



STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

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December 2022 Progress Report

Serving People, Conserving Fish and Wildlife

More than 500 Kentucky Fish and Wildlife employees make this commitment every day as they work to conserve our fish and wildlife resources across our Commonwealth's abundant woodlands, prairies, and waterways.

The 2023-2024 Strategic Plan for the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources serves as the framework to envision, execute and communicate the efforts of these dedicated staff to ensure that we are meeting the conservation challenges of our time, on behalf of both Kentucky's citizens and our precious natural resources.

On the following pages, we are pleased to provide you with updates on current programs and endeavors, and present new initiatives with thoughtful and measured planning. Guided by science-based decision making and best practices, these strategies guide our agency in making the necessary progress to address our most important conservation and recreational access challenges.

Our strategic plan outlines our five primary goals to:

- Manage for sustainable fish and wildlife populations and habitats
- Increase opportunities for and participation in fish and wildlife recreation
- Increase public awareness, engagement and partnerships
- Enhance the department's responsiveness and effectiveness
- Protect Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and promote user safety

We hope this plan provides you with an overview of our agency's most fundamental objectives and allows you to appreciate the devotion exhibited by the many exceptional men and women of the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources.

Thank you for your interest and support.

Rich Storm
Commissioner



Strategic Plan Initiatives: 2023-2024

| Strategic Plan Initiatives: 2023-2024 | | | |
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| 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 | July - December 2022 |
| 1.1.a. | Manage 3,800 acres of forests annually on WMAs with the use of prescribed fire, selective harvest, and forest stand improvement | In progress | Ongoing effort with staff actively managing 3,619.7 acres of forest on WMAS. Practices included prescribed burning on 2,737.7 forested acres, 122 acres of timber harvest, 70 acres of cedar harvest and 688 acres of forest stand improvement. Ongoing timber harvest projects at Dewey Lake, Grayson Lake WMA, and Taylorsville Lake WMA. Forest harvest plans in process at Fleming WMA and Yellowbank WMA. |
| 1.1.b. | Manage 10,000 acres of open lands on WMAs annually with prescribed fire, disking, herbicide treatments and other methods | In progress | Completed prescribed burns on open land acres for a total of 3,456.1 acres; Clay WMA completed a 600 acres aerial spraying application targeting invasive species. Accomplished WMA reporting is due at the end of January and Wildlife Division will update habitat numbers. |
| 1.1.c. | Manage 4,500 acres of wetlands on WMAs annually using water management, disking, planting and other methods | In progress | Wetland management acres are completed annually at predominately Ballard, Boatwright, Doug Travis, and Sloughs WMAs in western Kentucky. Unusually dry conditions allowed staff to complete additional disking and spraying of wetland units at Ballard WMA. Completed installation of a 10ac moist soil unit at KY River Boone tract in cooperation with KY Ducks Unlimited and 5th District LKS. |
| 1.1.d. | Update WMA management plans on WMAs with "High Management Level" designation by June 30, 2023 | In progress | WMA committee is working to standardize a working plan template to allow staff to complete a plan for 1 "High Management Level" per region by the end of the fiscal year. |
| 1.1.e. | Update lake-specific management plans for all major public lakes and reservoirs (>500 acres) managed by the Department by June 30, 2023 | In progress | A district staff meeting was held in the summer of 2022. A concensus was reached on the format and content changes for the management plans. Plans will be re-written with those changes in mind and submitted by June 30, 2023. |
| Initiative 2 | Expand research on species and habitat management efforts statewide. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 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 using new population model developed by University of Kentucky (anticipated December 2022). Determine hunting and viewing goals by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | A major calf survival and mortality project was completed in the summer of 2022. Currently, this data is being used to facilitate a statistical population reconstruction (SPR) abundance model of the Kentucky elk herd. The SPR model is scheduled for completion in late winter of 2023. At the completion of the SPR model, the elk program will take a wholistic view of the data collected in the last four years and make recommendations for future elk harvest and season structure to meet this objective. |
| 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, 2023 | In progress | Externally, a major population abundance project in conjunction with the University of Tennessee was concluded in spring of 2021. This project focused on an abundance estimate for the Big South Fork bear population. Population abundance of this interstate bear population was estimated at 817 bears with an annual mean growth rate of just under 20%. Internal research has focused on following a cohort of female bears to revise our reproductive estimates. Currently, there are 38 female bears wearing VHF tracking collars, with a subset of those used to investigate natality each winter. Major regulatory changes were made in September of 2022 that will guide a sustainable bear harvest into the future. |



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| 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 | During the survey period, KDFWR employees continued to conduct research and population trend surveys for a multitude of species of greatest conservation need. Staff completed surveys of barn owl nests, maternity cave surveys for Virginia big eared bats, surveys and reintroduction efforts for eastern hellbenders, qualitative and quantitative surveys multiple freshwater mussel species and long-term monitoring of monarch butterfly populations. Surveys at long term reptile monitoring sites at Mammoth Cave National Park continued. KDFWR also contracted with researchers to conduct population surveys for the spiny scale crayfish. |
| 1.2.d. | Conduct research on hunter effort for various wildlife game species to index wildlife population change, parameterize population models, inform season dates and bag limits on hunted species by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Ongoing efforts for data collection include Hangtags on Peabody WMA, Rockcastle River WMA, and Clay WMA. Statewide collection includes the annual rural mail carrier survey and voluntary hunter log surveys for small game species. Additionally, hunters and trappers are surveyed annually to collect harvest effort for river otter and bobcat. Effort data are used to explore the utility of statistical population reconstruction models to estimate abundance, recruitment, survival, and harvest vulnerability for river otter and bobcat in Kentucky. Also, we have collected hunter effort information via our WMA quota hunt surveys for deer and the new CWD survey for hunters in the CWD surveillance zone. Finally, the elk program conducts a mandatory elk hunter survey at the conclusion of each elk hunting season. Data from this survey is a foundational element in the construction of a statistical population reconstruction (SPR) model used to make inferences on elk abundance. At present, this survey has been conducted by the elk program annually since the 2016-2017 elk season. |
| 1.2.e. | Continue to evaluate the effectiveness of different fish habitat structures and materials | In progress | Ongoing, annual effort: Fisheries assessments of habitat enhancement sites have been conducted at Boltz Lake, Bullock Pen Lake, Corinth Lake, Laurel River Lake, Taylorsville Lake, Beaver Lake, Elmer Davis Lake, Benjy Kinman Lake, and Barren River Lake. Electrofishing surveys were used to estimate fish usage, catch rates, size structure, and seasonal habitat preference. Habitat sites constructed of natural materials tend to attract a higher abundance of sportfish as compared to plastic sites and control sites. Abundance of sportfish tend to be higher in the fall, as compared to spring and summer. Enhancement sites typically attract 6 or more fish species, with bluegill, largemouth bass, and crappie being most common. |
| 1.2.f. | Conduct research on turkey populations to understand (1) spring harvest rates and survival of male turkeys and (2) reproductive ecology including gobbling chronology in relation to the timing of nesting, nest and hatching success, and survival and movements of hens and broods | In progress | Two research projects on wild turkeys were initiated in 2022. The first field season was completed for "A Multi-State Banding Project to Investigate Factors Affecting Gobbler Harvest Rates and Assess Population Health", and a master's level graduate student matriculated at Tennessee Technological University. A PhD level graduate student also matriculated for the second project, "Reproductive ecology of wild turkeys in Kentucky", and is preparing for a first field season in 2023. |
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| Initiative 3 | Evaluate native fisheries species restoration efforts. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.3.a. | Continue to monitor and evaluate project success of ongoing lake sturgeon restoration efforts | In progress | Lake sturgeon were reared at Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery and a total of 9,300 were stocked in the Cumberland River above Lake Cumberland. Trotline surveys were conducted in December and data will be reported in a Federal Annual Report. All stocked year classes have been captured in trotline surveys. |
| 1.3.b. | Continue to monitor and evaluate project success of ongoing alligator gar restoration efforts | In progress | Efforts are on-going: 43,298 alligator gar have been stocked in western Kentucky between 2009-2022. Murray State University has been contracted since 2019 to a multi-year tagging and tracking project using GPS satellite tags and acoustic tags. MSU continues to monitor and tag fish: 4 tagged in 2020, 5 tagged in 2022, and other fish are being held to grow large enough to tag in 2023. This species is highly mobile over long distances and difficult to track and sample. USFWS is discussing ways to help states with survey efforts with a large survey effort planned for 2023-2025. |
| 1.3.c. | Continue to monitor and evaluate project success of ongoing native walleye restoration efforts | In progress | Working on Final Report: Restoration of Native Walleye in the Upper Barren River. |



| Initiative 4 | | | |
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| Initiative 4 | Expand reservoir fish habitat initiatives. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.4.a. | Conduct 1 large-scale reservoir fish habitat project annually | In progress | 4 large projects were in progress in 2022, Barren River Lake, Lake Barkley, Nolin River Lake and Rough River Lake. Barren River Lake: During the last half of 2022 staff continued to gather materials and built additional spider humps in October. To date, 6 of 7 phases of the Barren River Lake fish habitat project have been completed. The last phase will be completed in 2023. Sixty habitat sites have been constructed from 1,296 individual habitat structures. Sites have been constructed with a variety of material types, including large cedar trees, rock, wooden pallet structures, pvc, and commercially made products. Sites range from 10 to 20 feet deep at summer pool and include main lake points, large flats, pockets, and channel ledges. Largemouth bass catch rates were highest on rock/log structure types, while crappie catch rates were highest on brush pile and deep-water stake-bed sites. At Nolin River and Rough River lakes, staff in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers continued to implement a \$55K grant. Reefballs were built and deployed in these two lakes in October and November bringing the total to date at over 200. At Lake Barkley, staff in partnership with the US Army Corps of Engineers and other groups implemented a \$30K grant to install spawning beds. To date 450 bass and sunfish spawning beds, 1,237 tree laydowns and 1,000 cypress plantings have been completed. |
| 1.4.b. | Enhance fish habitat sites on at least 1 reservoir in each fisheries district annually | Completed | In 2022, each of the 7 fisheries districts completed at least 1 reservoir habitat project. The average per district was actually much higher than that with a total of 28 lakes and reservoirs receiving habitat work across all districts. |
| 1.4.c. | Create and implement a 10-year Reservoir Habitat Improvement Plan by Dec. 31, 2022 | Delayed | Incomplete. A new Habitat Team is being formed from the division's staff to guide the fish habitat efforts. The team will begin work in early 2023. Development of a 10-year plan will be one of the first tasks of this new team. |
| Initiative 5 | | | |
| Initiative 5 | Carefully prioritize projects, evaluate effectiveness and adaptively manage agency Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs). | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.5.a. | Critically evaluate High Management Level WMA plans based on short term and long term goals, staffing levels and operational budgets | In progress | WMA Committee in process of developing a standard WMA plan template to allow development of 1 "high level" management area per region to develop a plan by June 30, 2023. |
| 1.5.b. | Evaluate additional forestry and open lands management through contracting to maximize wildlife habitat management objectives | In progress | Ongoing topic to discuss among the members of the WMA committee. Currently ag contracts of tenancy allow minimal bartering except for material such as rock for road maintenance or general services such as herbicide application. Griffith Woods WMA is our best example of utilizing contracting and agriculture contracts where a bid package was developed for silage production and planting of sunflowers for maximizing public dove hunting opportunities. |
| Initiative 6 | | | |
| Initiative 6 | Identify critical needs for enhancing fish and wildlife species diversity that is consistent with the State Wildlife Action Plan. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.6.a. | Continue the review and revision to the State Wildlife Action Plan (fully complete by 2023) | In progress | Revision is on track for submission to USFWS in 2023. During this reporting period, the SWAP Advisory Committee convened four times and monthly meetings were held with each Taxa Team lead. Major accomplishments included completion of SGCN (species of greatest conservation need) prioritization, completion of SGCN habitat preferences, and completion of threat determinations for SGCN. Development and review of SGCN conservation actions, identification of SGCN Conservation Opportunity Areas, and plan design/writing are ongoing. |



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| 1.6.b. | Ensure fish and wildlife species status changes are incorporated into final updated revision of the State Wildlife Action Plan (fully complete by 2023) | In progress | Fisheries staff have updated the list of fish species that will be included in the plan and participated in development of the plan thus far. The revised list includes 77 species of fish. Compared to the last SWAP plan (2013) 17 species were added and 8 were removed. Of the species added, 9 are designated as data deficient, meaning additional survey work is needed to determine status and trends for these species. |
| 1.6.c. | Collaborate with state partners to accomplish SWAP revision, development, and implementation by June 30, 2024 | In progress | State partners participate with SWAP development and revision through collaboration on scientific taxa teams, selection of SGCN, data sharing regarding habitat, threats, and actions to benefit SGCN, and the development of models to inform state Conservation Opportunity Areas. |
| Initiative 7 | Improve facilities at fish hatcheries and WMAs to allow staff to better manage fish and wildlife populations. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.7.a. | Renovate 1 office building by Dec. 31, 2022 | Completed | Pfeiffer Hatchery office renovation complete fall of 2022. |
| 1.7.b. | Facilitate sediment removal from 2 hatchery ponds annually | In progress | Two ponds were renovated in 2022. Work will continue to remove sediment from ponds annually. |
| 1.7.c. | Repair 1 hatchery brood pond levee and outflow structure by Dec. 31, 2023 | Completed | Replaced outflow pipe from brood pond control tower to oxbow lake at Minor Clark Hatchery. Included water control tower to be re-leveled and new pipe connections were sealed water-tight. |
| 1.7.d. | Construct 1 new WMA office by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Phase C design nearly complete for new office structure on Veterans Memorial WMA. |
| 1.7.e. | Repair 2 Water Control Structures at WMAs by Dec. 31, 2023 | Completed | Water control structures replaced at Barren River Lake and Sloughs WMAs. Two failed structures replaced using larger capacity and longer lasting materials to facilitate seasonally flooded wetlands. |
| 1.7.f. | Replace Ohio River Pump at Ballard WMA by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Design is 75% complete. Plan to proceed with bids and award contract in calendar year 2023. |
| 1.7.g. | Construct 2 new storage sheds on WMAs by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Have evaluated multiple sites and are in planning and design phase. 5% |
| Initiative 8 | Revise and update species management plans. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 1.8.a. | Review and update the 2030 Elk Management Plan and identify next step goals and objectives by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Current research and the completion of an abundance model will be heavily utilized to review and update the 2030 elk plan. We are currently operating within the 2020-2024 five year window and are especially focusing on the research and habitat management objectives. In 2023, the elk program will review our progress and begin construction of the specific plan of work for 2025-2030. |
| 1.8.b. | Work to identify priority areas to achieve 5% of selected habitat goals set forth in the 2017 grouse plan by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | As of December 2022, approximately 366 acres of timber harvesting has been completed out of a total planned acreage of 1,096. |
| 1.8.c. | Create species management plans for major hatchery-reared species and develop procedures for evaluating the success of all current stocking efforts by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Four of the Fisheries Division management teams are currently working on species management plans. The species covered include Muskie, morone species, percid species, and trout species. Procedures for evaluating the succes of stockings of these species will be incorporated into these plans. |



| Goal 2 | | | |
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| Increase opportunities for and participation in fish and wildlife recreation | | | |
| Initiative 1 | Increase and promote boating and fishing opportunities on underutilized waters. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.1.a. | Host an R3 event on one underutilized waters location annually | Completed | Co-Hosted a Hook and Cook with Louisville Metro Parks at Shawnee Park. The Jefferson County Extension Agent provided the cooking demonstration and we had volunteer organizations that helped; Derby City Fly Fishers and Outdoor Afro. We participated in the Shawnee Outdoor Adventure Day on June 4th. Taught Kayak Fishing class on Gunpowder Creek in Boone County. |
| 2.1.b. | Send out 3 eBlasts to existing anglers to promote the Reel World Fishing Forecast website in the Spring and Fall. | Completed | Gear Up & Get Out - Summer Fishing in KY! eBlast sent in July to Subscribers of Current Fishing License and Lapsed Fishing Customers: 519,140 recipients with 236,951 Total Opens and 6,098 Total Clicks. Gear Up & Get Out - Summer Fishing in KY! eBlast sent in July to Subscribers of Reel Outdoors Contest Entries: 6,756 recipients with 3,017 Total Opens and 2,036 Total Clicks. |
| Initiative 2 | Expand our management efforts on public land in partnership with federal agencies and private landowners. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.2.a. | Work closely with the U.S. Forest Service to execute a state cooperative management agreement to better conserve and enhance resources on both the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Land Between the Lakes Recreation Area and to enhance services to our mutual constituents | In progress | The partnership agreement is currently being drafted by the partners. |
| 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 | KDFWR continued this important coordination and co-management with the Corps through 2022. |
| 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 | Completed | KDFWR now has a dedicated private lands coordinator and the private lands program is fully staffed for the first time as of December 2022. |
| 2.2.d. | Update WMA mapping to include habitat maps for minimum one High Management Level WMA* per Wildlife Region by June 30, 2023 | In progress | WMA Committee in process of collaborating with GIS staff to develop ability include habitat mapping for "high management level WMAs". |
| Initiative 3 | Enhance agency effectiveness by implementing the Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) plan for Kentucky. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.3.a. | Conduct an annual R3 summit with agency staff and partners by Dec. 31 of each year. | Completed | The annual R3 Summit was conducted on June 9th. Private FB group KY R3 Alliance Working Group. Conducted R3 Summit Post Survey. |
| 2.3.b. | Make a presentation about Kentucky's R3 Initiative to the entire Law Enforcement Division during annual training(s) | Completed | Certified all new recruits in Hunter Education. R3 course was completed and submitted to HR for all employees to complete. The course will be added to MyPurpose by HR. |



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| 2.3.c. | Exhibit at the Fish and Wildlife fair annually for the 22,000+ archers and spectators at the NASP Kentucky State Tournament through June 30, 2024. | Completed | Plan to attend and set up KDFWR booth at the KY State NASP Tournament to sell hunting and fishing licenses, permits, KY Elk Hunt Drawing entries, Kentucky Wild memberships, branded merchandise as well as market and communicate upcoming R3 and conservation-related programs and events offered by the department. |
| Initiative 4 | Improve mentor, coach and instructor development to strengthen R3 efforts. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.4.a. | Certify staff at Kentucky's 4-H camps as hunter education volunteers so they can teach hunter education as part of the 4-H camp experience | In progress | We have had meetings with the Program Coordinator for 4-H Shooting Sports. They are interested, but we need to continue to work together to figure out how to implement the program. |
| 2.4.b. | Continue promotion of online hunter education curriculum to high school agriculture and FFA programs. | In progress | Several ag teachers are teaching hunter education as a result of KDFWR presenting at the Kentucky Ag Teacher's Conference. |
| 2.4.c. | Evaluate the potential for providing online hunter education curriculum through school resource officer (SRO) safety programs by December 31, 2022 | Completed | Reached to SROs but they were not interested in pursuing this opportunity. In addition, we have reached out to the Kentucky Sheriff's Association to see if they are interested in teaching HE courses. We got some positive feedback from that group and will continue to explore that avenue. |
| Initiative 5 | Improve access to quality areas for hunting, fishing and other wildlife related recreation. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.5.a. | Construct 2 new boat ramps by Dec. 31, 2024 | In progress | One complete- Harris-Dickerson Pond River Boat Ramp complete winter of 2022. Provides expanded access to WMA and Pond River navigation. Camp Wallace Boat Ramp is currently awaiting permit approval. |
| 2.5.b. | Construct 1 fixed wooden fishing pier by Dec. 31, 2022 | Completed | Green River Lake Fishing Pier completed in Spring of 2022. Pressure treated fixed pier constructed allowing expanded fishing opportunity on Green River Lake reservoir. |
| 2.5.c. | Build relationships with large landholders in the east to develop 2 new hunting access areas by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | The elk program recently finalized an agreement with the Hoskins family to enroll just over 5,000 acres as a wildlife management area. Hoskins WMA provides critical access to Ataya WMA and the Daniel Boone National Forest while being home to a substantial herd of elk. This land had previously been enrolled in the voucher elk access program. |
| 2.5.d. | Develop a prioritized list of public fishing and hunting access improvement opportunities by Dec. 31, 2023. | In progress | The Fisheries Division is gathering a list of public fishing access improvement needs from each of the 7 management districts. Once this list is compiled, opportunities will be prioritized by greatest need. The Wildlife Division has presented 3 land acquisition projects to the commission for approval and is in process of acquiring yellowbook appraisals that will improve hunting access. Additionally, the Wildlife Division presented a donation opportunity to the Commission which is working its way through the process to become a new WMA. |
| 2.5.e. | Evaluate WMA mobile app options by Dec. 31, 2022. | In progress | |
| 2.5.f. | Rebuild 3 boat ramps by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Three ramp locations identified. 1) Beaver lake awaits final permit clearance to construct. 2) Wilgreen: is in design phase, pre-permitting. 3) West Point: design forthcoming as well permitting. |
| 2.5.g. | Pave 4 gravel boat trailer parking areas at existing boat ramps by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | 1) Wilgreen parking will convert from gravel to asphalt. 2) West Point will transition from gravel to asphalt park. More sites are being evaluated for upgrades from gravel to asphalt. |
| 2.5.h. | Install 2 new courtesy docks at existing boat ramps | In progress | 1) Greenup County; out for bid currently and working towards approved permits. 2) Wilgreen: will integrate new courtesy dock alongside new ramp construction, working towards design and permits. |



| Initiative 6 | Develop new public facilities that provide additional hunting, fishing and recreational shooting opportunities. | Status | July - December 2022 |
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| 2.6.a. | Increase recreational shooting opportunities through the completion of a plan and design for upgrades to existing rifle range berms and facilities by June 30, 2022 | In progress | Kleber rifle range currently being evaluated for tube removal and overhead baffle implementation. |
| 2.6.b. | Apply for 2 grants for the creation of a public archery range by Dec. 31, 2021 | Completed | |
| 2.6.c. | Make improvements to 2 existing WMA rifle ranges, including renovation of shooting berms and shooting facilities by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Kleber and Jones Keeney ranges are being evaluated for upgrades from tube based to baffle based ranges. Kleber is poised to be complete first. |
| 2.6.d. | Complete design and construction of a new shooting facility at Veteran's Memorial WMA by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Phase C design nearly complete. |
| 2.6.e. | Partner with 2 existing private shooting range facilities to secure new public recreational shooting access | Delayed | |
| 2.6.f. | Develop at least 2 ADA-accessible facilities by June 30, 2024 | In progress | HQ Archery Range is in design and should be complete by summer of 2023. Green River Fishing Pier completed in spring of 2022. |
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| Initiative 7 | Evaluate and improve all aspects of the customer experience. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 2.7.a. | Improve facilities at camps through replacing dated materials and equipment by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Dated failing concrete based bleachers replaced at Camp Currie. |
| 2.7.b. | Include customer satisfaction rating questions and opportunities for open-ended feedback in all customer surveys and distribute results to applicable program staff to facilitate additional public input. | Completed | KDFWR continued to include in its frequent customer surveys questions pertaining to participant or customer satisfaction and one or more questions allowing open-ended comments to elicit feedback from license customers to help ensure a high level of quality customer service. |
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| Goal 3 | Increase public awareness, engagement and partnerships | | |
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| Initiative 1 | Increase transparency of management and finances. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.1.a. | Publish before and after pictures of construction projects in the agency newsletter, GREAT Outdoors NEWS posts, and agency website whenever appropriate. | In progress | Multiple projects highlighted as EIT completes appropriate projects. |
| 3.1.b. | Maintain 3-step process for proposed regulation amendments to optimize public awareness and engagement. | Completed | KDFWR and the Commission have continued to use the 3-step process for handling proposed regulation changes including New Business, Discussion, and Action at three (or more) successive Commission meetings, except for the exceptional case requiring action in shorter order due to such factors as agreement with other current statutes or regulations, enacted federal regulations, or emergent issues. |



| Initiative 2 | Expand participation in Kentucky Wild and opportunities for other wildlife-related activities. | Status | July - December 2022 |
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| 3.2.a. | Create monthly Kentucky Wild mobile education events throughout the state. | In progress | Several mobile events were held throughout the state, including: 1) A Mussel Event in Georgetown, KY (July) that hosted 50 guests to educate about Kentucky Wild; 2) A Mussel-Tagging Event on Lake Cumberland in Jamestown, KY (August) that hosted around 20 participants to tag over 8,700 mussels; 3) Festival of the Bluebird in Franklin County, KY (September) that raised \$650 and registered 5 new members; 4) Bat Event in Georgetown, KY (October) that hosted 30 people and raised \$456 in KY Wild Merchandise sales and registered 4 new members; 5) Attended the KY Science Teacher Association Conference in Richmond, KY (November) at which 25+ contacts were established to expand our statewide Kentucky Wild brand ambassadors effort. |
| 3.2.b. | Create weekly content for department social media to bring awareness to species impacted by Kentucky Wild with a direct hyperlink to join. | Completed | 30 Kentucky Wild posts have been published since July to social media accounts. For Facebook, each post averaged: 23,907 in reach, 1,028 in engagement, and 28 shares. |
| 3.2.c. | Partner with another agency to create a Kentucky Wild event by June 30, 2023. | Completed | 25 Kentucky Wild members assisted with netting and tagging monarch butterflies at Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site in partnership with Kentucky State Parks in October. |
| 3.2.d. | Increase annual memberships and sponsorships by 5% year over year (Calendar Year). | Completed | Memberships for Calendar Year 2021 = 3,407 Memberships for Calendar Year 2022 = 4,100 For ~ 20% increase in memberships. |
| Initiative 3 | Broaden and strengthen project management collaboration with governmental, private and corporate partnerships on public and private lands. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.3.a. | Schedule meetings with each reservoir managing authority annually to facilitate communication and collaboration | Completed | Each of the 7 fisheries districts met with their major reservoir managing authorities in 2022 to discuss fish management, habitat work, and other reservoir management topics. |
| Initiative 4 | Grow our base by expanding our education and outreach approach to reflect a changing society. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.4.a. | Work with Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Foundation to publish and promote the grant-funded Kentucky fishing and boating app by summer 2023. | In progress | Fisheries and IT staff met in early 2023, to review final changes for the fishing and boating app. The app is scheduled for a spring 2023 release. |
| 3.4.b. | Complete and field a Request for Proposal for a license delivery system featuring a robust app and customer relationship management functions by June 30, 2023 | In progress | The RFP draft was being finalized as of December 2022. |
| 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 30, 2023 | In progress | |



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| 3.4.d. | Continue to actively incorporate diverse participants into agency publications, website, videos and other media to communicate that everyone is welcome in Kentucky's outdoors | In progress | Diverse participants were incorporated into the cover of the fishing guide, a fisheries division video, a wildlife division video, a law enforcement division video, an information and education division video, on the website, through social media, and other printed publications. Photoshoot with Bandy Carroll Heliage to obtain assets focusing on diverse female participation in outdoor recreation. These digital assets were utilized in a marketing campaign through an ACI grant that targeted new females in deer and squirrel hunting. |
| 3.4.e. | Expand, evaluate and report on annually our use of GovDelivery to capture and activate contacts to improve communications and increase sales | In progress | Staff continued to use and expand use of GovDelivery for email and sms messaging to constituent and customer groups, including enhanced notifications regarding CWD Surveillance Zone regulation changes applicable during the 2022 deer season. |
| 3.4.f. | Facilitate at least 2 fishing and 2 hunting events for new/novice adult participants annually | Completed | Completed Canoe Kentucky 3-part class Kayak Fishing Class for adults. Kayak Fishing program on Gunpowder Creek in Boone county. Two-day turkey hunting class with University of Kentucky students on March 22, followed by a mentor turkey hunt. BOW and Camp Currie mentor deer hunts were scheduled but had to be canceled due to a needed regulation update. Hook and Cook with BOW participants on March 19th. Mentor dove hunt with new staff. |
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| Initiative 5 | Continue to develop and expand agency sponsorship programs. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.5.a. | Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Fisheries Division by June 30, 2023 | In progress | |
| 3.5.b. | Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Wildlife Division by June 30, 2023 | In progress | |
| 3.5.c. | Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Information and Education Division by June 30, 2023 | In progress | |
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| Initiative 6 | Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.6.a. | Continue collaboration among marketing, communications, Commissioner's office, and divisional staff liaisons through weekly meetings and outreach planning activities of the communications coordination team. | Completed | Our weekly communications meetings continued through 2022. These meetings involved liaisons from each division bringing communication ideas to the core communications group. That group consists of staff from Information & Education, Marketing, and the Commissioner's Office. These meetings led to consistent and unified communication efforts on many projects. |
| 3.6.b. | Work collaboratively across multiple divisions to create a plan that outlines all groups working on public relations, defines their roles and establishes annual communication priorities. | In progress | A listing of communications priorities for 2022-23 were developed and shared with all communications team members as a reference and to help guide communications planning. |
| 3.6.c. | Continue weekly meetings of the communications team including division liaisons to maintain efficient, consistent messaging across all agency communication platforms. | In progress | The communications team continued to meet weekly to ensure good intraagency communication as well as to enhance planned external communications. |
| 3.6.d. | Share news releases and updates across multiple communications platforms. | Completed | Complete and ongoing |



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| 3.6.e. | Promote the work of staff in multiple media platforms and increase our total reach by 10% by Dec. 31, 2023. | In progress | Growth in social media platform audiences continues to be strong, with Kentucky Afield TV experiencing the largest expansion, in part due to availability and use of its high quality video content. |
| 3.6.f. | Review and update agency uniform policy by Dec. 31, 2022 to ensure optimal branding in all staff-public interactions. | Delayed | This was not yet completed but was begun as part of a systematic policy review and revision process. |
| 3.6.g. | Maintain at least eight social media accounts for the Fisheries Division with at least weekly posts submitted for each account. | Incomplete | Partially complete - The Fisheries Division currently has 9 active social media accounts. The majority are posting once a week, but improvements will be made to ensure all accounts are reaching the once-a-week goal. |
| 3.6.h. | Produce video and instructions to train all staff on the importance of agency branding and ambassadorship by June 30, 2023. | In progress | A draft script for a video has been produced and was in revision as of December 2022. |
| 3.6.i. | Conduct media outreach and facilitate interviews prior to key hunting/fishing/boating timeframes. | In progress | Ongoing |
| 3.6.j. | Complete update to all signage at headquarters by June 30, 2023 | Completed | Most signs at HQ have been replaced; the remaining signs have been ordered. |
| 3.6.k. | Implement a web-based electronic delivery platform for Kentucky Afield magazine to greatly expand its audience using a web-based platform and sponsorships | Delayed | A plan has been set forth with specific staff members tasked with setting the Print Information Branch up to succeed in this goal. One issue of the magazine was presented in a digital format in Spring '22, but that was a temporary fix to an issue. |
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| Initiative 7 | Enhance the Department's ability to facilitate and quantify public input when making management decisions. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 3.7.a. | Continue the new email platform for facilitating public input on Commission business by promptly distributing to members emails received on agenda items. | Completed | KDFWR staff continued to promptly distribute emails received on Commission business and constituent concerns to Commission members. |
| 3.7.b. | Develop and deploy a communications strategy to disability license customers regarding the transition from disability authorization cards to use of only numbers within My Profile by June 30, 2023. | Completed | KDFWR began contacting disability license customers using several communications platforms/tools. |
| 3.7.c. | Increase the use of customer survey question(s) at the end of transaction purchases as constructed by various shows where the agency exhibits and sells licenses, permits and Kentucky Wild memberships. | Completed | Continue to survey customers in-person at shows in events (August- surveyed 2 weekends at KY State Fair in Louisville, KY) and have started to incorporate QR code email opt-in options (November at Kentucky Wild Table Event in Richmond, KY). |
| 3.7.d. | Activate opt-in opportunity for email subscriptions on the department's home page by June 30, 2023. | In progress | Currently being planned. |
| 3.7.e. | Fisheries Division representatives will attend at least 20 public events annually that are hosted by sportsmen's groups, NGOs or department-affiliated entities to promote two-way communications and receive public input. | Completed | In total, staff of the 7 fisheries management districts attended over 35 public events in 2022. |



| Goal 4 | | | |
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| Enhance the Department's responsiveness and effectiveness | | | |
| Initiative 1 | Provide effective employee management and a positive work environment. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 4.1.a. | Initiate an employee communications and morale survey by June 30, 2023. | In progress | Currently being planned. |
| 4.1.b. | Evaluate and enhance opportunities for staff to mentor or mentee as hunters or anglers as part of their official job duties by December 31, 2023. | Completed | EMP Program launched on October 7, 2021. Developed EMP Step by Step Guide, EMP FAQ, Mentoring Best Practices, and EMP Survey. I am R3 course developed and submitted to HR on 1/3/2023 to post in MyPurpose. |
| Initiative 2 | Enhance recruitment to ensure a diverse, inclusive, well-suited workforce that relates to all customers. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 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 | Updated programs to align with current academic standards. |
| 4.2.b. | Uniformed officers and other staff will attend a minimum of 2 career fairs each year and work closely with area universities to attract diverse applicants | Completed | Completed and ongoing |
| 4.2.c. | Human resources will research needs related to an internship and cooperative education program by Dec. 31, 2023, and communicate opportunities for selected majors/disciplines to all state universities in Kentucky by June 30, 2024. | In progress | Underway |
| 4.2.d. | Human resources will enhance and keep updated the career opportunities page on the Department's website. | Completed | Complete and ongoing |
| Initiative 3 | Offer opportunities for professional development to ensure operational effectiveness. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 4.3.a. | Identify suitable customer service training and require of all staff beginning Jan. 1, 2023 to develop better responsiveness and communication to the public. | | |
| 4.3.b. | Provide media relations training to Law Enforcement and other pertinent personnel by June 30, 2023. | In progress | Training information/materials are being developed during this reporting period. |
| 4.3.c. | Evaluate and expand employee cross training across workstations to increase operational effectiveness by June 30, 2023. | | |
| 4.3.d. | Increase measurably the use of on-line trainings available through My Purpose by Dec. 31, 2023. | | |



| Initiative 4 | Improve private lands, water conservation and stream and wetland restoration programs. | Status | July - December 2022 |
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| 4.4.a. | Work with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to help landowners take advantage of the conservation provisions of the federal Farm Bill | Completed | Completed and continuing - housing staff in USDA offices around the state has improved communications and |
| 4.4.b. | Implement communications about the WMA Management Levels by Dec. 31, 2022 | Completed | Completed development of logos for each management level; signage updated at each WMA; press release completed; ongoing webpage and hunting guide informational communications |
| 4.4.c. | Update content and add informational videos to the Pond Management section of the website by Dec. 31, 2023 | In progress | Ongoing - Fisheries staff have met with the I&E Division to discuss video topics and format. Next steps will be to prioritize topics and begin filming short segments for the Pond Management page. |
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| Initiative 5 | Enhance revenue streams and operating budget to adequately address fish and wildlife conservation and recreation needs of the Commonwealth. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 4.5.a. | Increase operating budget to accommodate more FILO projects being implemented operationally via contracting, implementation of federal Recovering America's Wildlife Act (if passed by U.S. Congress), and other changes necessitated by statutory or other requirements | Completed | The operating budget was increased by \$9 Million to accommodate additional operational contract spends by FILO to implement scheduled projects. Recovering America's Wildlife Act did not pass in 2022. |
| 4.5.b. | Identify and evaluate feasible new revenue sources (both immediate and additional) to meet budgetary needs through an internal Alternate Income Working Group by June 30, 2023 | In progress | A communication to staff was sent to solicit suggestions for alternative income sources/means. Results were being reviewed and preliminary responses to staff formulated as of December 2022. By year end, the Alternate Income Working Group had met twice in 2022 and began prioritizing practical/feasible potential new income sources. |
| 4.5.c. | Begin implementing new immediate revenue sources by June 30, 2024 and initiate steps required to implement additional new revenue sources. | | The alternative income review and prioritization process underway will facilitate accomplishment of this initiative. |
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| Goal 5 | Protect Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and promote user safety | | |
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| Initiative 1 | Control, reduce and eradicate invasive species. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 5.1.a. | Work to identify locations of and eradicate invasive species on WMAs, beginning with "high management level" areas in this biennium. | In progress | An extensive bush honeysuckle eradication project was completed in fall 2022; results will be evaluated in spring 2023. |
| 5.1.b. | Work with 5 private/public landowners in each region through partnerships to control and reduce invasive species in to an acceptable level by Dec. 31, 2024. | In progress | Ongoing - To day our biologist have worked with 7 landowners in the Northeast Region, 7 landowners in the Southeast Region, 15 landowners in the Bluegrass, 4 landowners in the Green River Region, and 3 landowners in the Purchase Region. All of these landowners are working to control invasive species through the Environmental Quality Incentive Program. |
| 5.1.c. | Update the Statewide Aquatic Nuisance Species Plan for Kentucky by June 30, 2023 | In progress | Ongoing - Minor changes have been made to the ANS Plan. These need to be finalized and sent to USFWS for review before adoption. |



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| 5.1.d. | Continue to work with private industry to increase removal of invasive carp to 20 million pounds annually by Dec. 31, 2023. | In progress | Ongoing - KDFWR is working to establish an Experimental Fishing Methods Program to increase harvest (first MOU already in place). We are also forming a partnership with Murray State University to help promote carp-related business opportunities in Kentucky. We hope our continuing efforts with commercial fishermen and private industry will allow us to reach the 20M lb threshold. |
| Initiative 2 | Increase public safety for hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 5.2.a. | 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 | Ongoing - Officers are out patrolling public hunting and fishing areas on a routine basis. |
| 5.2.b. | Establish 5 additional life jacket loaner stations across the state by June 30, 2023 | In progress | Completed by December 31, 2022. 9 Life Jacket loaner stations were added during 2022 with 2 additional slated for construction in spring 2023. |
| 5.2.c. | 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 | In progress | Ongoing - 174 ramp sites are inspected and maintained annually, completed new Pond River Harris-Dickerson WMA boat ramp, 32 dams are inspected and maintained annually, 27 signs added or replaced at fishing access points across the state |
| Initiative 3 | Protect fish and wildlife resources through increased regulation compliance. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 5.3.a. | Conservation officers will increase the annual number of compliance checks conducted by 10% by June 30, 2023 | In progress | Ongoing - Officers will continue to perform compliance checks to meet this goal by June 30, 2023. |
| 5.3.b. | The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance by offering 24-hour dispatch service through Kentucky State Police referral system. | In progress | Ongoing - KSP dispatch continues to provide 24-hour services for our officers |
| 5.3.c. | The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance by offering Tip411 | Completed | Ongoing - Tip411 is still in operation and being utilized by citizens to provide information to LE officers. |
| 5.3.d. | The Law Enforcement Division will continue to promote public assistance with regulation compliance through social media channels | In progress | Ongoing - LE Staff are working to develop a division specific Facebook page to assist LE division with regulation compliance and public outreach on LE specific topics. |
| Initiative 4 | Provide professional conservation law enforcement services to the Commonwealth through mission-focused policing. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 5.4.a. | Maintain all levels of supervision across the Law Enforcement Division by promptly filling any supervisor vacancies that occur | In progress | Promotions to the ranks of Major, CPT, and LT occurred during 2022. SGT promotions are currently in process January 2023. |
| 5.4.b. | Require a minimum of 6 detailed and organized Law Enforcement operations from each district during peak seasons to ensure mission-focused efforts | Completed | Each district conducted 6 or more mission focused organized details during peak seasons, specifically during spring turkey, summer boating, dove, bear, elk, waterfowl and deer seasons. |



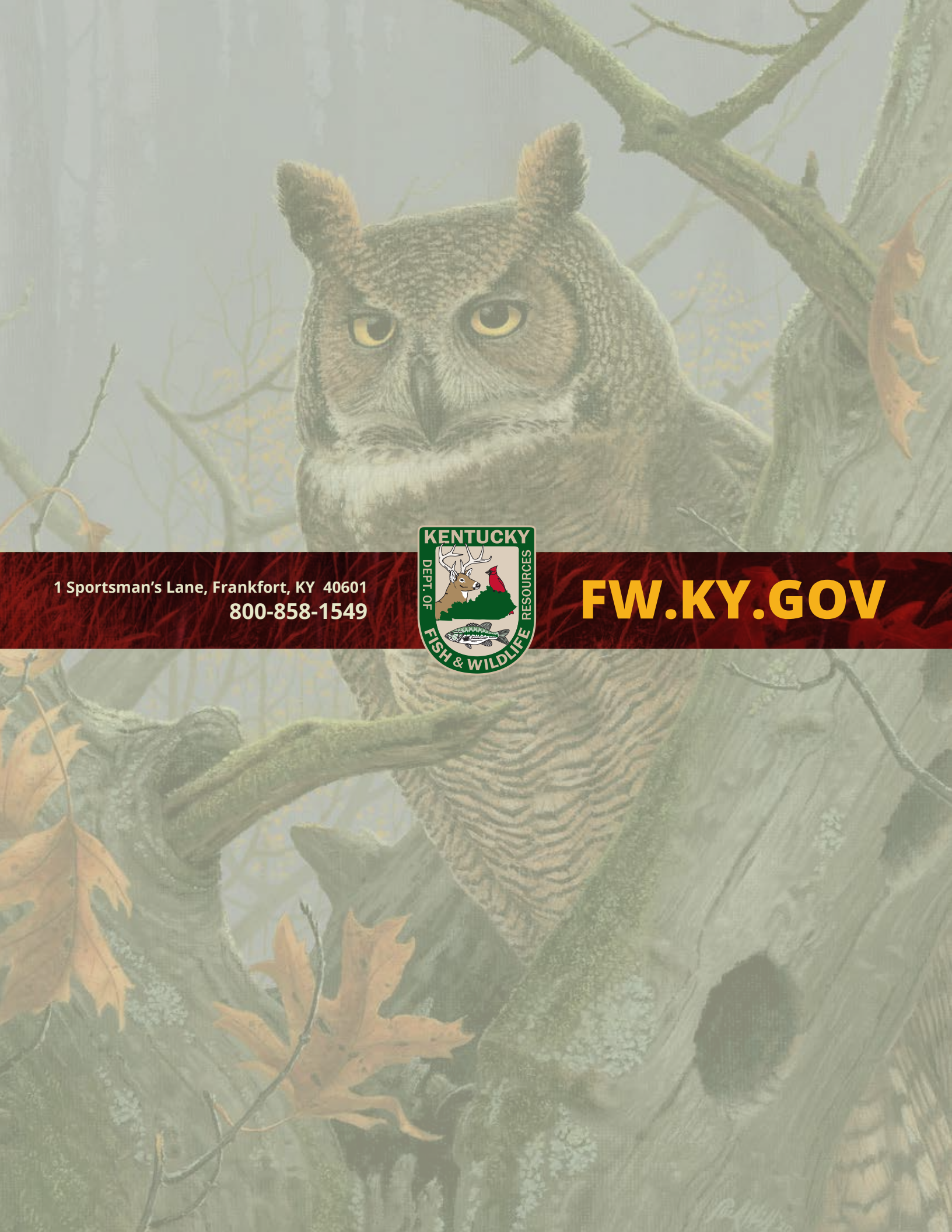
| Initiative 5 | Promulgate clear and concise fish and wildlife regulations for anglers, hunters, trappers and boaters. | Status | July - December 2022 |
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| 5.5.a. | Work closely with the Commission and internally across applicable division lines to ensure the regulations are concise, not in conflict with Kentucky Revised Statutes, and enforceable | In progress | Legislative liaison began tabulating all Commission-proposed regulation amendments by KAR number for tracking by all applicable staff to aid in drafting and review and to track progress in the promulgation process. Numerous amendments that had been proposed and favorably voted on by the Commission were processed and filed during this 6-month period, making significant progress on a backlog created by vacancies in the regulation coordinator position in the last 3 years. |
| 5.5.b. | Provide the Commission with clear and concise regulation recommendations for the take of fish and wildlife species | Completed | Commissioner's office staff and division directors have been very intentional to state recommendations and explanations in the Commission meeting agenda as clearly and concisely as possible. |
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| Initiative 6 | Enact proactive measures in response to existing and emerging fish and wildlife health threats. | Status | July - December 2022 |
| 5.6.a. | Continue surveillance efforts for the Asian longhorned tick (<i>Haemaphysalis longicornis</i>), particularly in high-risk counties | In progress | KDFWR continues to collect ticks opportunistically from wildlife and submit them to the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study for identification and pathogen screening. In the summer of 2022, two additional detections the Asian longhorned tick (<i>Haemaphysalis longicornis</i>) were identified in Breathitt and Perry County. These ticks were collected from elk calves and represent the first confirmed detections in these counties. To date, no pathogens have been detected in the ticks submitted from wildlife. However, a novel pathogen, <i>Theileria orientalis</i> genotype Ikeda, has been confirmed in ticks collected from cattle in two Kentucky Counties (Fleming and Hart). The detection of this novel pathogen reinforces the need for continued surveillance in wildlife for Asian longhorned tick which is the known vector of <i>T. orientalis</i> . |
| 5.6.b. | Continue Chronic Wasting Disease prevention and surveillance activities | In progress | KDFWR has continued to improve the agency's ability to detect the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) through surveillance activities and prevent the introduction of this disease. The Wildlife Health Program continues to participate in the Cornell University's Surveillance Optimization Project for Chronic Wasting Disease (SOP4CWD). The goal is to provide quantitative tools to help wildlife agencies improve their surveillance techniques and allocate resources efficiently and cost-effectively. The taxidermist and processor incentive program was updated in an effort to formalize a standard protocol regarding payment for CWD samples received from these partners. Mandatory check stations were maintained for the Fall 2022 hunting season in the CWD Surveillance Zone in Western Kentucky. CWD regulations prohibiting baiting and carcass transportation outside the CWD Surveillance Zone were continued same as the previous year. Voluntary Check Stations were implemented in two counties in Eastern Kentucky (Bell and Harlan). The establishment of these voluntary check stations were in response to a "suspect-not confirmed" case approximately 10 miles from our border in Tennessee. |
| 5.6.c. | Continue ongoing elk surveillance and health assessments | In progress | KDFWR program staff continue to respond to morbidity and mortality reports in elk. Mortality investigations are primarily suspect <i>P. tenuis</i> cases. Most cases have had a copper deficiency comorbidity. KDFWR will continue to monitor meningeal worm cases in elk in Eastern Kentucky, especially since the symptoms may present similarly to those caused by Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The Wildlife Health Program is working to develop a trace mineral reference range for elk in Eastern Kentucky to better understand the perceived copper deficiency among elk in Kentucky. The Wildlife Health Program has collected greater than 100 liver samples from hunter-harvested animals and elk mortality investigations. Additionally, serum has been collected from live animals during helicopter capture events for the past three years. Health assessments include trace mineral panels, abomasal parasite counts, manual white blood cell counts on blood smears, and pathogen screening include <i>P. tenuis</i> and CWD. |



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| 5.6.d. | Continue review and response of wildlife to COVID-19 | In progress | In 2021 USDA collected a total of 117 samples, of which 79 samples from 27 counties have been tested. Only one county, Christian, has been confirmed positive while 3 others are presumptive positives awaiting final confirmation by National Veterinary Service Laboratory (NSVL). Additional sampling was completed in August of 2022 and the results are pending. This additional sampling was conducted on six Wildlife Management Areas across the state. |
| 5.6.e. | Continue monitoring and surveillance of Rabbit Hemorrhagic Disease | In progress | In December of 2021 the first case of RHDV-2 in a domestic rabbit was confirmed in Kentucky. There have been no additional detections since the initial case. The Wildlife Health program continues to respond and investigate suspicious wild rabbit mortalities, while USDA APHIS Veterinary Services responds to suspicious reports in domestic rabbits. |
| 5.6.f. | Pursue federal grants or other sources of funding for increasing capacity of disease monitoring and abatement | | The Wildlife Health Program and the Deer Program applied for a USDA grant titled "FY22 Wild Cervid CWD Management and Response Activities" and was awarded approximately \$196,000 to fund a CWD genetics study. The US Fish and Wildlife Service also announced a new grant: the Zoonotic Disease Initiative, a grant program focused on wildlife disease prevention and preparedness. The Wildlife Health Program will be applying in the next grant cycle. The grant proposal will focus on enhancing KDFWR's capacity to respond to wildlife disease outbreaks and emerging pathogens. The Wildlife Health Program will specifically be requesting funds to improve the Wildlife Health Database which is currently outdated and inadequate to meet the needs of the program. An additional component will focus on specific communication needs regarding wildlife diseases. |

| Initiative 7 | Promote safe and enjoyable experiences for all recreational boaters. | Status | July - December 2022 |
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| 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 | Officers spent over 13,500 hours patrolling KY waterways during 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 | Division staff worked closely with Kevin Kelly and the Coms team to develop multiple boating safety PSAs to promote boating safety. |
| 5.7.c. | The boating education coordinator will teach a minimum of 10 boating education classes annually in multiple locations (or virtually) across the state in 2022 and 2023. | Completed | 19 Courses consisting of 214 students were taught by the boating education coordinator in 2022. |





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