloughs WMA and Peabody WMA.
2.1.e.	Evaluate the feasibility of a paddlecraft program by meeting with legislators and members of the outdoor recreation industry by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Staff developed a toolkit for municipal governments and others interested in developing paddlecraft area sites.
<b>Initiative 2</b>	<b>Expand our management efforts on public land in partnership with federal agencies and private landowners.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
2.2.a.	Work closely with the U.S. Forest Service to better manage both the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area	In progress	We are in the early stages of planning a joint meeting with U.S Forest Service and KDFWR. COVID restrictions have delayed in-person meeting ability. Staff will continue to work with USFS to plan a partner meeting.
2.2.b.	Continue to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to manage areas around some of the major lakes throughout the state	In progress	Completed license agreements for Green River Lake WMA, Buckhorn Lake WMA, and Rough River Lake WMA. Olmstead license agreement is currently being reviewed and forwarded for signatures.
2.2.c.	Expand our partnership with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help landowners take advantage of the conservation provisions of the federal Farm Bill Program	In progress	Over the past two months 8 Private Land Biologist partner positions have been filled. One remaining position needs to be filled to fully staff the Private lands Program (18 staff).
2.2.d.	Work with local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project offices to implement large-scale habitat improvement projects at two reservoirs by June 30, 2021	Completed	A large-scale habitat project was completed at Carr Creek Lake and another project in ongoing at Barren River Lake. Both are in partnership with the Louisville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
2.2.e.	Update WMA mapping to include habitat maps and area video overviews on all High Level WMAs* by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	WMA Categories are expected to roll out in Fall 2022. Habitat mapping goals will be included in the next plan.
* WMAs will be categorized into High, Moderate, or Low. High Level WMAs will be typically staffed and intensively managed, while Low Level WMAs will have no staff housed on the area and will receive little or no active habitat management for wildlife, but will still be available for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, etc.			



Initiative 3	<b>Enhance agency effectiveness by implementing the Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) plan for Kentucky.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
2.3.a.	Conduct an R3 summit with agency staff and partners by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	KDFWR staff conducted its 2022 R3 Summit virtually with 38 staff and 22 representatives from local, state and national partner organizations in attendance.
2.3.b.	Make a presentation to the entire Law Enforcement Division during their training on KDFWR's R3 Initiative	In progress	This initiative has expanded to the entire department as mandatory training for current staff and new staff in the future. Plan for final training video to be completed in 2022.
2.3.c.	Exhibit at the Fish and Wildlife fair annually for the 22,000+ archers and spectators at the NASP Kentucky State Tournament	Completed	KDFWR provided a booth promoting hunting and fishing opportunities in Kentucky, answering questions from attendees, and selling KDFWR-branded merchandise.
Initiative 4	<b>Improve mentor, coach and instructor development to strengthen R3 efforts.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
2.4.a.	Train 50+ UK Cooperative Extension Agents to conduct their own Field to Fork and Hook and Cook classes	Completed	174 total agents were trained in January of 2021 and January of 2022.
2.4.b.	Certify Trooper Island Staff as hunter education volunteers so they can teach hunter education as part of the Trooper Island Camp Experience	Completed	25 staff members of Trooper Island were trained as certified hunter education instructors.
2.4.c.	Certify 4-H Camp Staff as hunter education volunteers so they can teach hunter education as part of the 4-H camp experience	In progress	Initial meeting with 4-H staff has been conducted. Any additional efforts have been delayed due to COVID-19.
2.4.d.	Evaluate the potential for providing online hunter education curriculum to high school agriculture and FFA programs by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	This initiative is in the investigation stage.
2.4.e.	Evaluate the potential for providing online hunter education curriculum through school resource officer (SRO) safety programs by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	This initiative is in the investigation stage.
2.4.f.	Conduct a survey of coaches, instructors and volunteers in outdoor and shooting sports programs in Kentucky to establish a baseline of knowledge and help determine next steps for improving R3 planning	Completed	The survey was completed and a report was prepared and shared with applicable staff and partnering organizations.
Initiative 5	<b>Improve access to quality areas for hunting, fishing and other wildlife related recreation.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
2.5.a.	Construct 1 new fishing ramp by Dec. 31, 2020	Completed	Shawnee Boat Ramp completed in Spring 2021.
2.5.b.	Install 2 accessible kayak launches by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Lake Reba and McNeely Lake ADA Accessible kayak launch installations completed.



2.5.c.	Construct 1 fixed wooden fishing pier by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Green River Lake State Park fishing pier under construction. Delayed by high water.
2.5.d.	Build relationships with large landholders in the east to develop 5 new hunting access areas by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	We continue to work with and identify potential partners throughout eastern Kentucky.
2.5.e.	Develop a prioritized list of access improvement opportunities by June 30, 2021	In progress	Several projects were identified and work was begun. Examples include the Salt River access parking lot expansion on Taylorsville Lake WMA, fishing pier project on Green River Lake, and the paddlecraft access site on Lake Reba and McNeely Lake.
2.5.f.	Create a WMA access mobile app for public use by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	This initiative is in the investigation stage.
2.5.g.	Demolish 3 structures and construct a parking area on Veterans WMA by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Razed three frame houses and one barn that presented safety hazards or removal necessitated by future projects at the WMA. An additional parking area was constructed on the east side of the WMA that will greatly improve access. The parking lot will accommodate up to 15 vehicles and is 100' x 100'.
2.5.h.	Taylorsville WMA Palmer Road parking addition by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Expansion completed in 2021 to improve access to the area.
2.5.i.	Steele Branch Boat Ramp rebuild by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Rebuild completed in Spring 2021.
2.5.j.	Catlettsburg Boat Ramp access route augmentation and associated parking paving by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Paving and radius improvement Summer 2021.
2.5.k.	Rochester Boat Ramp to be reconstructed by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Agency portion is complete; the county will be expanding the parking area.
2.5.l.	Barren River State Resort Park courtesy dock by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	Installation completed in Spring 2022.
<b>Initiative 6</b>	<b>Develop new public facilities that provide additional hunting, fishing and recreational shooting opportunities.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
2.6.a.	Conduct surveys of Kentuckians and license holders to determine current participation in shooting sports and demand for range opportunities across Kentucky by June 30, 2020 to facilitate shooting strategic planning for range development	Completed	A survey was completed in 2020 in partnership with the University of Kentucky and the report distributed to applicable staff to aid planning for range and shooting sports programs.
2.6.b.	Increase recreational shooting opportunities through construction of a new pistol pit at Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area by June 30, 2021	Completed	Pistol pit was constructed at Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area and is proving to be a popular amenity.
2.6.c.	Increase recreational shooting opportunities through the completion of a plan and design for upgrades to existing rifle range berms and facilities by June 30, 2021	Completed	Conceptual design developed.
2.6.d.	Increase recreational shooting opportunities through the development of a new design for future shooting needs by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Conceptual design developed.





2.6.e.	Apply for 2 grants for the creation of a public archery range by Dec. 31, 2021	In progress	The agency successfully applied for one archery range grant through the USFWS Wildlife Restoration Program. Available funds are 75% federal and 25% non-federal match and will be used to construct a public archery range on KDFWR headquarters campus in Frankfort.
2.6.f.	Make improvements to 2 existing WMA rifle ranges, including renovation of shooting berms and shooting facilities by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Completed the reshaping, fill, and compaction of the impact berms to return to near original construction specifications at Kleber and Taylorsville Lake WMA's tube rifle ranges.
2.6.g.	Complete design and scoping phase of new shooting range at Veterans Memorial WMA by Dec. 31, 2020 and secure bid for construction by end of June 30, 2021	In progress	Initiative is delayed, but a design firm is contracted and design is in progress.
2.6.h.	Partner with existing private shooting range facilities to secure public access	In progress	Postponed due to challenges related to COVID-19.
2.6.i.	Develop at least 2 ADA-accessible facilities by June 30, 2021	In progress	Three ADA-accessible facilities completed and one in progress. Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area pistol pit, ADA parking and sidewalk complete and open. ADA accessible kayak launches complete at Lake Reba and McNeely Lake. ADA accessible Green River State Park fishing pier construction is delayed by high water.
<b>Initiative 7</b>	<b>Evaluate and improve all aspects of the customer experience.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
2.7.a.	Improve the bear exhibit at Salato Wildlife Education Center by enhancing fencing and enclosure facilities by June 30, 2021	Completed	Bear exhibit fencing was enhanced as planned.
2.7.b.	Improve the bear exhibit at Salato Wildlife Education Center by improving the pool by June 30, 2021	Completed	The bear pool was repaired and enhanced.
2.7.c.	Improve facilities at camps through replacing dated materials and equipment by June 30, 2021	In progress	Camp Webb cooler is completed. Camp Webb wastewater treatment plant is currently out for bid with project completion anticipated in 2022. Camp Currie superintendent house renovation is complete. Camp Webb swim dock is completed.
2.7.d.	Develop a newly designed website by June 30, 2021	Completed	The new website was launched early in 2021.
2.7.e.	Perform a customer satisfaction survey related to the presentation of regulations by Dec. 31, 2021	Delayed	Postponed due to vacancy in regulations coordinator position.
2.7.f.	Work with staff to develop and implement a customer satisfaction survey by June 30, 2021	In progress	Satisfaction rating questions were included in several angler and hunter surveys implemented in 2020 and 2021. Results were very positive across customer groups.
2.7.g.	Investigate the feasibility to publish the <i>Kentucky Afield</i> magazine, with the aid of sponsorships, free to the public in a digital platform to vastly expand its reach by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	Initial scoping is complete. A timeline for implementation is being developed while taking into consideration current workload and timing of the printed magazine release dates.



<b>Goal 3</b>		<b>Increase public awareness, engagement and partnerships</b>	
<b>Initiative 1</b>	<b>Increase transparency of management and finances.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.1.a.	Show before and after pictures of construction projects on the department's website	In progress	A few projects were highlighted in the news section of the website and others were posted on social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.
<b>Initiative 2</b>	<b>Expand participation in Kentucky Wild and opportunities for other wildlife-related activities.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.2.a.	Create Kentucky Wild mobile education events throughout the state	In progress	Kentucky Wild mobile education events included in-person shows and events beginning in August 2021 and included monthly experiences for members in key market areas across the state.
<b>Initiative 3</b>	<b>Broaden and strengthen project management collaboration with governmental, private and corporate partnerships on public and private lands.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.3.a.	Implement annually scheduled meetings with each local U.S. Army Corps of Engineers lake project office to facilitate communication and collaboration by June 30, 2021	Completed	Fisheries district staff members met with Corps managers as planned to enhance our partnership on Corps-owned lakes.
<b>Initiative 4</b>	<b>Grow our base by expanding our education and outreach approach to reflect a changing society.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.4.a.	Launch a Kentucky fishing and boating app by Dec. 31, 2020	In progress	Staff are finalizing revisions and anticipate a soft rollout of the app through partnership with a sponsoring organization in early 2022. A hard rollout (full promotion and advertising) will occur in the spring of 2022.
3.4.b.	Complete a draft Request for Proposal process for a license delivery system featuring a robust app and customer relationship management functions by Dec. 31, 2020	In progress	RFI was completed, and staff have been working with Finance & Administration Cabinet on development of an RFP. Regulation changes are being promulgated for updating and clarification pursuant language in reg.
3.4.c.	Create a webpage cataloging how-to videos to explain fishing, hunting and boating techniques for public use, with all major species groups, fishing techniques, with meat preparation and cooking instruction, by June 31, 2021	In progress	Substantial video content has been produced and posted in the department's YouTube channel and linked on the agency website; some playlists featuring quality content from external sources have also been created.
3.4.d.	Produce 5 short videos that highlight WMAs and wildlife habitat improvement practices by December 31, 2021	Completed	Four videos were produced highlighting Rolling Fork, Curtis Gates Lloyd, Cedar Creek Lake and Dix River WMAs. In addition, 3 short video were also produced highlighting habitat improvement projects in eastern Kentucky for elk, fish habitat work on Lake Barkley and native seed habitat planting.
3.4.e.	Expand our use of GovDelivery to capture and activate contacts to improve communications and increase sales	In progress	This initiative is partially complete and staff will continue to expand in 2022.



3.4.f.	Facilitate at least 2 annual youth fishing events servicing at least 50 youth each by June 30, 2021	In progress	One event was completed in July 2021.
<b>Initiative 5</b>	<b>Continue to develop and expand agency sponsorship programs.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.5.a.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Fisheries Division by June 30, 2021	In progress	One completed and looking to build and expand.
3.5.b.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Wildlife Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Kentucky Wild sponsors include: Country Boy Brewing and East Kentucky Power Cooperative. Struttin' in the Bluegrass sponsors include: Mossy Oak, FoxPro and Swagger BiPods.
3.5.c.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Information and Education Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Gear Up & Get Out sponsored by Academy Sports and Outdoors included: KDFWR in-store promotions, coupons for customers, social media content including videos and imagery, along with co-branded seasonal checklists.
<b>Initiative 6</b>	<b>Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.6.a.	Continue collaboration among marketing, public relations and communications specialists.	In progress	Communication and collaboration continues through weekly meetings and use of Trello platform specific planning and content management system.
3.6.b.	Work collaboratively across multiple divisions to create a plan that outlines all groups working on public relations and define their roles	Completed and ongoing	Regular weekly comms team meetings and active involvement of division liaisons to the comms team facilitated better coordination, goal setting, flow of information into, out of, and within the agency.
3.6.c.	Coordinate efforts to maintain consistent messaging across all communication platforms.	Completed and ongoing	Coordination between the Commissioner's office, PIO and comms team enhanced branding and consistency across agency communications and marketing platforms.
3.6.d.	Create press releases that can be shared on multiple social media platforms by June 30, 2021	Completed	News releases and advisories were produced in a more user-friendly fashion and posted on the department website to improve media usage. Recaps were also initiated following Commission meetings to highlight key actions for improved public awareness.
3.6.e.	Promote the work of staff across the realm of conservation in multiple media platforms and increase our reach by 10% by June 30, 2021	In progress	Ongoing and plans to increase communications in 2022.
3.6.f.	Maintain at least eight social media accounts for the Fisheries Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Accounts for all Fisheries districts were maintained, as well as Facebook pages for selected districts.
3.6.g.	Evaluate and update signage at headquarters by June 30, 2021	Completed	Headquarters received new signage and front entrance sign has been replaced.
<b>Initiative 7</b>	<b>Enhance the Department's ability to facilitate and quantify public input when making management decisions.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
3.7.a.	Create a mechanism to allow the public to provide input on management actions on multiple social media platforms	In progress	Informally at present.



3.7.b.	Use the GovDelivery platform to solicit public input on topics for which they have expressed an interest	In progress	Tested during Deer season in five county surveillance zone.
3.7.c.	Conduct at least one live social media call-in style show related to the management and policy decisions being considered by the agency	In progress	Communications team now has the tools to execute this initiative and look to produce a show in 2022.
3.7.d.	Increase the use of customer surveys to obtain direct input and interaction with the public at shows where the agency exhibits and sells licenses, permits and Kentucky Wild memberships	Delayed due to COVID-19 and cost	Surveys were conducted verbally at point of sale at in-person shows and events to obtain direct feedback from customers. Detailed signage as well as additional brochures with QR codes were implemented to help customers find specific information about hunting, fishing, and wildlife-related opportunities quickly by accessing online resources from mobile devices.
3.7.e.	Expand opt-in opportunities through the department web pages and social media channels	Under evaluation	Additional software and staffing capacity are needed to deploy.
3.7.f.	Implement a system for Fisheries Division representatives to attend at least 10 public events annually that are hosted by sportsmen's groups, NGOs or department affiliated entities by June 30, 2021	Completed	A system has been initiated and each Fisheries District Program Coordinator has public event attendance requirements listed in their annual evaluations.

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Enhance the Department's responsiveness and effectiveness</b>
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Initiative 1	Provide effective employee management and a positive work environment.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
4.1.a.	Conduct an employee communications and morale survey by June 30, 2021	Delayed	This project was delayed due to staff turnover and vacancies. Remaining vacancies are in the process of being filled now, but all non-essential projects involving HR are still delayed.
4.1.b.	Develop a program for staff to mentor or mentee as hunters or anglers as part of their official job duties	Completed	Employee Mentoring Program was launched in October 2021, allowing all KDFWR staff to be a mentor or be mentored up to 15 hours per calendar year with at least one other hunter or angler. Staff can include up to 5 hours of hunter education training, or participate in a Hook and Cook or Field to Fork event.
4.1.c.	Provide applicable safety training and personal protective equipment to all staff by June 30, 2021	In progress	This action was started then delayed because of retirement of the agency safety coordinator. It will be included in the next plan.
4.1.d.	Perform safety inspection on 50% of KDFWR facilities by Dec. 31, 2020 and on the remaining facilities by December 31, 2021	In progress	This action was 50% completed but delayed due to retirement of the agency safety coordinator; 17 of the 32 staff-occupied structures have been inspected. Completion of inspections and an annual inspection schedule will be included in the next plan.
4.1.e.	Increase number of employees with OSHA 10- & 30-hour training certification by having agency safety coordinator (OSHA-trained trainer)	Delayed	KDFWR's safety coordinator retired and this action is delayed until the position is refilled.
4.1.f.	Review Fish and Wildlife-specific job class specifications and update as necessary. Create additional classifications as needed to increase employee longevity	In progress	The Law Enforcement Division's Job Classifications were all updated and title of Conservation Master Officer was added in 2020 for career advancement opportunities. The Wildlife Division's Wildlife Biologist series was reviewed, removing some confusing course work requirements, and these changes were finalized in 2021. Full review of all titles will take several years to complete.
4.1.g.	Create an updated salary comparison regionally, or of surrounding states, to compare Kentucky to other state fish and wildlife agencies	Delayed	This action was delayed due to HR staffing constraints.

Initiative 2	<b>Enhance recruitment to ensure a diverse, inclusive, well-suited workforce that relates to all customers.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
4.2.a.	Improve programs at the camps and in the schools that will appeal to a broader range of children while maintaining our mission focus	Completed	All programs have been updated to meet the Kentucky Academic Standards.
4.2.b.	Uniformed officers and other staff will attend a minimum of 3 career fairs each year and work closely with area universities to attract diverse applicants	Delayed	Career fairs were largely canceled in 2020-21 due to COVID-19 restrictions. Staff will resume attendance in 2022.
4.2.c.	Human resources staff will attend at minimum 3 recruitment events by June 30, 2021	Delayed	Due to COVID-19, there were very few recruitment events offered in 2020-21. Staff were able to attend one event at Anderson County High School in 2021 and plan to increase these when possible. HR has reached out to several college and university student relations staff to increase awareness of job and internship opportunities with KDFWR. An internship guidance document has been drafted and will be shared with internal hiring managers and agency leadership in spring 2022.
4.2.d.	Human resources will research options and produce staff recruitment materials by Dec. 31, 2020	Delayed	HR has made progress on drafting these materials. It has an internship flyer that has been shared with area colleges and universities to increase awareness of internship opportunities with KDFWR. Other projects are on hold due to staffing shortages.
Initiative 3	<b>Offer opportunities for professional development to ensure operational effectiveness.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
4.3.a.	Provide customer service training to Information Center staff, Salato staff and other pertinent personnel to develop better responsiveness and communication to the public	Ongoing	All Information Center staff and Salato Center staff have completed training opportunities through MyPurpose. Those opportunities will continue to be sought out and used as necessary.
4.3.b.	Provide media relations training to Law Enforcement and other pertinent personnel	Ongoing	Public Affairs Officers (PAOs) have been established in two Law Enforcement Regions. These officers have and will continue to attend training classes pertaining to media relations.
4.3.c.	Evaluate and expand employee cross training across workstations to increase operational effectiveness by June 30, 2021	Delayed	Delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions and HR staff shortage.
4.3.d.	Increase the use of online trainings available through MyPurpose by 25% by Dec. 31, 2020	Completed	In 2021, Agency staff took 3,000 training classes and spent almost 1,500 hours training in MyPurpose. In 2020, agency staff took 1,738 trainings and more than 1,300 hours in training. This is a 72% increase in training with only a 15% increase in time used to take the trainings. This is due to efforts to make training more useful, appropriate, purposeful and less time consuming.
Initiative 4	<b>Improve private lands, water conservation and stream and wetland restoration programs.</b>	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
4.4.a.	Be a trusted leader in conservation by participating in diverse and effective projects such as lead reclamation projects on WMA shooting ranges	Completed	The Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA trap shooting range was mined for lead through Finance & Administration Cabinet processes, and applicable environmental best practices.





4.4.b.	Work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help landowners take advantage of the conservation provisions of the federal Farm Bill	In progress	We continue to work closely with NRCS to implement CRP, EQIP, WRE, and CSP Farm Bill Programs.
4.4.c.	Define private lands program goals and objectives by species and region and set program measurable goals	In progress	A Private Lands Program Coordinator has been hired and has developed the roles and responsibilities for each position in the program, and has developed tracking mechanisms that the staff have utilized for the past year. The program will now evaluate the tools to ensure they are capturing the appropriate information.
4.4.d.	Review and update information on the department's "Managing Your Farm Pond" page by June 30, 2021	Completed	Potential development of a pond management video series is currently being evaluated.
4.4.e.	Work with the Finance Cabinet and other state partners to improve stream and wetland mitigation project processes and cut project timeline in half by Dec. 30, 2020	Completed	KDFWR hired an attorney dedicated to the FILO program, dedicated the majority of working time of the land acquisition coordinator, and worked intentionally to maintain and improve efficiency in working with members of other agencies involved in FILO projects to greatly improve workflows.

<b>Goal 5</b>	<b>Protect Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and promote user safety</b>		
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Initiative 1	Control, reduce and eradicate invasive species.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
5.1.a.	Work to eradicate invasive species on WMAs	In progress	Invasive species control is consistently ongoing on all WMAs.
5.1.b.	Work with private landowners to control, reduce and eradicate invasive species on their property	In progress	Working with NRCS through the EQIP program to eradicate invasive species.
5.1.c.	Update the Statewide Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan for Kentucky by June 30, 2021	In progress	The KDFWR Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Team continues to work on a revised plan, with revisions anticipated in 2022.
5.1.d.	Continue to work with the private industry to increase removal of invasive carp to 10 million pounds annually	Ongoing	Although the goal of 10 million pounds was not reached, private industry was able to remove over 8.5 million pounds of invasive carp in 2021. This is a harvest record for the past four years.

Initiative 2	Increase public safety for hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
5.2.a.	Require landowners to have hunter education certification, if required by date of birth, while hunting on their own property	Delayed	Regulation amendment was not promulgated.
5.2.b.	Conservation officers will routinely patrol public hunting and fishing areas and the public waterways of the state each year, observing for unsafe conditions and illegal activity	In progress	Officers continue to routinely patrol public hunting and fishing areas.

Initiative 3	Protect fish and wildlife resources through increased regulation compliance.	Status	June 30, 2022 Update
5.3.a.	Conservation officers will increase the annual number of compliance checks conducted by 10% by June 30, 2021	Completed	2019 - (35,454) 2020 - (51,736 Anomaly due to pandemic resulting in increased participation) 2021 - (45,297) ~27% increase from 2019.

5.3.b.	The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance by offering 24-hour dispatch	In progress	Kentucky State Police is dispatching officers on a daily basis.
5.3.c.	The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance by offering Tip411	In progress	Tips are being received daily. This app is being continuously promoted using publications and social media.
5.3.d.	The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance through social media channels	In progress	Social media posts are promptly responded to in regards to regulation compliance. Agency social media posts promote reporting of violations by citizens.
<b>Initiative 4</b>	<b>Provide professional law enforcement services to the Commonwealth through mission-focused policing.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
5.4.a.	Maintain all levels of supervision across the Law Enforcement Division by promptly filling any supervisor vacancies that occur	In progress	Vacant promotion opportunities are being posted at this time. Vacancies in each rank will be filled in early 2022.
5.4.b.	Implement a new policy manual by June 30, 2021 to ensure clear, consistent expectations to maintain the desired level of professionalism	Completed	New policy manual implemented January 1, 2022.
5.4.c.	Require a minimum of 6 detailed and organized Law Enforcement operations from each district during peak seasons to ensure mission focused efforts	Ongoing	These organized details have been taking place to meet this goal and will continue into the future.
<b>Initiative 5</b>	<b>Promulgate clear and concise fish and wildlife regulations for anglers, hunters, trappers and boaters.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
5.5.a.	Ensure safety and improve access to public waters by maintaining statewide boat ramps, launch sites, dams and fishing sites, and informational signage to educate the public and promote safe use	Ongoing	Continuing to implement this strategic initiative.
5.5.b.	Work closely with the Commission and the other divisions to ensure the regulations are concise, not in conflict with Kentucky Revised Statutes, and enforceable	In progress	A regulation review team consisting of Commissioner's office staff, directors, program managers and coordinators, and legal staff has been assembled and applicable staff now review each proposed regulation change before reaching a Commission agenda.
5.5.c.	Provide the Commission with clear and concise regulation recommendations for the hunting of wildlife species	In progress	Continuing to implement this strategic initiative.
5.5.d.	Establish a working group to review fisheries regulations prior to proposal to the Commission by June 30, 2021	Completed	Fisheries Division management teams recommended a suite of potential regulation changes for simplification and these were presented at the June 2021 Commission Meeting.



<b>Initiative 6</b>	<b>Enact proactive measures in response to existing and emerging fish and wildlife health threats.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
5.6.a.	Continue surveillance efforts for the Asian long horned tick ( <i>Haemaphysalis longicornis</i> ), particularly in high-risk counties	In progress	Ongoing surveillance includes collecting ticks opportunistically from captured and road-killed wildlife species and submitting samples to diagnostic laboratories for identification.
5.6.b.	Continue Chronic Wasting Disease prevention and surveillance activities	In progress	Transitioned to a weighted sample surveillance scheme in 2020 and are expanding our voluntary hunter-harvested head donation program using freezer drop-off locations.
5.6.c.	Continue ongoing elk surveillance and health assessments	In progress	Active surveillance and collection of biological samples from both sick and healthy animals is being conducted throughout the year.
5.6.d.	Continue COVID-19 and wildlife review and response	In progress	Emergency regulations regarding the handling and rehabilitation of wildlife likely susceptible to SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) are awaiting approvals above the department level.
5.6.e.	Continue monitoring and surveillance of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease	In progress	Informational letters have been sent to stakeholders regarding the risk of introduction of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease Virus (RHDV) into Kentucky. Emergency regulations to mitigate the risk of potential introduction were drafted and are awaiting approvals above the Department level; regular amendments are being promulgated currently.
5.6.f.	Pursue federal grants or other sources of funding for increasing capacity of disease monitoring and abatement	In progress	We have collaborated with other agencies on multiple disease grant proposals that are still pending. Additionally, ongoing surveillance includes mosquito surveillance for arboviruses in ruffed grouse habitat, health assessments on bobwhite quail, and LPDV and REV surveillance in wild turkeys.
<b>Initiative 7</b>	<b>Promote safe and enjoyable experiences for all recreational boaters.</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>June 30, 2022 Update</b>
5.7.a.	Conservation officers will spend a minimum of 30% of their patrol hours on public waterways surveilling for violations and unsafe conditions	Completed and ongoing	This was accomplished in 2021 and will continue to be a priority in 2022.
5.7.b.	A minimum of 3 public safety announcements will be produced or activated each year to focus on the most dangerous aspects of boating to increase public awareness and safety compliance	Completed and ongoing	This was accomplished in 2021 and will continue to be a priority in 2022.
5.7.c.	The boating education coordinator will teach a minimum of 10 boating education classes in multiple locations (or virtually) across the state by Dec. 31, 2021	Completed	317 students attended in-person classes instructed by the Boating Education Coordinator in 2021.





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