



STRATEGIC PLAN INITIATIVES

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July 2021 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 2020-2021 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, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources remained true to its mission and continues pressing forward in 2021 despite ongoing 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.

We appreciate your interest in our mission, 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



2020-2021 Strategic Plan Initiatives

2020-2021 Strategic Plan Initiatives			
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 2021 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	Current forest management projects at Clay WMA (191 acres), Yatesville Lake WMA (141 acres), Dewey Lake WMA (225 acres), Grayson Lake WMA (365 acres). Taylorsville Lake WMA in process of advertising bid package for cedar harvest.
1.1.b.	Manage 13,000 acres of open lands on WMAs annually with prescribed fire, disking, herbicide treatments and other methods	In progress	Open lands management is being conducted on WMAs in all categories but specific acreages are not available at this time. However, a public dove field statewide summary is available : 23 WMAs have a total of 88 fields designated as dove fields for a total of 749 acres. This is a +181.5 acre increase compared to 2020. Additionally, 2,305 acres of open lands prescribed fire have been conducted on WMAs in the spring of 2021.
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 currently unknown but requested update from staff. Ballard and Boatwright total about 4,000 acres.
1.1.d.	Update WMA management plans on Tier I WMAs* by December 31, 2021	In progress	Wildlife Division leadership will be discussing short and long term plans; WMA Working Group will also be discussing.
1.1.e.	Update lake-specific management plans for all major public waters by June 30, 2021	Delayed	With the formation of species-specific management working groups within the Fisheries Division, their work will form the basis for the lake management plans. This process will delay the lake-specific management plans past 2021.
<p>* WMAs will be categorized into Tier I, II and III. Tier I WMAs will be staffed and intensively managed, while Tier III 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.</p>			
Initiative 2	Expand research on species and habitat management efforts statewide.	Status	July 2021 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 December 31, 2021	In progress	The first season of fieldwork on adult/yearling natality rates and calf survival estimates research have been completed; the second season will begin in January 2021.
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 December 31, 2021	In progress	The fieldwork portion of a major mark and recapture project to determine the abundance and density of black bears in the core of the Kentucky population was completed in summer 2019. Final results were presented in the spring of 2021 and are currently being utilized to amend the bear hunting regulations. This regulation amendment 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	We are currently investigating Virginia big-eared bats, eastern hellbenders, various mussels and bird species to help determine management needs and causes of declines. Determinations will be used to implement corrective management actions in the field. Additionally, 2 scientific papers were published dealing with eagles and mitigation options for osprey. Research is still ongoing with Virginia big-eared bats (2 new sites have been located), eastern hellbender, mussels and avian species (emerging disease issue under investigation), statewide amphibian and reptile surveys are ongoing. The Indiana bat maternity WNS research has concluded and we have shown 95% successful reproduction. This information has been presented at the national WNS Symposium and will be teed up for publication in the near future.

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 December 31, 2021	In progress	The turkey program conducted post-season surveys of eligible license customers and have developed estimates of spring turkey hunter effort along with other metrics, such as a number of turkey hunters, success rate, and total harvest independent from tele check data. Also, hunting effort data is now being collected from successful turkey hunters who report their harvest through the online tele check process, providing a different but real-time measure of turkey hunting effort.
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 December 31, 2021	In progress	Currently researching the feasibility of utilizing iSportsmen application. Also, we are investigating a new enhanced licensing system that may encompass electronic check-in and WMA permits. Additionally, we have contracted with UK Survey Research Center to conduct a survey of KY residents regarding wildlife-related recreation and how KDFWR could improve, enhance, or increase those opportunities.
1.2.f.	Initiate a research project to evaluate the effectiveness of different fish habitat structures and materials by June 30, 2021	Completed	Project has been initiated. Note this is an evaluation of effectiveness and not a traditional research project. Data collected in 2020 and 2021.
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	Black Bass Management Team recommended discontinuation of routine bass tournament exemptions and this was presented to the Commissioner and the Commission.
Initiative 3 Evaluate native fisheries species restoration efforts.			
Initiative 3	Evaluate native fisheries species restoration efforts.	Status	July 2021 Update
1.3.a.	Monitor and evaluate project success of lake sturgeon restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	Monitoring is underway; project milestones have been set.
1.3.b.	Monitor and evaluate project success of alligator gar restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	Monitoring is underway; project milestones have been set.
1.3.c.	Monitor and evaluate project success of native walleye restoration efforts by June 30, 2021	Completed	Monitoring is underway; project milestones have been set.
Initiative 4 Expand reservoir fish habitat initiatives.			
Initiative 4	Expand reservoir fish habitat initiatives.	Status	July 2021 Update
1.4.a.	Initiate 1 new large-scale reservoir fish habitat project by December 31, 2020	Completed	Enhanced habitat project initiated with Corps of Engineers, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, the U.S. Forest Service (LBL) and local angler groups on Barkley Lake.
1.4.b.	Enhance fish habitat sites on 3 existing reservoirs by end of June 30, 2021	Completed	Major fish habitat enhancements were completed on Benjy Kinman Lake, Barren River Lake, Taylorsville Lake, Carr Creek Lake, Elmer Davis Lake, and Cave Run Lake plus many other regular habitat efforts.
Initiative 5 Carefully prioritize projects, evaluate effectiveness and adaptively manage agency Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).			
Initiative 5	Carefully prioritize projects, evaluate effectiveness and adaptively manage agency Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).	Status	July 2021 Update
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 Committee has held two virtual meetings and are in the planning stages of scheduling tours of various WMA's in early spring of 2021.

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	Staff have identified Tier I, II, and III WMAs and are working with the Information and Education Division to produce video segments on each type to be added to the WMA page. Will work with WMA Working Group on updates and next steps.
1.5.c.	Evaluate additional forestry and open lands management through contracting to maximize wildlife habitat management objectives	In progress	Northeast Region has successfully hired a forester, and Green River Region is in the process of requesting to post a forester vacancy. Staff foresters will greatly increase the division's ability to prioritize forest management.
Initiative 6	Identify critical needs for enhancing Kentucky Wild species diversity consistent with the State Wildlife Action Plan.	Status	July 2021 Update
1.6.a.	Begin updating revision to the State Wildlife Action Plan (fully complete by 2023)	In progress	Revision process is underway. Executive and Advisory Committees convened in 2020. Technical Teams assembled in 2021 and are currently evaluating Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN).
1.6.b.	Plan twelve Kentucky Wild member experiences in 2020	In progress	Pandemic restrictions called for cancellation of most 2020 member experiences; however, several small group events were held in September 2020- May 2021.
1.6.c.	Begin revising the State Wildlife Action Plan to reflect changes in fish species status by June 30, 2021	In progress	Initial step to determine/reassess conservation status for each KY wildlife species, and identify species of greatest conservation need has started. Technical team has begun evaluation of potential changes.
Initiative 7	Improve facilities at fish hatcheries and WMAs to allow staff to better manage fish and wildlife populations.	Status	July 2021 Update
1.7.a.	Renovate 3 office buildings by December 31, 2021	In progress	Peter W Pfeiffer Fish Hatchery in critical design phase. Construction should begin during 3rd quarter. Murray office construction is 50% complete and will be 100% complete in early 3rd quarter.
1.7.b.	Facilitate sediment removal from 2 hatchery ponds annually	Completed	Two hatchery ponds have been cleaned out in 2020 and have started on others.
Initiative 8	Revise and update species management plans.	Status	July 2021 Update
1.8.a.	Review and update the 2030 Elk Management Plan and identify next step goals and objectives by December 31, 2021	In progress	Elk Program staff will continue to monitor the progress and identify ways to improve the 2030 Elk Management Plan.
1.8.b.	Publish the final report for the existing 10-year quail plan by December 31, 2020	Completed	The "Road to Recovery: Ten Year Restoration Report" was formally released to the public in digital format in July 2020. Printed copies are available upon request.
1.8.c.	Work to identify priority areas to achieve 15% of selected habitat goals set forth in the 2017 grouse plan by December 31, 2021	In progress	Progress toward habitat goals in the 2017-2027 Kentucky Ruffed Grouse and Young Forest Strategic Plan is underway through commercial and non-commercial forest stand improvements on WMAs, on private lands through USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) contracts, and on the Daniel Boone National Forest through recently approved management plans for Integrated Resource Management Areas.
1.8.d.	Form 5 internal fisheries management committees by June 30 2020, which meet at least quarterly through 2021	Completed	Seven internal fisheries management working groups have been established. Each working group has met multiple times.

Goal 2			
Increase opportunities for and participation in fish and wildlife recreation			
Initiative 1	Increase and promote boating and fishing opportunities on underutilized waters.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.1.a.	Write at least one Kentucky Afield magazine article annually about a fishing or boating opportunity on underutilized waters	Complete	The cover story of the spring 2020 issue details the history and opportunities of Elkhorn Creek. An article on the Tradewater River was written for the summer 2020 issue.
2.1.b.	Host an R3 event on one underutilized waters location annually	Delayed	Due to COVID-19 restrictions, it has been difficult to have guests in the small recording studio. But podcast hosts have discussed opportunities on streams, creeks and rivers to encourage stakeholders to visit underutilized bodies of water as a way of social distancing.
2.1.c.	Produce two segments on Kentucky Afield television detailing opportunities on underutilized waters	Completed	A segment fishing in Drennen Creek aired in August, and a segment fishing the Green River aired in September.
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	The Podcasts hosts have discussed opportunities on streams, creeks, and rivers encouraging folks to visit underutilized bodies of water as a way of social distancing. Fisheries Biologist David Baker joined the Podcast in June and discussed WMA ponds, Kentucky River, Ohio River pools and feeder creeks, and other opportunities. John Hast joined the show and discussed Yellowbank WMA for rabbit hunting and public lands for bear hunting. Wes Little talked about Sloughs WMA and Peabody WMA for waterfowl.
2.1.e.	Evaluate the feasibility of a paddle craft program by meeting with legislators and members of the outdoor recreation industry by December 31, 2021	Delayed	Due to COVID-19 restrictions.
Initiative 2	Expand our management efforts on public land in partnership with federal agencies and private landowners.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.2.a.	Work closely with the US Forest Service to better manage both the Daniel Boone National Forest and the Land Between the Lakes Recreation Area	In progress	We have two Good Neighbor Agreements active with the U.S. Forest Service. Purchase Region regional coordinator serves on advisory board at Land Between The Lakes National Recreation Area.
2.2.b.	Continue to work with the US Army Corps of Engineers to manage areas around some of the major lakes throughout the state	In progress	Three Corps property license agreements are being reviewed by the Cabinet and are in the final stages of providing fully executed copies to all parties.
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	We have met with NRCS leadership and have agreed to expand our partnership to 18 positions by the end of 2020. We are currently in the hiring process for several of these positions and hope to have all new staff in place by the beginning of March 2021.
2.2.d.	Work with local US Army Corps of Engineers project offices to implement large-scale habitat improvement projects at two reservoirs by June 30, 2021	Completed	Barren River Lake in final stage; Rough River Lake Project in progress; Additional work at Carr Creek Lake and Cave Run Lake completed spring 2021.
2.2.e.	Update WMA mapping to include habitat maps and area video overviews on all Tier I WMAs* by December 31, 2021	In progress	Currently Clay WMA has active habitat mapping available online.

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Initiative 3	Enhance agency effectiveness by implementing the Recruitment, Retention and Reactivation (R3) plan for Kentucky.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.3.a.	Conduct an R3 summit with agency staff and partners by December 31, 2021	Completed	Due to COVID-19 restrictions the 2021 summit was conducted virtually in June 2021. Planning to host the 2022 Summit Format TBD based on survey responses.
2.3.b.	Make a presentation to the entire Law Enforcement Division during their training on KDFWR's R3 Initiative	In progress	Due to COVID-19 restrictions this has been delayed but we are hoping to launch before fall of 2021
2.3.c.	Exhibit at the Fish and Wildlife fair annually for the 22,000+ archers and spectators at the NASP Kentucky State Tournament	Complete	Due to COVID-19 restrictions the 2021 tournament was hosted with restrictions. Due to limitations imposed by COVID, R3 displays and information were set-up in the main entrance area.
Initiative 4	Improve mentor, coach and instructor development to strengthen R3 efforts.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.4.a.	Train 50+ UK Cooperative Extension Agents to conduct their own Field to Fork and Hook and Cook classes	Complete	Trained 43 in February 2020. In 2021, 112 extension agents were trained.
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	Initial training with Trooper Island staff was conducted, Staff was Hunter Education Certified. Any additional efforts have been delayed due to COVID-19.
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 December 31, 2021	Delayed	Due to COVID-19 restrictions.
2.4.e.	Evaluate the potential for providing online hunter education curriculum through school resource officer (SRO) safety programs by December 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	Final report on the survey is complete.
Initiative 5	Improve access to quality areas for hunting, fishing and other wildlife related recreation.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.5.a.	Construct 1 new fishing ramp by December 31, 2020	Completed	Project complete and Shawnee Boat Ramp in Louisville is open to the public.
2.5.b.	Install 2 accessible kayak launches by December 31, 2021	In progress	50% Complete. Lake Reba access facility is complete. McNeely Lake installation scheduled to begin in July 2021.

2.5.c.	Construct 1 fixed wooden fishing pier by December 31, 2021	In progress	On hold only due to water level. Will complete late 4th quarter or early 2022 1st quarter.
2.5.d.	Build relationships with large landholders in the east to develop 5 new hunting access areas by December 31, 2021	In progress	We have added 5,000 new acres to an existing agreement with RH Group and added one new 5,900 acre landowner agreement with Land Resources Royalties to create the Betterment Wildlife HAA. We continue to seek out new partners to increase public access.
2.5.e.	Develop a prioritized list of access improvement opportunities by June 30, 2021	In progress	Development during this reporting period. List will be prioritized and worked into the budget development and capital construction requests in spring 2021.
2.5.f.	Create a WMA access mobile app for public use by December 31, 2021	In progress	This initiative is in the investigation stage.
2.5.g.	3 Structures on Veterans WMA to be demolished and parking area constructed by December 31, 2021	Completed	Structure demolitions completed in the 1st quarter, and construction of new parking area was completed in 2nd quarter.
2.5.h.	Taylorsville WMA Palmer Road Parking Addition by December 31, 2021	Completed	Expansion of existing parking area by over 100% was completed in the 2nd quarter.
2.5.i.	Steele Branch Boat Ramp Rebuild by December 31, 2021	Completed	Rebuild is required due to spring flooding completed 2nd quarter.
2.5.j.	Catlettsburg Boat Ramp access route augmentation and associated parking paving by December 31, 2021	In progress	Ramp improvements are underway and total upgrades to be completed in 3rd quarter.
2.5.k.	Rochester Boat Ramp to be reconstructed by December 31, 2021	In progress	In design and scheduled for reconstruction in 3rd quarter.
2.5.l.	Barren River State Resort Park Courtesy Dock by December 31, 2021	In progress	Bid review in July results in 90 days to construct/deliver. Conditions permitting, should be installed 4th quarter.
Initiative 6	Develop new public facilities that provide additional hunting, fishing and recreational shooting opportunities.	Status	July 2021 Update
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	UK completed "Report on 2020 Survey about Wildlife Recreation in KY" in June 2020, which included questions and findings regarding participation in target shooting.
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	Project is complete.
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	In progress	New design development ongoing.
2.6.d.	Increase recreational shooting opportunities through the development of a new design for future shooting needs by December 31, 2021	In progress	New design development ongoing.

2.6.e.	Apply for 2 grants for the creation of a public archery range by December 31, 2021	In progress	Range designs have been created. One grant application has been completed and will be submitted when the application period opens. The first range is proposed for Kentucky Fish and Wildlife's HQ campus in Frankfort; the grant that will provide the majority of funding has already been approved.
2.6.f.	Make improvements to 2 existing WMA rifle ranges, including renovation of shooting berms and shooting facilities by December 31, 2021	Completed	Improvements/repairs were made to Taylorsville Lake WMA shooting berm and Kleber WMA shooting berm, as well as the Otter Creek range.
2.6.g.	Complete design and scoping phase of new shooting range at Veteran's Memorial WMA by December 31, 2020 and secure bid for construction by end of June 30, 2021	Delayed but in progress	Wildlife and Engineering Divisions continue to partner to advance the project to the design and scoping phase. Have met with design firm and progress is being made.
2.6.h.	Partner with existing private shooting range facilities to secure public access	In progress	Progress is being made on a draft to present including plans to explore alternative means of allowing increased range opportunities for Kentucky sportsmen and sportswomen. KDFWR is partnering with Calvert City Gun club on a public/private partnership where we continue to lease range time for public use.
2.6.i.	Develop at least 2 ADA-accessible facilities by June 30, 2021	In progress	Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area pistol pit, ADA parking and sidewalk complete and open.
Initiative 7	Evaluate and improve all aspects of the customer experience.	Status	July 2021 Update
2.7.a.	Improve the bear exhibit at Salato Wildlife Education Center by enhancing fencing and enclosure facilitates by June 30, 2021	Completed	Project complete.
2.7.b.	Improve the bear exhibit at Salato Wildlife Education Center by improving the pool by June 30, 2021	Completed	Staff worked to clean out old sealant and replace with new sealant material. The water is holding at an acceptable rate, providing an improved environment for the bear and a better viewing experience for visitors.
2.7.c.	Improve facilities at camps through replacing dated materials and equipment by June 30, 2021	In progress	Camp Webb cooler and waste water treatment plant are in design phase; Camp Webb superintendent house renovation completed; Camp Currie superintendent house renovation in progress; Camp Webb swim dock replacement in progress.
2.7.d.	Develop a newly designed website by June 30, 2021	Completed	The new website design is now live.
2.7.e.	Perform a customer satisfaction survey related to the presentation of regulations by December 31, 2021	Delayed	Initial project discussion has taken place, but no action has been taken to date.
2.7.f.	Work with staff to develop and implement a customer satisfaction survey by June 30, 2021	In progress	Questions pertaining to hunter and angler satisfaction with the job KDFWR is doing at completing its mission have been included in 2021 customers surveys, and final results are pending.
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 December 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.

Goal 3			
Increase public awareness, engagement and partnerships			
Initiative 1	Increase transparency of management and finances.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.1.a.	Show before and after pictures of construction projects on the department's website	In progress	Documentation via website and other set to begin with 3rd quarter projects
Initiative 2	Expand participation in Kentucky Wild and opportunities for other wildlife-related activities.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.2.a.	Create Kentucky Wild mobile education events throughout the state	Delayed	Events postponed due to COVID-19. Planning will resume when permissible and feasible.
Initiative 3	Broaden and strengthen project management collaboration with governmental, private and corporate partnerships on public and private lands.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.3.a.	Implement annually scheduled meetings with each local US Army Corps of Engineers lake project office to facilitate communication and collaboration by June 30, 2021	Completed	Annual meetings about reservoirs were conducted with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers by district Fisheries biologists.
Initiative 4	Grow our base by expanding our education and outreach approach to reflect a changing society.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.4.a.	Launch a Kentucky fishing and boating app by December 31, 2020	In progress	The Fishing and Boating App sponsorship agreement has been reposted stating it is for a 5-yr term and is expected to be in place by August 1. Fisheries staff have been reviewing beta version and working with IT on revisions.
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 December 31, 2020	In progress	RFI is complete, and staff are working with Finance Cabinet on RFP. Statutory and regulatory changes are needed for updating and clarification.
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	One video was produced on T.N. Sullivan WMA and another at Sloughs WMA. A segment focused on a prescribed burn at Taylorsville WMA aired in December of 2020. A segment on prescribed fire for elk habitat aired in April 2021. A segment highlighting the public dove field program aired in January, 2021. A WMA-specific commercial was produced and runs on the show as well as on Facebook.
3.4.e.	Expand our use of GovDelivery to capture and activate contacts to improve communications and increase sales	In progress	Partially complete.

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.
Initiative 5	Continue to develop and expand agency sponsorship programs.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.5.a.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Fisheries Division by June 30, 2021	In progress	In process
3.5.b.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Wildlife Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Completed
3.5.c.	Expand sponsorships to include at least 1 sponsorship for the Information and Education Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Completed
Initiative 6	Develop and implement a comprehensive communications strategy.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.6.a.	Continue collaboration among marketing, public relations and communications specialists.	In progress	Collaboration has been much improved through intentional meeting and joint planning.
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	Division communications liaisons have been designated and are engaged in weekly communications planning.
3.6.c.	Coordinate efforts to maintain consistent messaging across all communication platforms.	In progress	Communications coordination is much improved and still being enhanced
3.6.d.	Create press releases that can be shared on multiple social media platforms by June 30, 2021	Completed	Press release format has been updated including providing links to key information, and the information is being shared across pertinent platforms depending on topic.
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	Delayed	Communications team will initiate next quarter.
3.6.f.	Maintain at least eight social media accounts for the Fisheries Division by June 30, 2021	Completed	Currently have eight accounts, and are maintaining annually.
3.6.g.	Evaluate and update signage at headquarters by June 30, 2021	In progress	Signs have been designed and will be ordered soon; a replacement sign for entrance kiosk is being researched and quotes are being obtained.
Initiative 7	Enhance the Department's ability to facilitate and quantify public input when making management decisions.	Status	July 2021 Update
3.7.a.	Create a mechanism to allow the public to provide input on management actions on multiple social media platforms	In progress	Researching best system to deploy.
3.7.b.	Use the GovDelivery platform to solicit public input on topics for which they have expressed an interest	In progress	Researching best system to deploy.

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	Planning for implementation in 2021.
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	In progress	Tablets purchased. Need to construct kiosk that will allow self-help to execute.
3.7.e.	Expand opt-in opportunities through the department web pages and social media channels	In progress	Exploring but very complicated. Need to purchase additional software and staff to manage.
3.7.f.	Implement a system for Fisheries Division representatives to attend at least ten public events annually that are hosted by sportsmen's groups, NGOs or department affiliated entities by June 30, 2021	Completed	Despite slowdowns due to COVID-19, Fisheries staff attended and presented at more than 20 meetings in 2020.

Goal 4

Enhance the Department's responsiveness and effectiveness

Initiative 1	Provide effective employee management and a positive work environment.	Status	July 2021 Update
4.1.a.	Conduct an employee communications and morale survey by June 30, 2021	Delayed	Not complete due to COVID-19 related reduction in staff work hours; Plan to continue development in early 2021.
4.1.b.	Develop a program for staff to mentor or mentee as hunters or anglers as part of their official job duties	In progress	Final stages of project design are underway.
4.1.c.	Provide proper safety training and personal protective equipment to all staff by June 30, 2021	In progress	Written programs and job hazard analysis reviews were completed and located on SharePoint. This is the first step to being able to provide training. Salato was subject to a Labor Cabinet consultative visit so they received all training required for this visit. Pfeiffer and Clark Hatcheries have also been through the Labor Cabinet consultative visits. Delayed in part due to COVID-19.
4.1.d.	Perform safety inspection on 50% of KDFWR facilities by December 31, 2020 and on the remaining facilities by December 31, 2021	In progress	Inspections are complete on headquarters structures, Taylorsville Lake WMA, Murray and Camp Wallace. Internal pipe inspections were performed on the Arnold Mitchell Building and Salato Wildlife Education Center. The COVID-19 pandemic and loss of our safety administrator have temporarily postponed additional progress on this task.
4.1.e.	Increase number of employees with OSHA 10 & 30-hour training certification by having on-site OSHA trained trainer	Delayed	New Safety Administrator will begin 02/2021 and will work to develop a training plan to continue progress toward this goal.
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 Conservation Educator series was completed by Oct. 16, 2020. We plan to review the FW Technician series next and continue until each classification has been reviewed.
4.1.g.	Create an updated salary comparison regionally, or of surrounding states, to compare Kentucky to other state fish and wildlife agencies	Delayed	Staff shortage of hours due to COVID-19, and school and childcare closings have temporarily postponed additional progress on this task.

Initiative 2	Enhance recruitment to ensure a diverse, inclusive, well-suited workforce that relates to all customers.	Status	July 2021 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	In Progress / delayed	Working to get all programs to meet Kentucky Academic Standards. However, delayed due to pandemic related cancellation of camps and in-person classes.
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	Recruiting events have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19.
4.2.c.	Human resources staff will attend at minimum 3 recruitment events by June 30, 2021	Delayed	Recruiting events have been cancelled or postponed due to COVID-19. We are pre-registered for a Law Enforcement-specific recruitment event that was to occur in February 2020 but has been postponed to May 2021.
4.2.d.	Human resources will research options and produce staff recruitment materials by December 31, 2020	Delayed	Recruiting events and materials have been delayed due to increased workload related to Covid and telecommuting. This will be a priority for 2021.
Initiative 3	Offer opportunities for professional development to ensure operational effectiveness.	Status	July 2021 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	In Progress	All Information Center staff and Salato Center staff have completed training opportunities through My Purpose. Those opportunities will continue to be sought out and taken advantage of when they arise.
4.3.b.	Provide media relations training to Law Enforcement and other pertinent personnel	Delayed	COVID-19 has not allowed this training to take place, as the Department of Criminal Justice Training (DOCJT) canceled their classes. The intention is to create our own class in the future, if necessary.
4.3.c.	Evaluate and expand employee cross training across workstations to increase operational effectiveness by June 30, 2021	Delayed	Due to COVID-19.
4.3.d.	Increase the use of on-line trainings available through My Purpose by 25% by December 31, 2020	In Progress	With COVID-19 related absences, many supervisors increased use of the My Purpose trainings to permit employees to work from home. Improvements made on additional online trainings as part of new employee orientation. Working on additional training recommendations for 2021.
Initiative 4	Improve private lands, water conservation and stream and wetland restoration programs.	Status	July 2021 Update
4.4.a.	Be a trusted leader in conservation by participating in diverse and effective projects such as lead reclamation projects	In progress	Lead reclamation project on Miller Welch-Central Kentucky WMA is 50 percent complete.
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	Working with NRCS to implement CRP, EQIP, WRE, and CSP.
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 is working with regional and program coordinators to set goals for 2021.

4.4.d.	Review and update information on the department's "Managing Your Farm Pond" page by June 30, 2021	Completed	The webpage has been reviewed and updated.
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 December 30, 2020	Completed	Land contracts secured properties for 11 projects with 5 being purchased in 2020, reducing delivery time by approximately half for this year; directly related to the new 3-person delivery team jointly created by Finance, TAHC, and KDFWR in March 2020.
Goal 5			
Protect Kentucky's fish and wildlife resources and promote user safety			
Initiative 1	Control, reduce and eradicate invasive species.	Status	July 2021 Update
5.1.a.	Work to eradicate invasive species on WMAs	In progress	Ongoing.
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	KDFWR Aquatic Nuisance Species Management Team was created. Team has reviewed the plan and working to summarize suggested changes and will be working with the National ANS Taskforce on the revision.
5.1.d.	Continue to work with the private industry to increase removal of Asian carp to 10 million pounds annually	In progress	Although COVID-19 has slowed down efforts, the industry is continuing to work towards the goal of 10 million pounds.
Initiative 2	Increase public safety for hunting, fishing, boating and recreational shooting.	Status	July 2021 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 withdrawn and is on hold.
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	July 2021 Update
5.3.a.	Conservation officers will increase the annual number of compliance checks conducted by 10% by June 30, 2021	Completed	Officers conducted 51,736 compliance checks in 2020 which was over a 30% increase above to 39,255 compliance checks in 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.
Initiative 4	Provide professional law enforcement services to the Commonwealth through mission-focused policing.	Status	July 2021 Update
5.4.a.	Maintain all levels of supervision across the Law Enforcement Division by promptly filling any supervisor vacancies that occur	In progress	Two vacant SGT positions in Regions 2 and 4 were recently filled. Personnel actions will be filed to fill any upcoming vacancies as a result of retirement. We currently have one vacant Major position. All field level supervisory roles are filled.
5.4.b.	Implement a new policy manual by June 30, 2021 to ensure clear, consistent expectations to maintain the desired level of professionalism	In progress	Officer review board recently reviewed and submitted potential amendments to the current drafts. Policy committee will review/implement these changes and submit to Colonel for final approval and dissemination to field staff.
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	In progress	Officers conducted numerous organized law enforcement details during waterfowl, fishing (FINS Lakes) and turkey season. This will continue the remainder of 2021 for boating events and fall hunting seasons.
Initiative 5	Promulgate clear and concise fish and wildlife regulations for anglers, hunters, trappers and boaters.	Status	July 2021 Update
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	Inspected 168 boat ramps and 32 dams. Conducted maintenance on one fishing access site, 1 courtesy dock, 3 boat ramps, and 5 dams. Performed 40 dam mowing's on 18 different dams. Ordered 32 new or replacement signs for boating and fishing access sites.
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	To accomplish this initiative, 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.
Initiative 6	Enact proactive measures in response to existing and emerging fish and wildlife health threats.	Status	July 2021 Update
5.6.a.	Continue surveillance efforts for the Asian long horned tick (Haemaphysalis longicornis), 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 utilizing 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 have been written and are awaiting approvals above the Department level.
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.
Initiative 7	Promote safe and enjoyable experiences for all recreational boaters.	Status	July 2021 Update
5.7.a.	Conservation officers will spend a minimum of 30% of their patrol hours on public waterways surveilling for violations and unsafe conditions	In progress	Officers have logged over 1,000 hours patrolling waterways observing for violations and assisting recreational boaters during the last 6 months of 2021. This will remain a priority for the remainder of the 2021 boating season.
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	In progress	Public service announcements (PSAs) focused on lifejacket use, boating under the influence (BUI) and water safety (drowning) awareness have already been released in 2021. More PSAs will be released ahead of upcoming summer holiday weekends.
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 December 31, 2021	In progress	Boating education coordinator has taught 7 boater education classes in 2021 and will easily exceed the 10 minimum by end of 2021.



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