

Direction for the Decade

Sustaining natural resources, building a conservation ethic, creating organizational excellence – these are three over-arching goals of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and the Wildlife Resources Division is well on its way to contributing to the achievement of these ideals with the Direction for the Decade.

For many people, strategic planning represents a task to be dreaded rather than an opportunity to make an organization stronger. A little over two years ago, the Wildlife Resources Division designed and launched the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process in an effort to ensure that the agency's administration and field associates had similar priorities, but more importantly, to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the public attitudes towards the agency and its responsibilities.

Development of the recommendations based on the information learned through Direction for the Decade focus groups and surveys with staff, stakeholders and the public was a huge task. Reconciling the differences in perspectives among these three groups and setting priorities that not only would conserve and protect the state's natural resources but also would exceed public expectations for the state's wildlife agency was challenging. The ten core principles and the resulting action items truly represent a diversity of interests. The final product represents an aggressive agenda for the next ten years.

Even while the final recommendations for the Direction for the Decade were being penned, agency staff were already well on their way to implementing its agenda. The Wildlife Resources Division has developed a strategy to educate and inform state legislators about its mission and responsibilities and to strengthen those relationships at the local level in order to serve as resources for legislative decision-making. Agency associates have served as support staff for Governor Sonny Perdue's Land Conservation Partnership Task Force and worked to incorporate many of the elements suggested for a land acquisition program into those recommendations. The agency also has initiated a Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy, the Georgia Deer Management Plan, and a Law Enforcement Policy and Procedures Review Committee, which all contain large elements of public input and relate directly back to the three goals of the Department of Natural Resources.

Good things can happen by accident, but more often they occur through careful planning and execution. I look forward to watching the Wildlife Resources Division implement the Direction for the Decade and further their efforts to be excellent stewards of Georgia's natural resources while striving to be responsive to the public they serve.

Noel Holcomb, Commissioner
Department of Natural Resources

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Table of Contents

Introduction and Overview.....	3
Resource Management	8
Enforcement	13
Land Acquisition	16
Education	20
Recreation	23
Outreach and Communications	26
Internal Administration	29
Appendix A: Program Areas and Responsibilities	31
Appendix B: Stakeholders Mailing List	34
Appendix C: Recommendations for Other Areas of Responsibility ...	40
Appendix D: Other Recommendations	49
Appendix E: Wildlife Resources Division Mission and Goals	52
Appendix F: Timeline for Direction for the Decade Action Items	54

Introduction and Overview

In 1991, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Wildlife Resources Division initiated a strategic planning effort called “Vision 2000”. The agency worked with the University of Georgia to host a Decision Conference with selected staff members in order to define critical issues facing the agency in the coming decade and to develop action items to address those issues. The conference was specifically designed to develop ideas and suggestions provided by agency staff and to give field personnel an opportunity to participate in the process of determining the Division’s direction. This process identified key issues such as education, funding for nongame wildlife conservation, technical assistance to private landowners and internal communications as priorities for the next ten years.

In March 2002, the Division embarked on a new strategic planning effort called “Direction for the Decade: 2003 – 2013”. The Direction for the Decade process broadened the efforts of the Vision 2000 by taking into consideration not only the attitudes of the entire agency, but also the attitudes of stakeholders and the general public. These efforts resulted in a much more comprehensive analysis of the Division’s responsibilities from which to set the agency’s priorities through 2013.

Strategic Planning Process

A Direction for the Decade Oversight Committee was named to provide input into the planning process and to review all of the survey instruments. This Committee included Noel Holcomb, Beth Brown, Chuck Coomer, Dan Forster, Lt. Col. Terry West and Mike Harris.

In order to develop the survey tools for the Direction for the Decade, the Oversight Committee first identified the major program areas and responsibilities of the Division. Further evaluation of these program areas and responsibilities in terms of their importance as part of the agency’s daily activities and the agency’s performance of each would serve as the basis to set future priorities for personnel and financial resources. Seven program areas were named for evaluation including: resource management, enforcement, land acquisition, education, recreation, outreach and communications and internal administration. More than 75 responsibilities were identified under these program areas (Appendix A).

The Oversight Committee, with input from the Director and the Section Chiefs, also selected a Direction for the Decade Working Group. The Working Group consisted of approximately 40 agency associates who were selected across job classes and levels of the organization in order to achieve a diverse representation of agency staff. No headquarters office staff were included as part of the Working Group. The Working Group was charged with evaluating the information obtained through the Direction for the Decade process and to develop action items for the agency to accomplish during the next ten years. WRD Regional Supervisors and Headquarters staff would review the recommendations from the Working Group and develop the final strategy for the agency.

The agency contracted with Mark Duda, of Responsive Management, Inc., to develop, conduct, and analyze mail and telephone surveys and to provide guidance throughout the planning process. After the agency’s program areas and responsibilities were identified, Responsive Management conducted four focus groups in May 2002 to determine that the primary work functions were identified and to assist in the design of the mail and telephone surveys. These focus groups included both agency associates as well as stakeholders. Agency associates consisted of those who were still early in their careers (5 – 10 years of experience) and those who had been with the agency for some time (15 – 20 years of experience). Stakeholders were selected for participation in the focus groups either as an organization with which the Division

already had strong ties or as an organization with which the Division would like to establish a better working relationship.

During June and July 2002, Responsive Management conducted a mail survey of Wildlife Resources Division associates, a mail survey of stakeholders, and a telephone survey of the general public. Appendix B lists all of the stakeholders' groups that received the Direction for the Decade survey. The surveys were designed so the results from all three groups could be easily compared. Complete findings from the surveys can be found in "DIRECTION FOR THE DECADE: The Attitudes of Georgia Residents, Wildlife Resources Division Staff, and Conservation Organizations Regarding the Future of the Georgia Wildlife Resources Division" published by Responsive Management in September 2002 and are available on-line at www.responsivemanagement.com.

Working Group Input

The Direction for the Decade Working Group met for the first time in July 2002 for a one-day workshop. The workshop provided an overview of changes in Georgia's demographics and land use and highlighted issues and trends influencing fish and wildlife management across the country. In addition, the Working Group received a notebook of other pertinent information related to wildlife conservation issues. Following this workshop, the Working Group members organized regional staff meetings to share the information they received with their co-workers in order to gain their perspective on some of these issues and to hear their concerns about the future direction of the Division.

In early October, the Direction for the Decade Working Group re-convened for a two-day facilitated meeting. Mark Duda presented the findings from the Responsive Management survey work and compared the attitudes of agency associates, stakeholders and the public. Following this presentation, breakout sessions were organized based on the program areas to allow the Working Group to discuss the survey results and to brainstorm recommendations for each program area in the next decade. Facilitators encouraged the Working Group members to make comments about the survey results and to suggest action items for the Division.

Following the Working Group meeting, the Division further examined the survey information provided by Responsive Management and used this information to help organize and prioritize the action items suggested during the two-day retreat. The following chapters include an overview of the survey findings. Each chapter includes a comparison of the top three responsibilities (rated extremely important) from each of the groups surveyed. All of the responsibilities listed as high importance by any of the three groups surveyed were considered priorities for that program area for the next decade. This process identified 37 of the Division's responsibilities as priorities.

Because the Working Group was asked to work with the findings from the Responsive Management surveys the same day that they were presented, these agency associates had very little time to consider the results before they were discussed. Therefore, some of the priority responsibilities were not discussed while other responsibilities that did not make the priority list were discussed in more detail. Action items for priorities that were not included in the following chapters are listed in Appendices C and D.

Prioritizing the Priorities

Weighted voting was used to help rank the 37 priority responsibilities identified through the Direction for the Decade process in order of importance. Each Working Group member and the Headquarters' Staff was given 50 points that he or she could assign to the list of responsibilities. Points could be allocated across all of the responsibilities or allocated selectively for responsibilities. Points from the Working Group and the Headquarters staff were added together to develop a prioritized list of the top ten responsibilities for the Division.

Top Ten Agency Responsibilities by Working Group and Headquarters Staff
Managing statewide sport fish populations.
Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
Educating and informing legislators about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
Managing and/or restoring habitat on state-owned lands.
Recruiting and retaining qualified employees.
Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding.
Acquiring new lands for Wildlife Management Areas.
Protecting threatened and endangered species.
Developing a conservation land acquisition program.
Managing statewide game populations.

These top ten priorities then were compared to the top ten responsibilities of importance identified by Division staff, stakeholders and the public through the Responsive Management surveys. Items highlighted in gray in the following tables indicate overlap with the top ten list of agency responsibilities identified by the Working Group and Headquarters' Staff and served as a basis to compare the attitudes of all groups that participated in this strategic planning effort.

Top Ten Agency Responsibilities by All WRD Staff
Recruiting and retaining qualified employees.
Managing statewide sport fish populations.
Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates.
Managing statewide game populations
Managing and/or restoring habitat on state-owned lands.
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.
Protecting threatened and endangered species.
Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
Maintaining agency lands, buildings and facilities.
Educating and informing legislators about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.

Top Ten Agency Responsibilities by Stakeholders
Managing and/or restoring habitat on state-owned lands.
Protecting threatened and endangered species.
Educating and informing legislators about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
Implementing recovery plans.
Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species.
Reviewing development projects for possible impacts on fish and wildlife resources and commenting on how to avoid or mitigate negative impacts.
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.
Providing adequate training for law enforcement personnel.
Interacting with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.
Recruiting and retaining qualified employees.

Top Ten Agency Responsibilities by the Public
Enforcing boating laws and regulations.
Encouraging safe practices and behavior in fish, wildlife and boating related recreation.
Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.
Protecting threatened and endangered species.
Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species.
Providing safety training for hunters.
Providing adequate training for law enforcement personnel.
Providing recreational oriented facilities on state-owned lands (such as camping areas, hiking trails, interpretive facilities, etc.).
Providing safety training for boaters.

The tables above indicate that there is some discrepancy between the priorities identified by the Working Group and Headquarters' Staff and the priorities identified by the other groups that participated in the Direction for the Decade process. Because the overriding goal of the strategic planning effort was to allow input from many different groups, the Director's Office and Section Chiefs worked with the responsibilities listed in the tables above to develop the following "Core Principles" for the agency for the next decade.

1. **The Wildlife Resources Division will work to ensure safety in outdoor recreation through quality enforcement and education activities.** The public views this role as a priority, including services such as providing safety training for hunters and boaters, enforcing boating safety laws and regulations, and encouraging safe practices and behavior in fish, wildlife and boating related recreation.
2. **The Wildlife Resources Division will manage and/or restore habitat on state-owned lands to meet the diverse needs of Georgia's wildlife.** Division staff and stakeholders indicate that this responsibility is extremely important.
3. **The Wildlife Resources Division will provide meaningful input into development activities that will negatively impact Georgia's fish and wildlife resources.** Stakeholders feel that reviewing development projects for possible impacts on fish and wildlife resources and commenting on how to avoid or mitigate negative impacts is an important role of the agency.
4. **The Wildlife Resources Division will educate the public about the importance of land acquisition and work to develop future land acquisition programs that encompass wildlife conservation and recreational needs.** The Direction for the Decade Working Group and Headquarters Staff placed emphasis on land acquisition efforts but other groups surveyed did not rank this responsibility high.
5. **The Wildlife Resources Division will provide fair and consistent enforcement of hunting and fishing laws and regulations.** All of the groups surveyed indicate that enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations is one of the agency's primary responsibilities.
6. **The Wildlife Resources Division will manage game and sport fish populations that allow for quality hunting and fishing opportunities.** Managing game and sport fish populations is important to Division staff, but not necessarily understood or viewed as important by stakeholders and the public.

7. **The Wildlife Resources Division will provide recreational oriented opportunities on state-owned lands to meet the needs of the public.** The public indicates that providing opportunities for hunting and fishing as well as camping, hiking, and interpretation is important.
8. **The Wildlife Resources Division will actively enforce environmental laws and regulations to protect Georgia's natural resources.** All groups indicate that enforcing environmental laws and regulations is a primary responsibility of the agency.
9. **The Wildlife Resources Division will protect threatened and endangered species and other nongame wildlife and protected plants through conservation, management and recovery efforts.** All groups indicate protecting threatened and endangered species, including implementing recovery plans and enforcement, is important.
10. **The Wildlife Resources Division will work to educate legislators and other decision makers about conservation and recreation issues to encourage informed decisions for the future of the state's natural resources.** All groups recognize that legislators are a major player in conservation and recreation issues and that efforts should continue to educate and inform them.

These Core Principles and action items suggested by the Working Group that related to them were combined and presented for consideration for Regional Supervisors and Headquarters staff at a statewide supervisors' staff meeting held in August 2003. These managers were provided an opportunity to review, edit and add to the original action items provided by the Working Group. The final step in the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process was review by the Director's Office and the Section Chiefs. This group had the opportunity to review, edit and add to the action items approved at the statewide supervisors' staff meeting. They also placed quantifications on each of the action items including a projected timeline and a primary Section for oversight and implementation.

The following chapters outline the Direction for the Decade for the Wildlife Resources Division. These action items will serve as the primary goals for the agency for the next ten years and are driven by input provided by agency staff, stakeholders and the public at every step in the process. Other action items suggested by the Working Group that are listed in the appendixes for the other program areas are considered secondary goals for the next decade and may be considered in more detail by smaller committees with more specific charges.

Resource Management

Core Principles

- The Wildlife Resources Division will manage game and sport fish populations that allow for quality hunting and fishing opportunities.
- The Wildlife Resources Division will protect threatened and endangered species and other nongame wildlife and protected plants through conservation, management and recovery efforts.
- The Wildlife Resources Division will manage and/or restore habitat on state-owned lands to meet the diverse needs of Georgia's wildlife.
- The Wildlife Resources Division will provide meaningful input into development activities that will negatively impact Georgia's fish and wildlife resources.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

When Jimmy Carter established the Georgia Department of Natural Resources in 1972, its primary purpose was to manage and protect the state's diverse natural resources. Today, a large part of the mission created by the Board of Natural Resources for the Wildlife Resources Division is to protect, conserve, manage and improve Georgia's wildlife and freshwater fisheries resources and to manage and conserve protected and endangered wildlife and plants. For these reasons, resource management permeates all of the other major program areas undertaken by the Wildlife Resources Division including land acquisition, enforcement, recreation and education.

In the early days of wildlife management, resource management activities were primarily geared towards game and sport fish restoration efforts. Thanks to license fees and the Federal Aid in Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Programs, species such as white-tailed deer, wild turkey, wood ducks and striped bass have been restored to sustainable levels that allow for regulated harvest. The key to implementing these successful programs was professional wildlife management. Today, the Wildlife Resources Division still places great emphasis on wildlife management programs for game animals and sport fish.

In more recent decades, nongame and endangered wildlife and protected plants have started to receive more attention. During the Vision 2000 strategic planning process, agency staff indicated that more emphasis was needed for nongame wildlife conservation initiatives as well as funding for these projects. Since that time, the Wildlife Resources Division combined the Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program and the Georgia Natural Heritage Program to create the Nongame Wildlife and Natural Heritage Section, placing it on the same level as the Fisheries Management, Game Management, and Law Enforcement Sections.

In addition, the agency has worked to resolve some of the funding issues by creating a nongame wildlife conservation license plate program that has generated over \$14 million since 1997. Attempts to secure permanent funding at the federal level through the Conservation and Reinvestment Act have not been successful; however, the Wildlife Resources Division has played a key role in raising the awareness for the need for funding nongame wildlife programs resulting in annual federal appropriations through the Wildlife Conservation and Restoration Program and State Wildlife Grants in recent years. While a permanent funding source is still the ideal way to meet the needs of nongame wildlife species, the funding secured at the state and federal level since 1997 has greatly expanded the efforts underway in Georgia.

In the Direction for the Decade surveys, both Wildlife Resources Division associates and stakeholders ranked resource management as the top priority for the agency in the next decade. A larger percentage of stakeholders (78%) rated resource management as extremely important than Wildlife Resources Division associates (61%). Only 24 percent of the public rated resource management as extremely important. This low rating by the public, considered with a similar low rating by the public for land acquisition, indicates that the agency needs to be more aggressive in explaining the processes and benefits of wildlife management.

Stakeholders and the general population thought protecting threatened and endangered species was the most important resource management responsibility of the agency. Wildlife Resources Division associates ranked this responsibility second in importance behind managing game. The public also named managing game as extremely important. Stakeholders and the general population placed emphasis on initiatives designed to manage and restore habitat. In addition, stakeholders indicated that reviewing development projects to mitigate or avoid negative impacts to the environment was extremely important for the agency to address in the coming decade, while Wildlife Resources Division associates placed priority on managing fish.

Top Three Resource Management Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Managing game (49%)	Protecting threatened/endangered species (54%)	Protecting threatened/endangered species (35%)
Protecting threatened/endangered species (45%)	Managing/restoring habitat (49%)	Managing game (25%)
Managing fish (44%)	Reviewing development projects (43%)	Managing/restoring habitat (24%)

Eighty percent of both stakeholders and Wildlife Resources Division associates rated the agency's overall resource management efforts as excellent or good. These performance ratings ranked second only to the agency's law enforcement efforts. However, these groups also identified several areas in need of improvement (less than 60 percent of those surveyed rated their performance as excellent or good). Some of these responsibilities include reviewing development projects, conducting biological research, managing and restoring habitat, and providing technical assistance to urban/suburban landowners.

Resource Management Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Reviewing development projects (47%)	Reviewing development projects (44%)
Biological research (49%)	Technical assistance to urban/suburban landowners (48%)
Implementing recovery plans (50%)	Technical assistance for nuisance wildlife (51%)
Managing/restoring habitat (50%)	Biological research (57%)
Inventorying populations (53%)	
Technical assistance to urban/suburban landowners (58%)	

Wildlife management responsibilities that currently are performed well by the agency and were rated as important in the survey findings must continue to receive emphasis in the coming decade. These responsibilities include the conservation and management of all wildlife populations. Emphasis should also be placed on managing and restoring wildlife habitat. Based on the importance and performance ratings of resource management programs identified in the survey, the agency also must develop and expand programs designed to review development projects for possible impacts on fish and wildlife resources in an effort to avoid or mitigate negative impacts on the state's natural resources.

The Direction for the Decade working group spent a great deal of time discussing the agency's performance in the area of nongame and endangered wildlife conservation. This program ranked as high importance among all three groups surveyed, but was not identified as an area in need of increased performance. The group attributed these findings to the fact that the agency has greatly increased funding for nongame wildlife conservation through the sales of wildlife license plates and federal grants. However, these funding initiatives are not permanent sources of revenue and have only allowed the agency to address the most pressing nongame wildlife conservation needs. Many of the low performing resource management areas identified by agency associates are tools used in managing nongame wildlife populations including conducting biological research, inventorying populations, implementing recovery plans and managing and restoring habitat. More public education is needed to increase the awareness of the plight of nongame wildlife populations and to generate support for a permanent funding source for these programs.

Furthermore, while none of the groups surveyed rated programs that provide technical assistance as highly important, the working group recognized that changes in the state's population resulting in increased habitat loss will only increase the demand for this service. While some of these problems may be avoided through more active education to urban and suburban landowners, the Wildlife Resources Division will need to develop a consistent policy for handling these situations with limited staff in order to avoid negative public relations.

Wildlife and their habitat are under more pressure than ever before due to the increased urbanization in Georgia. In order to successfully manage the state's wildlife resources in the next decade, the Wildlife Resources Division must educate the public about the importance of managing, protecting and conserving wildlife in order to maintain and increase support for these activities.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principles for Resource Management:

Resource Management Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Continue to place emphasis on surveys to monitor statewide game and fish populations.	Fisheries Management Section and Game Management Section	Ongoing
Educate the public on survey results, regulation processes and population goals. Target outreach and education efforts to increase awareness of the management of statewide game and fish populations	Fisheries Management Section, Game Management Section and Public Affairs Office.	Ongoing
Continue to improve the in-stream flow policy.	Fisheries Management Section and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section	Ongoing
Place a high priority on establishing a long-term, stable funding source for nongame wildlife and non-consumptive use activities.	WRD	Ongoing
Use available funds for habitat restoration on Wildlife Resources Division managed lands.	WRD	Ongoing

Task	By Whom	Timeline
Provide incentives to private landowners using available funds for efforts to restore and conserve threatened, endangered and nongame species.	WRD with Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Set a better example for land management and protect the biodiversity on state lands. Examples for areas of improvement include: erosion and sedimentation control, improved small game management techniques, improved fisheries management on areas other than public fishing areas, road design and construction as it relates to water quality, and monoculture pine/timber stands. Associates should be made aware of and follow closely Best Management Practices for agriculture and forestry.	WRD	Ongoing
Develop and implement a plan for comprehensive timber management on state lands and/or better inform staff of the plan. Decide how to deal with timber revenues generated by timber harvest. Use timber revenue to add foresters as needed to address forest habitat needs on state-owned lands. (Ongoing; Fisheries Management, Game Management and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Sections)	WRD with the Game Management Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Work with the Parks and Historic Sites Division by assisting with the development of resource management plans for their facilities.	WRD and the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Work with other state agencies (such as the Department of Corrections) to assist in the development of management plans for state-owned lands. Conduct an assessment of lands available and opportunities that exist for conservation and recreation.	WRD	Ongoing
Look for innovative partnerships and expand cooperative efforts with large private landowners that will protect lands for wildlife habitat. Enhance partnerships with other non-wildlife groups (such as power companies) to manage their lands in a wildlife-friendly manner.	WRD	Ongoing
Review projects that have a major impact on resources.	WRD	Ongoing
Develop a comprehensive land management plan to identify habitats in need of conservation. Develop a map that shows which areas are the most important areas for wildlife habitat. Take a broader approach to management by looking at eco-regions in the state and make sure adequate habitat is protected to manage for wildlife resources. Protect biodiversity and take a more comprehensive approach to management.	WRD	FY 04
Develop a comprehensive resource management booklet to incorporate information from all Sections. Implement a cataloguing system with tracking numbers for printed publications. Put all Division publications on the web site.	WRD	FY 05
Conduct a review of the 50-year plans for state lands to identify opportunities (such as funding) and to discuss priority issues. Develop a five-year or annual plans with measurable goals and quantitative steps. Consider timber management and include forest management staff in these annual reviews.	WRD Game Management Section is the lead on wildlife management areas, Fisheries Management Section is the lead on public fishing areas, and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section is the lead on natural areas.	FY 06

Task	By Whom	Timeline
Promote the management and use of native plants and habitats in order to create habitat for native wildlife.	WRD with Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section as the lead.	FY 06
Develop incentive and recognition based programs (using the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership and Bobwhite Quail Initiative programs for models) for habitat improvement on private-owned lands for game and nongame species.	Game Management and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Sections	FY 06
Identify priority areas and issues within each Region and cooperate with Regional Supervisors to better enforce laws and address other conservation needs. Provide access to the Georgia Natural Heritage Program’s database on threatened and endangered species for conservation rangers and other agency associates. (Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section)	WRD	FY 06
Increase and/or improve fishing opportunities in non-traditional areas, such as county and city park lakes. (Fisheries Management Sections)	Fisheries Management Section	FY 08
Add a Nongame Wildlife - Natural Heritage Section associate (at least a biologist and technician) to each Region.	Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section	FY 09

Enforcement

Core Principles

- The Wildlife Resources Division will provide fair and consistent enforcement of hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
- The Wildlife Resources Division will actively enforce environmental laws and regulations to protect Georgia's natural resources.
- The Wildlife Resources Division will work to ensure safety in outdoor recreation through quality enforcement and education activities.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

The role of enforcement in a state fish and wildlife agency has changed dramatically in recent decades and will continue to change in the next ten years. This is clearly apparent in the way that enforcement efforts were perceived by those surveyed through the Direction for the Decade process. Enforcement plays a vital role as a resource management tool and is essential to the agency's recreation, education and communications efforts.

Changes recommended as part of the Vision 2000 strategic planning process, such as aligning the number and boundaries of the Law Enforcement regions with the other agency Sections and moving the command staff to the headquarters facility in Social Circle, have greatly improved communications within the agency in the last ten years. In addition, specialized training such as accident investigation and the creation of the canine unit, has positively accented the efforts of the agency's law enforcement personnel. However, additional changes may be needed to meet the expectations set forth by the public, stakeholders, and agency associates.

The general population rated enforcement as the agency's most important responsibility, with 31 percent of those surveyed indicating it was extremely important. Forty-three percent of Wildlife Resources Division associates rated enforcement as extremely important, behind resource management and land acquisition. Approximately one-quarter of stakeholders (24%) rated enforcement programs as extremely important.

The enforcement programs that were rated as important by the general population, stakeholders and Wildlife Resources Division associates were somewhat varied. The general population and stakeholders were united in rating the enforcement of laws to protect threatened and endangered species as the top priority for the agency in the next ten years (priority action items listed under Resource Management). The public also listed two other services provided and widely publicized by the agency – enforcing boating laws and regulations and encouraging safe recreational practices – as extremely important.

Stakeholders and Wildlife Resources Division associates both rated enforcing environmental laws and regulations and providing training for law enforcement personnel as extremely important over the next ten years. Wildlife Resources Division associates also rated enforcing hunting and fishing regulations as extremely important, perhaps because this function has been the core of the agency's enforcement efforts.

Top Three Enforcement Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Providing training for law enforcement personnel (55%)	Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species (45%)	Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species (36%)
Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations (49%)	Enforcing environmental laws and regulations (45%)	Enforcing boating laws and regulations (34%)
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations (47%)	Providing training for law enforcement personnel (35%)	Encouraging safe recreational practices (34%)

Enforcement received the highest performance rating of any category by Wildlife Resources Division associates, with 84 percent rating these programs as excellent or good. While stakeholders did not rate enforcement programs as high as agency associates, 65 percent rated these programs as excellent or good. This lower rating may be explained in that stakeholders place more importance in enforcement programs that currently receive less priority within the agency such as enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species and enforcing environmental laws and regulations. These programs received a low performance rating by stakeholders. Wildlife Resources Division associates agreed that enforcing environmental laws and regulations was the enforcement program with the most room for improvement.

Enforcement Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Enforcing environmental laws and regulations (51%)	Enforcing environmental laws and regulations (35%)
Operating a canine unit (57%)	Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species (51%)
Interacting with other law enforcement agencies (59%)	

The challenge for the agency as it relates to enforcement is much the same as many of the agency's other efforts. Changing demographics and land use patterns require more attention towards the protection of threatened and endangered species and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations, but the agency cannot overlook the traditional enforcement responsibilities for hunting, fishing and boating. These new directions, and others including homeland security, will require additional specialized training for the agency's law enforcement personnel. While training for law enforcement personnel was not named as one of the agencies Core Principles, the agency must continue to refine and upgrade the training provided to POST-certified associates both at the training academy and through in-service opportunities. Other issues that were discussed in detail by the working group that impact enforcement included equipment needs, recruitment and retention of personnel, and workforce allocation.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principles for Enforcement:

Enforcement Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Develop incentive programs (such as t-shirts) for people that are obeying the laws and standardize the program statewide. Identify a permanent funding source or solicit corporate partner support for incentive items.	Law Enforcement Section	Ongoing
Annually review hunting and fishing regulations.	WRD	Ongoing
Continue efforts to enforce the Litter Control Act and Waste Control Act.	WRD with the Law Enforcement Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Conduct an annual meeting with representatives from all Sections to establish priority resource issues.	WRD	FY 04
Establish a Task Force to evaluate the agency's data and communications system and provide recommendations to upgrade the agency's radio and other equipment so that it meets current technology standards.	WRD	FY 05
Develop quality control and accountability processes for Law Enforcement Section databases.	Law Enforcement Section, License and Boat Registration Unit and the Program Support Division.	FY 05
Develop a communication system that allows conservation rangers to get real-time information from agency databases such as license and boat registration, the Wildlife Resources Information System (WRIS) and other information using a palm pilot or other hand-held device.	WRD and the Program Support Division.	FY 06
Establish a Task Force of Wildlife Resources Division, Environmental Protection Division and Pollution Prevention Division representatives to identify ways the Department can more effectively enforce environmental laws and regulations.	WRD with the Law Enforcement Section as the lead.	FY 06
Use data from the Stream Team surveys or other existing biological data to modify discharge regulations to protect the aquatic environment. Consider special designations for those streams considered to have sensitive areas or those considered pristine and with high biodiversity.	Fisheries Management Section, Law Enforcement Section and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section with input from EPD.	FY 07

Land Acquisition

Core Principle

- The Wildlife Resources Division will educate the public about the importance of land acquisition and work to develop future land acquisition programs that encompass wildlife conservation and recreational needs.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

Georgia has experienced tremendous population growth in recent decades. During the decade of the 1990s, Georgia was the sixth fastest growing state in the nation on a percentage basis and the fourth fastest growing state on a numeric basis. Not only does this population growth spur development that reduces available habitat for wildlife, but it also creates other concerns including the allocation of water and the quality of air. Nationwide, Georgia ranks sixth in wildlife and plant species diversity. In order to maintain the state's diverse wildlife resources in the face of a growing number of residents, the habitat and other resources upon which these species are dependent must be protected and conserved.

During the Vision 2000 strategic planning process, Wildlife Resources Division associates named land acquisition as a priority. At the time, the agency's budget did not include dedicated funding for land acquisition. However, the administrations of Governor Zell Miller and Governor Roy Barnes both placed some emphasis on land acquisition for wildlife conservation and recreation purposes even though they took very different approaches. Governor Miller created the Preservation 2000 and Rivercare programs to purchase more than 100,000 acres through the creation of bonds and increased licensing fees. Governor Barnes, on the other hand, chose to earmark funds to purchase specific sites including the Chickasawhatchee Swamp and an addition to the Crockford-Pigeon Mountain Wildlife Management Area and to fund the Greenspace Program in some of the state's rapidly growing counties. Governor Perdue also has shown great interest in protecting and conserving Georgia's natural resources and has appointed the Land Conservation Partnership Task Force to develop recommendations for future initiatives. The Wildlife Resources Division has augmented the efforts of these three administrations through land purchases funded with federal grants matched, in part, with revenue generated through the sales of wildlife license plates to benefit nongame wildlife conservation initiatives.

Land acquisition was rated second only to resource management by both Wildlife Resources Division associates and stakeholders. In fact, more than half of the stakeholders (52%) ranked land acquisition as extremely important compared to 45 percent of agency associates. While 21 percent of the public rated land acquisition as extremely important, other responsibilities including enforcement, education, and resource management rated more favorably. This indicates that the public may not understand the importance of protecting land as it relates to other areas of the agency's mission including resource management and recreation.

Acquiring lands for natural areas to protect rare habitats and acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Areas rated highly among all three groups. Acquiring lands for natural areas to protect rare habitats was the highest priority for both stakeholders and the general population, reinforcing data from previous surveys indicating high public support for protecting rare and endangered species. The general population and Wildlife Resources Division associates also rated acquiring lands for Public Fishing Areas as extremely important. Stakeholders placed more emphasis on acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands. The emphasis placed on different land acquisition priorities may reflect the level of understanding of what these areas are used for by the groups surveyed.

Top Three Land Acquisition Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Areas (48%).	Acquiring lands for Natural Areas to protect rare habitats (55%).	Acquiring lands for Natural Areas to protect rare habitats (27%).
Acquiring lands for Public Fishing Areas (38%).	Acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Areas (54%).	Acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Areas (21%).
Acquiring lands for Natural Areas to protect rare habitats (38%).	Acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands (43%).	Acquiring lands for Public Fishing Areas (17%).

Land acquisition received the lowest performance rating of any category by Wildlife Resources Division associates, with only 45 percent of respondents rating the performance as excellent or good. This indicates that although the agency has done a good job at acquiring public land in recent years without a dedicated funding source, agency associates recognize the importance of acquiring land to carry out the mission of the agency in the future. Stakeholders also indicated that land acquisition was an area of low performance, with only 51 percent of those surveyed rating the agency's performance as excellent or good.

None of the land acquisition responsibilities evaluated were rated excellent or good by more than 60 percent of those surveyed. Stakeholders and Wildlife Resources Division associates both listed acquiring conservation easements on private lands and acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands as the two lowest areas of performance.

Land Acquisition Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Acquiring conservation easements on private lands (26%).	Acquiring conservation easements on private lands (34%).
Acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands (32%).	Acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands (41%).
Acquiring access to lakes and streams (38%).	Acquiring lands for Natural Areas to protect rare habitats (42%).
Acquiring lands for Natural Areas to protect rare habitats (41%).	Acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Areas (49%).
Acquiring lands for Wildlife Management Area (41%).	Acquiring lands for Public Fishing Areas (50%).
Acquiring lands for Public Fishing Areas (43%).	Acquiring access to lakes and streams (59%).

Based on the importance and performance ratings of land acquisition programs identified in the survey, the need to establish a permanent land acquisition program is clear. A traditional land acquisition program aimed at increasing the number of Wildlife Management Areas, Natural Areas and Public Fishing Areas appears to have the most support among all of the groups surveyed. However, the agency should not overlook opportunities to acquire in-holdings and/or adjacent lands next to existing state lands because funding for smaller tracts may be easier to secure than funding for large land purchases.

During the Direction for the Decade working group session, land acquisition was named as one of the agency's biggest challenges in the next ten years, primarily due to budgetary constraints. The working group agreed that in order for land acquisition to be successful in the next decade, a dedicated source of funds for purchasing land must be established and that building public awareness and support for a land acquisition initiative is essential to its success. In addition, funding for operations and maintenance must be included in any new land acquisition program in order to achieve strong wildlife management programs while also offering recreational opportunities.

The working group also indicated concern about the current land acquisition process within the Department. They expressed interest in better educating field associates about this process and about new acquisitions when they are finalized. A recommendation was made to develop a comprehensive database of individual tracts of land that are available so that when money becomes available the agency knows immediately what land should be purchased. The working group also suggested that the agency prioritize what can be purchased with available funds and not eliminate opportunities because the potential acquisition does not fall into specific land categories. Overall, the working group indicated that a quicker process was needed for the agency to make decisions on land purchases so that opportunities are not lost.

The future of land acquisition in Georgia is uncertain at this time, but likely will occur in many different areas. The working group made recommendations on ways to improve the current land acquisition process and suggested options to consider in the development of a permanent land acquisition program. They also provided recommendations for improvements to the agency's lease program, land protection initiatives, and relationship with the Department of Transportation. In addition, the working group discussed funding for land acquisition programs in the next decade.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principle for Land Acquisition:

Land Acquisition Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Get involved with the Department of Transportation's land mitigation property program through a Commissioner-to-Commissioner Memorandum of Understanding. Evaluate Department of Transportation-owned lands, including river access at right-of-ways, for potential wildlife management areas or public use areas through lease agreements or other arrangements.	WRD and the Department of Transportation	Ongoing
Capitalize on current Wildlife Management Areas, Public Fishing Areas, and State Parks. Develop a proactive public relations campaign based on current management of state-owned land. Bring existing lands up to a high standard to raise public expectations and generate demand for more public land.	WRD and the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Implement specifications for bonds issued by the Department of Natural Resources that require mitigation lands to be suitable for wildlife-associated recreation.	Director's Office and the DNR Real Estate Unit.	FY 05
Develop a proactive public relations campaign for any new land acquisition program so that it does not get defeated based on misinformation from opponents. Explain the need for and address the arguments against land acquisition (for example, the agency is not taking land away from people, but protecting it for people). Publicize successes of prior land purchases and use it to educate voters on what is done with the property (Preservation 2000, Rivercare, NAWCA). Promote new acquisitions to the public.	WRD	FY 07

Task	By Whom	Timeline
<p>Develop a statewide land acquisition plan and funding mechanism that sets a goal on how much land needs to be protected (such as 20-25 percent of the state's total land area) and work to meet this goal through a combination of state-owned property, national forest land, state and national parks, conservation easements, etc. The plan should include some or all of the following concerns:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife diversity • Alternative user fees • Location and distribution • Ownership • Partnerships • Recreation opportunities • Funding sources • Operational funding 	WRD	FY 07
<p>Develop a cooperative program for individuals owning lands around state-owned lands. This effort would provide a better opportunity for cooperative resource management and improve the potential for future land acquisition.</p>	WRD	FY 07

Education

Priority Recommendations

- The Wildlife Resources Division will work to ensure safety in outdoor recreation through quality enforcement and education activities.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

The Wildlife Resources Division also placed great emphasis on education efforts during the last decade, based largely on recommendations in the Vision 2000 strategic plan. For example, the agency initiated a regional education center program, implemented alternative delivery opportunities for both hunter education and boating safety, and established an agency web site.

Based on changing demographics and land use trends in Georgia, education should remain a priority for the agency during the next decade. Thirty-three percent of Wildlife Resources Division associates rated education as extremely important over the next ten years. Stakeholders placed even greater emphasis in this area, with 42 percent rating education programs as extremely important. Only 29 percent of the public rated education as extremely important during the next decade. The public rated this topic area second only to enforcement.

All of the groups surveyed ranked hunter education as the most important education program conducted by the Wildlife Resources Division. These groups also felt that providing targeted education and outreach to the public was extremely important. The public placed more emphasis on providing safety training for boaters than did stakeholders or agency associates. Stakeholders emphasized providing education through regional education centers, while agency staff indicated that providing information about fish- and wildlife-associated recreation was extremely important.

Top Three Education Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Providing safety training for hunters (28%).	Providing safety training for hunters (36%).	Providing safety training for hunters (31%).
Providing information about fish- and wildlife -associated recreation (25%).	Providing targeted education and outreach to the public (30%).	Providing safety training for boaters (27%).
Providing targeted education and outreach to the public (24%).	Providing education through regional education centers (22%).	Providing targeted education and outreach to the public (18%).

Only 60 percent of stakeholders and 59 percent of agency associates rated the agency’s education efforts as excellent or good, indicating room for improvement in many programs. Programs identified by both stakeholders and agency associates in need of improvement include providing targeted education and outreach to the public, providing education through regional education centers, and providing education on skills for outdoor recreation. Agency associates also felt that programs aimed at providing information about fish- and wildlife-associated recreation also were in need of improvement.

Education Responsibilities	
Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Providing education on skills for outdoor recreation (43%)	Providing targeted education and outreach to the public (43%)
Providing information about fish- and wildlife-associated recreation (52%)	Providing education through regional education centers (47%)
Providing targeted education and outreach to the public (52%)	Providing education on skills for outdoor recreation (56%)
Providing education through regional education centers (56%)	

The agency should continue to focus on education initiatives identified by stakeholders and/or Wildlife Resources Division associates as having a high importance but low performance. These areas include providing education on skills needed to pursue wildlife-related outdoor recreation, providing targeted education to the public and providing education through regional education centers. In addition, the Wildlife Resources Division should continue to place strong emphasis on areas identified by the survey as having high importance and high performance and work to enhance them when given the opportunity.

In the Wildlife Resources Division associate survey, one comment summarized the importance of the agency’s education efforts – “Education is key to everything that we do.” During the Direction for the Decade working group session, a variety of action items for the agency’s education programs were discussed including regional education centers, hunter education, boating safety, youth education, the web site, and public relations efforts. The working group recommended that the Wildlife Resources Division also develop a list of priority messages (such as the importance of land acquisition) and promote them through all of the agency’s educational programs. Support materials should be developed to standardize the delivery of these messages by agency staff and regional education centers.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principle for Education:

Education Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Conduct public outreach to encourage safe boating, focused on raising public awareness.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office	Ongoing
Develop a proactive public affairs campaign to promote safe boating practices.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office	Ongoing
Standardize law enforcement education programs that are available for conservation rangers to give to schools and other groups. Make regional education centers more accessible to rangers to borrow “canned” programs. Develop a safety aspect to the annual conservation theme (ACT) in the education plan.	Law Enforcement Section and WRD Education Co mmittee.	FY 04
Evaluate the effectiveness of the on-line hunter education program.	Law Enforcement Section	FY 06
Increase public awareness of ongoing environmental enforcement efforts, including enforcement of the Litter Control Act and Waste Control Act.	Public Affairs Office with assistance from the Law Enforcement Section.	FY 05
Evaluate the potential for a courtesy boat inspection program, including working with partners such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.	Law Enforcement Section	FY 07

Task	By Whom	Timeline
Develop the hunting education and boating safety programs in the mold of project wild.	Law Enforcement Section and the WRD Education Committee	FY 07
Develop opportunities to provide hands-on firearms and archery training for hunter education graduates and others interested in shooting sports, including the expansion of the Archery in the Schools program.	Game Management Section and Law Enforcement Section.	FY 08
Update the hunter education and boating safety education materials, including videos and incorporate hands-on components to these education courses.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office.	FY 08

Recreation

Core Principle

- The Wildlife Resources Division will provide recreational oriented opportunities on state-owned lands to meet the needs of the public.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

Hunters and anglers have served as the backbone of wildlife conservation programs for decades through the purchase of hunting and fishing licenses and the federal surcharge placed on equipment purchases through the Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Acts. This funding is essential to the agency’s day-to-day operations. For these reasons, providing quality hunting and fishing opportunities are an extremely important part of the agency’s mission. Increased urbanization has led to a declining trend in hunting and fishing participation making the recruitment and retention of sportsmen and women challenging. The Wildlife Resources Division must continue to work on this problem in order to survive financially in the next decade.

Participation in other outdoor recreational activities such as bird watching, hiking, backpacking and camping have seen increases in recent years. Nowhere has this been more evident than in an increase of non-consumptive recreation on Wildlife Management Areas and Public Fishing Areas. Unlike hunters and anglers, however, these constituents do not contribute financially to wildlife conservation programs. Therefore, the agency must determine how to work with these constituents to not only provide services and facilities, but also to gain their financial support for conservation programs.

All of the groups that were surveyed ranked recreation as one of the lowest priorities for the Wildlife Resources Division. This ranking does not indicate that recreation is not an important part of the agency’s mission, but rather, that it is not considered as important as some of the other priority areas such as resource management, land acquisition and enforcement. Twenty percent of the general population rated recreation as extremely important in the next ten years, compared to 19 percent of Wildlife Resources Division associates and 22 percent of stakeholders.

When looking at specific recreational opportunities provided to the public, the general population and stakeholders indicated that providing fish and wildlife recreation opportunities for youth was the most important program for the agency in the next decade, an initiative also rated highly by Wildlife Resources Division associates. Another program of high importance to the public and stakeholders is providing wildlife viewing opportunities on state-owned lands. The public also named providing recreation oriented facilities as an extremely important program. Stakeholders and Wildlife Resources Division associates ranked providing hunting and fishing opportunities as high priority programs.

Top Three Recreation Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Providing hunting opportunities (47%)	Providing fish and wildlife recreation for youth (37%)	Providing fish and wildlife recreation for youth (23%)
Providing fish and wildlife recreation for youth (41%)	Providing hunting opportunities (28%)	Providing wildlife viewing opportunities (19%)
Providing fishing opportunities (39%)	Providing wildlife viewing opportunities (27%)	Providing recreation oriented facilities (18%)

Wildlife Resources Division recreation programs received a fair performance rating from stakeholders and agency associates, with 80 percent of stakeholders rating these programs as good or excellent compared to 68 percent of agency staff. Common areas receiving low performance ratings include identifying and eliminating barriers to outdoor recreation, providing fish and wildlife recreation for minorities, and providing recreational shooting range opportunities. In addition, agency staff indicated low performance for programs aimed at providing wildlife viewing opportunities, recreational oriented facilities and fish and wildlife recreation for youth.

Recreation Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Identifying/eliminating barriers to outdoor recreation (40%)	Identifying/eliminating barriers to outdoor recreation (46%)
Providing recreational shooting opportunities (53%)	Providing fish and wildlife recreation for minorities (46%)
Providing fish and wildlife recreation for minorities (49%)	Providing recreational shooting opportunities (53%)
Providing wildlife viewing opportunities (54%)	
Providing recreational oriented facilities (54%)	
Providing fish and wildlife recreation for youth (58%)	

Based on the importance and performance ratings identified in the survey, the top priorities for Wildlife Resources Division recreation programs in the coming decade are providing wildlife viewing opportunities, providing recreation oriented facilities, and providing fish and wildlife recreation programs for youth. Recreation programs that currently have good performance ratings but are extremely important in the next ten years include providing hunting and fishing opportunities. These findings indicate that the agency should continue to look for opportunities to provide services for people interested in a variety of outdoor activities, including hunting and fishing, in an effort to expand its constituent base.

The issue of providing increased recreation opportunities for activities other than hunting and fishing on state lands operated by the Wildlife Resources Division was discussed at length during the Direction for the Decade working group. Concerns over user-conflicts and the lack of financial support by non-consumptive users were among the key issues. As the agency moves to expand the recreational opportunities provided on state lands, these issues and others need to be carefully considered.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principle for Recreation:

Recreation Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Develop better opportunities for hunting species other than deer and turkeys on Wildlife Management Areas. Enhance quail management on state-owned lands that hold potential for providing sustainable public quail hunting.	Game Management Section	Ongoing

Task	By Whom	Timeline
Develop more opportunities to hunt on state parks, especially those with high populations of deer such as Red Top Mountain and Hard Labor Creek.	Game Management Section working with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Share areas of expertise with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division to benefit all state lands (for example, provide wildlife management assistance for state parks in exchange for recreation management assistance on wildlife management areas).	WRD in cooperation with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division	Ongoing
Develop public/private partnerships to establish canoe trails.	WRD	Ongoing
Investigate user fee system for all state-owned lands.	WRD	FY 05
Develop an accurate inventory of recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities on state-operated lands. Make the public aware of what is available (such as interpretive trails) but under-used. Develop new wildlife viewing opportunities on areas that have unique characteristics that would attract non-consumptive users.	WRD	FY 05
Develop a plan to determine what level of service is appropriate for each state-owned area and then provide multi-use areas where possible.	WRD	FY 07

Outreach and Communications

Core Principles

- The Wildlife Resources Division will work to educate legislators and other decision makers about conservation and recreation issues to encourage informed decisions for the future of the state's natural resources.

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

All Wildlife Resources Division associates are involved in outreach and communications efforts by serving as ambassadors to provide information on the agency's perspective on a wide range of services and issues. Whether it is working with an individual landowner or giving a presentation to a local sportsman's association, these interactions are vital to increasing awareness about the importance of protecting the state's diverse natural resources and encouraging Georgians to become wise stewards of the environment.

The only associates dedicated to outreach and communications efforts are the agency's public affairs office. This office functions primarily to provide public relations counsel to the Director's Office and Section Chiefs, develop statewide marketing and communications campaigns, interact with the media and coordinate special events and fundraising initiatives. For these reasons, field associates must handle many local outreach and communications programs. Strong communications skills have become a key characteristic to consider when hiring new associates.

Outreach and communications did not rank highly among any of the three groups surveyed compared to some of the other program areas. However, suggestions for new and/or improved outreach and communications efforts were included throughout the Direction for the Decade process in other areas of responsibility. Traditionally, outreach and communications programs have served in a support role and have developed in order to meet other parts of the agency's mission. Approximately one-fifth of all groups surveyed indicated that outreach and communication efforts are extremely important in the next ten years.

All three groups surveyed indicated that informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues is the most important responsibility of the agency for the next decade. Stakeholders and the public also indicated that involvement with the *Georgia Outdoors* television show is extremely important. Wildlife Resources Division associates placed more emphasis on programs working with the media to provide public information on conservation and recreation issues and developing programs to educate urban and suburban landowners about wildlife conservation.

Top Three Outreach and Communications Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents		
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders	General Population
Informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues (60%)	Informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues (59%)	Informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues (31%)
Educating urban/suburban constituents about conservation and recreation issues (31%)	Developing/maintaining relationships with traditional conservation groups (46%)	Educating minorities about conservation and recreation issues (23%)
Informing citizens about conservation through the media (29%)	Informing citizens about conservation through Georgia Outdoors (34%)	Educating urban/suburban constituents about conservation and recreation issues. (22%)
		Educating rural constituents about conservation and recreation issues (22%)
		Informing citizens about conservation through Georgia Outdoors (22%)

Neither Wildlife Resources Division associates nor stakeholders rated the performance of the agency's outreach and communications programs very high. Only 46 percent of agency associates and 47 percent of stakeholders rated these programs as excellent or good. The two lowest performing programs listed by both groups were educating urban/suburban constituents about conservation and recreation issues and educating minorities about conservation issues. Other programs that were noted as low performing by both groups included developing and maintaining relationships with non-traditional conservation groups, educating rural constituents about conservation and recreation issues, educating legislators about conservation and recreation issues, and informing citizens about conservation and recreation issues through the Internet, media and group presentations.

Outreach and Communications Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Educating urban/suburban constituents about conservation and recreation issues (34%)	Educating urban/suburban constituents about conservation and recreation issues (35%)
Educating minorities about conservation and recreation issues (36%)	Educating minorities about conservation and recreation issues (43%)
Informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues (38%)	Informing citizens about conservation issues through the Internet (47%)
Developing/maintaining relationships with non-traditional conservation groups (38%)	Educating rural constituents about conservation and recreation issues (53%)
Educating rural constituents about conservation and recreation issues (41%)	Developing/maintaining relationships with non-traditional conservation groups (54%)
Informing citizens about conservation issues through the Internet (43%)	Informing citizens about conservation through group presentations (56%)
Informing citizens about conservation through the media (47%)	Informing legislators about conservation and recreation issues (58%)
Informing citizens about conservation through group presentations (54%)	Informing citizens about conservation through the media (60%)

When considering programs rated as extremely important and as low performance, five outreach and communications priorities can be identified for the next decade. The Wildlife Resources Division can address these areas by developing conservation and recreation programs to inform and educate targeted groups including urban/suburban constituents, rural constituents, minorities, and legislators. Furthermore, the agency should focus more attention on using the media as a vehicle to provide more information to the public on conservation and recreation issues.

The Direction for the Decade working group discussed programs to educate and inform legislators on conservation and recreation issues at length and placed emphasis on this area for the next ten years. The decisions made by legislators today stand to influence the state’s natural resources and the environment for decades to come.

Following are the action items that were developed through the Direction for the Decade strategic planning process that relate to the Core Principle for Outreach & Communications:

Outreach and Communications Priority Action Items		
Task	By Whom	Timeline
Educate key legislators on specific Wildlife Resources Division issues, not just issues that arise during a particular legislative session. Stress how the Department is working together to protect the environment as a whole, not through the efforts of separate Divisions. Promote an ecosystem management view of Georgia’s future. In order to do this, HQ will need to develop an accepted list of topics (briefing points) that are allowed for discussion with legislators. Examples of potential legislative educational opportunities include legislative field days, roundtable discussions or a “Wildlife Day at the Capitol.” Provide legislators demographic and economic data on hunting, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation for specific districts. These education efforts also may be beneficial for DNR Board members, state court judges and county government officials.	WRD with guidance from the Director’s Office.	Ongoing
Develop public relations opportunities for legislators when they are active in natural resource issues.	Public Affairs Office with input from all Sections.	Ongoing
Continue long-term legislative initiatives rather than annual legislative plans. Communicate these initiatives to field staff.	Director’s Office	Ongoing
Work with the Conservation Congress to conduct lobbying efforts on behalf of the Wildlife Resources Division.	Director’s Office	Ongoing
Provide legislators with a “Direction for the Decade” report so that they are aware of the Division’s planning efforts and needs.	Director’s Office	FY 04
Implement the Wildlife Resources Division Education Plan.	WRD	FY 04 – FY 09
Identify Division associates (Section Chiefs or appointees) and encourage them to contact key legislators. Establish a protocol for these associates to follow. Make sure this information is clearly conveyed to staff (as many have been told not to do this in the past). Provide training to associates on how to properly communicate key issues to legislators. Inform Division contacts when legislators are instrumental in agency legislation so that these decision makers are known.	Director’s Office	FY 05

Internal Administration

Historical Perspective & Summary of Survey Findings

Internal administration is the hub around which all of the agency’s areas of responsibilities rotate. Only Wildlife Resources Division associates and stakeholders rated the agency’s internal administration efforts, primarily because most of the public is not familiar with day-to-day operations issues. Evaluating the agency’s internal administration provides two important areas of insight. First, since stakeholders are likely to have regular contact with the agency, their attitude towards internal administration may reflect the general public’s interaction with and impressions of the agency. Furthermore, associates’ opinions towards internal administration can provide insight into job satisfaction and an evaluation of the agency’s daily operations from an insider’s perspective.

Internal administration was not rated as high in importance as other Wildlife Resources Division areas of responsibility. Approximately one-fifth (19%) of agency associates rated it as extremely important, compared to four percent of stakeholders. It is important to note, that the only area that fell into the top three issues of importance identified by both groups for the next ten years was identifying new or non-typical sources of funding. Wildlife Resources Division associates rated programs that related to internal communications and personnel issues as more important than stakeholders. This ranking could be attributed to the fact that stakeholders are less familiar with current challenges in these areas.

Top Three Internal Administration Responsibilities Rated as Extremely Important by Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Recruiting and retaining qualified employees (66%)	Developing a clear vision for the future of fish and wildlife management (61%)
Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates (60%)	Developing conservation land acquisition programs (50%)
Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding (49%)	Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding (48%)

Stakeholders rated the performance of internal administration programs much higher than Wildlife Resources Division associates. Seventy-one percent of stakeholders rated internal administration as excellent or good compared to 49 percent of associates. Both groups identified the need to identify new or non-typical sources of funding as the lowest performing internal administration area. Wildlife Resources Division associates were much more critical of the performance of internal administration efforts. The only area evaluated that more than 60 percent of agency staff rated as excellent or good was developing and monitoring the agency’s budget, and that area only received a 61 percent performance rating. Areas for improvement identified by stakeholders included publishing and acknowledging research and accomplishments, providing timely and accurate information to associates, and facilitating communication between Sections.

Internal Administration Responsibilities Receiving an Excellent or Good Rating by Less Than 60% of Respondents	
Wildlife Resources Division Associates	Stakeholders
Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding (27%)	Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding (40%)
Facilitating communication between Sections (31%)	Publishing/acknowledging research and accomplishments (51%)
Developing/managing databases for human dimensions purposes (32%)	Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates (54%)
Administering the boat registration system (35%)	Facilitating communication between Sections (55%)
Developing conservation land acquisition programs (36%)	Developing conservation land acquisition programs (55%)
Publishing/acknowledging research and accomplishments (37%)	Developing/managing databases for human dimensions purposes (58%)
Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates (39%)	
Providing adequate computer training to associates (40%)	
Recruiting and retaining qualified associates (41%)	
Developing a clear vision for the future of fish and wildlife management (46%)	
Providing adequate management training for associates (49%)	
Developing/managing databases for wildlife management (50%)	
Maintaining agency lands, buildings and facilities (51%)	
Administering the licensing system (59%)	

In the next ten years, the Wildlife Resources Division should focus internal administration improvements on areas that rated as having high importance and low performance. These areas include identifying new or non-typical sources of funding, providing timely and accurate information to agency associates, recruiting and retaining qualified employees, developing conservation land acquisition and developing a clear vision for the future of wildlife management.

When developing the Core Principles of the agency, the Headquarters staff decided to focus on the services that are provided to the public. Therefore, the Internal Administration responsibilities listed as priorities were not incorporated and the action items suggested through the Working Group process were not evaluated. The action items suggested by the Working Group for internal administration are listed in Appendix C and should be reviewed and quantified as personnel and financial resources become available.

APPENDIX A

DIRECTION FOR THE DECADE PROGRAM AREAS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

- Conducting biological research.
- Implementing recovery plans.
- Managing and/or restoring habitat on state-owned lands.
- Managing statewide game populations.
- Managing statewide nongame fish and wildlife.
- Managing statewide sport fish populations.
- Monitoring/inventorying wildlife populations on state-owned lands.
- Providing technical assistance for nuisance wildlife or wildlife damage.
- Providing technical assistance on fish and wildlife issues to other state and federal agencies.
- Providing technical assistance rural landowners.
- Providing technical assistance to urban/suburban landowners.
- Protecting threatened and endangered species.
- Reviewing development projects for possible impacts on fish and wildlife resources and commenting on how to avoid or mitigate for negative impacts.

ENFORCEMENT

- Enforcing boating laws and regulations.
- Enforcing environmental laws and regulations.
- Enforcing hunting and fishing laws and regulations.
- Enforcing laws to protect threatened and endangered species.
- Encouraging safe practices and behavior in fish, wildlife and boating related recreation.
- Interacting with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.
- Operating a canine unit.
- Operating a covert unit.
- Providing adequate training for law enforcement personnel.

LAND ACQUISITION

- Acquiring access to lakes and streams.
- Acquiring conservation easements on private lands.
- Acquiring in-holdings and/or adjacent lands to existing state lands.
- Acquiring new lands for Natural Areas to protect rare and endangered habitats.
- Acquiring new lands for Wildlife Management Areas.
- Acquiring new lands for Public Fishing Areas.

EDUCATION

- Providing education and outreach programs through regional education centers.
- Providing education on skills needed to pursue wildlife-related outdoor recreation.
- Providing information for fish and wildlife associated recreation (such as maps, descriptions of facilities, etc.).
- Providing safety training for boaters.
- Providing safety training for hunters.
- Providing targeted education and outreach the public.

RECREATION

- Identifying and eliminating barriers to outdoor recreational participation.
- Providing fishing opportunities on state-owned lands.
- Providing hunting opportunities on state-owned lands.
- Providing more boating access points on the state's rivers and reservoirs.
- Providing more fish and wildlife recreational opportunities for children and youth.
- Providing more fish and wildlife recreational opportunities for minorities.
- Providing recreational oriented facilities on state-owned lands (such as camping areas, hiking trails, interpretive facilities, etc.).
- Providing wildlife viewing opportunities on state-owned lands.
- Providing recreational shooting range opportunities on state-owned lands.

OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATIONS

- Conducting research to improve the understanding of the attitudes and opinions of constituents.
- Developing a funding mechanism for non-consumptive users to contribute.
- Developing marketing campaigns aimed at increasing recreational users and/or educating constituents about conservation issues.
- Developing/maintaining relationships with non-traditional conservation groups.
- Developing/maintaining relationships with traditional conservation groups.
- Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through group presentations.
- Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the Internet.
- Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the media.
- Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the sponsorship of Georgia Outdoors on Georgia Public Television.
- Educating and informing legislators about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
- Educating and informing minorities about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
- Educating and informing rural constituents about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
- Educating and informing urban/suburban constituents about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.
- Incorporating constituents' wants and needs into the management of the state's fish and wildlife.
- Involving constituents in agency decision-making processes.
- Raising public perception of the role of the Wildlife Resources Division and its associates.

INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

- Administering the boat registration system.
- Administering the licensing system.
- Developing a clear vision for the future of fish & wildlife management.
- Developing and managing databases for human dimensions purposes.
- Developing and managing databases for wildlife management purposes.
- Developing and monitoring the agency's overall budget.
- Developing conservation land acquisition programs.
- Facilitating communication between sections.
- Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding.
- Maintaining agency lands, buildings and facilities.
- Providing adequate computer training for associates.
- Providing adequate management training for associates.

- Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates.
- Publishing research accomplishments and acknowledging accomplishments.
- Recruiting and retaining qualified employees.

APPENDIX B

STAKEHOLDERS MAILING LIST FOR DIRECTION FOR THE DECADE SURVEY

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APPENDIX C

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OTHER AREAS OF RESPONSIBILITY

The following action items were suggested by the Direction for the Decade Working Group for other Wildlife Resources Division areas of responsibility that did not fall under the Core Principles. These action items were not reviewed by regional supervisors or the Headquarters Staff and have not been quantified by a timeline or Section for responsibility or implementation. These suggested action items should be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate as more focused efforts are initiated, such as the development of the agency's five year Education Plan by the Wildlife Resources Division Education Committee.

Resource Management

Providing technical assistance for nuisance wildlife or wildlife damage.

Providing technical assistance on fish and wildlife issues to other state and federal agencies.

Providing technical assistance to rural landowners.

Providing technical assistance to urban/suburban landowners.

- Develop an aggressive public awareness campaign on wildlife abatement to educate the public on what they can do to prevent nuisance wildlife problems. Develop an informational brochure on dealing with nuisance wildlife and add this information to the website. Establish a fee system for technical assistance that requires a large amount of time (pond assistance, nuisance wildlife, etc.).
- Work cooperatively with people who are already in the business of technical assistance (animal control workers, nuisance trappers, etc.) and direct calls from the public to them. Develop a standard policy on how to use these contacts to assist with technical assistance and nuisance wildlife issues.
- Don't assume that public education will resolve the nuisance wildlife problem. Add additional staff to respond to public requests for assistance in dealing with nuisance wildlife. Consider putting a technical guide in each county of the state.
- Develop more programs to provide technical assistance to large private landowners since they hold the majority of the state's resources. Add staff to handle technical assistance for nongame wildlife management objectives.
- Develop distinct programs to provide technical assistance to rural and urban landowners since they have vastly different needs.
- Stop some of the technical assistance to private landowners.
- Provide more information to local law enforcement agencies on dealing with wildlife problems.

Enforcement

Providing adequate training for law enforcement personnel.

- Provide more frequent, high quality in-service training. Improve in-service training for conservation rangers to include refresher courses on skills learned in basic training that are not frequently used.
- Provide more training on threatened and endangered species and critical habitat identification.

- Provide more environmental enforcement training and coordinate training between the Environmental Protection Division and the Wildlife Resources Division.
- Provide training for new conservation rangers including computer skills, accounting and terrorism.
- Provide education training for associates expected to give programs to schools and other groups. Develop additional natural resource training for law enforcement personnel.

Land Acquisition

Acquiring conservation easements on private lands.

- Monitor conservation easements to ensure that the land is being used in the manner it was offered.
- Place more emphasis on riparian areas through conservation easements. Use the groundwater usage fee to help fund this initiative.
- Develop stronger partnerships with large timber companies. Educate them on options such as conservation easements to relieve tax burdens.
- Work with local land trusts to ensure wildlife habitat protection of quality areas.

Education

Providing education and outreach programs through regional education centers.

- Establish a closer link with and/or play a more active role in developing programs and curriculum for the regional education centers to ensure that the centers are meeting the agency's outreach needs and covering pertinent habitat issues.
- Establish more regional education centers.
- Make regional education centers more accessible to more kids.
- Add staff to existing regional education centers.
- Partner with Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) to "sell" environmental education centers to local schools.

Providing education on skills needed to pursue wildlife-related outdoor recreation.

- Develop a mentoring program for hunting and fishing for kids and adults. Partner with conservation groups to provide mentoring for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Offer a hands-on outdoor camp for kids to teach outdoor recreation skills or restart the summer youth camp.
- Develop skill-based seminars aimed at specific groups (minorities, college kids, etc.) and partner with corporate partners for funding.

Providing information for fish and wildlife associated recreation (such as maps, descriptions of facilities, etc.).

- Create more nature trails and/or interpretive signs on Wildlife Management Areas or in urban areas.
- Update information on Wildlife Management Area maps. Develop a CD with maps that can download to a GPS unit for all state-owned lands.
- Work with local Chambers of Commerce to provide Division information.

Providing targeted education and outreach to the public.

- Encourage Director to establish a relationship with the Department of Education Superintendent and the Board of Education to facilitate the inclusion of natural resource issues into the state curriculum. Standardize key expected outcomes for a core curriculum and develop education programs that can “piggyback” on curriculum that students already are learning. Tap into Department of Education funds to help boost education efforts.
- Provide and/or increase classroom ready materials for teachers. Focus on one grade level and send the information to every teacher in the state. Provide a person to teach the unit in the classroom.
- Develop an outdoor education elective for schools that would include segments on hunting, boating, natural resource management and other issues.
- Enhance information available on the Division’s Internet site for teachers and provide links to other research sites. Provide teachers with an inventory of nearby field experiences.
- Develop brochures and other materials geared for teachers about the role of the Department of Natural Resources.
- Develop a “teachers in the outdoors” program.
- Develop natural resources curriculum that are reading and math oriented and hire staff or use retired educators to develop support materials. Ensure the curriculum portrays hunting and fishing in a positive light.
- Partner with colleges to develop co-op programs to introduce natural resource issues, especially with schools that do not offer coursework in these areas.
- Develop a mobile aquatic education unit.
- Develop short video clips on Division issues that can be used in schools and at other locations. Incorporate touch screen technology at places like state parks and visitor’s centers.
- Develop more printed materials for education purposes on targeted issues (such as stream protection).

Recreation

Providing fishing opportunities on state-owned lands.

- Develop more fishing piers, especially those with handicap access. Maintain facilities that are already in use.
- Develop more fishing piers on Wildlife Management Areas. People are using the facilities where they currently are provided.
- Establish free fishing days on holidays to promote family activities.
- Provide free fish and technical assistance only to landowners who allow public access for fishing. Implement a fee structure for landowners who do not allow public access and use revenue to develop fishing programs in urban areas.
- Increase and/or improve public fishing opportunities in areas where there are a few places to fish (for example, Albany area).
- Create an urban fishing program. Work with city and county governments to provide urban fishing opportunities.

Providing hunting opportunities on state-owned lands.

- Provide more hunting days on Wildlife Management Areas. Return to traditional weeklong hunts on Wildlife Management Areas.
- Establish a “walk-in” partnership program with large landowners to provide more places to hunt. Consider leasing fields from large landowners to provide more hunting opportunities.

- Develop partnerships with or lease dove fields through farmers to provide additional hunting opportunities for the public. Allow the farmers to cut the fields for hay, but then have it planted with dove attractants and allow the public to hunt on them. Make better use of cooperative farming agreements with farmers on Wildlife Management Areas.

Providing more boating access points on the state’s rivers and reservoirs.

- Develop a map that shows all boating access sites and add new sites as they are completed.
- Enhance the boat ramp program to address boating access problems in the regions where it is an issue. Some regions have more than they can adequately maintain and others do not have enough.
- Partner with the Department of Transportation to make sure that boating access is considered in future planning for bridges and right-of-ways so that mitigation money can be used for construction of access points. Work with the Department of Transportation to widen bridge right-of-ways for boaters during construction projects.
- Identify and resolve erosion problems created by boating access points.
- Address public access rights to waterways. Clarify the legalities of hunting and fishing on private waters. Define navigable waterways for the public.
- Purchase, rather than lease, locations on rivers for boating access.
- Provide canoe access at new ramps.
- Develop partnerships with private companies to establish more concessions for rentals and access.
- Develop partnerships with corporate landowners to include public access in mitigation when building.
- Coordinate with other organizations that provide boating access and services to develop good information for boaters and canoeists including information on take out points, parking facilities, etc.
- Develop an “Adopt-a-Stream”-type program for boat ramps with schools and businesses and designate them with signage.

Providing more fish and wildlife recreational opportunities for children and youth.

- Offer more family-oriented opportunities such as Outdoor Adventure Days, adult-child hunts, International Migratory Bird Day events and free fishing days. Solicit corporate sponsors to help cover expenses for these events.
- Put more emphasis into programs aimed at kids and first time anglers.

Providing recreational shooting range opportunities on state-owned lands.

- Develop a communications campaign to work with nearby homeowners and landowners to minimize and/or alleviate the “not in my backyard” attitude towards shooting ranges. Provide better public information about state-owned and private shooting ranges.
- Charge for the use of state-owned shooting ranges or require a Wildlife Management Area license or parking fee to help fund operations and maintenance.
- Develop a plan to deal with the high number of violations that occur on state-owned shooting ranges. Establish operating hours and assign staff to work shooting ranges during those times or consider using volunteers to operate shooting ranges to help reduce vandalism.
- Increase the number of public shooting ranges (firearms and archery). Add or enlarge shooting ranges in areas with a high demand. Consider improvements, such as target stands, to some of the ranges. Develop indoor shooting ranges or archery ranges in metropolitan areas where noise may be a problem.
- Put a map on the Division web site to show the locations of shooting ranges. Link to the map under development by the National Shooting Sports Foundation.

- Upgrade all state-owned shooting ranges to National Rifle Association standards. Develop a publication to provide standards and directions for building a shooting range.
- Develop partnerships with local governments or military ranges to develop additional shooting range opportunities.
- Promote opportunities to use private shooting ranges.

Outreach and Communications

Developing/maintaining relationships with traditional conservation groups.

- Develop a newsletter for distribution to all conservation groups highlighting agency issues.
- Develop canned presentations for associates to use when talking to conservation groups and others.
- Develop relationships with conservation groups and solicit their assistance for research work, water monitoring, and management activities on state lands.
- Create volunteer “Friends of” groups for projects such as cleaning up Wildlife Management Areas or working on a mentor program.
- Inform agency associates which groups are supportive of agency efforts and which groups are not.

Developing/maintaining relationships with non-traditional conservation groups.

- Identify non-traditional conservation groups for agency associates.
- Expand the agency stakeholder contacts to include more non-traditional conservation groups.
- Provide non-traditional conservation groups an opportunity to invest in Division programs either financially or through volunteer opportunities on state-owned lands.

Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the Internet.

- Upgrade the web site and use the technology available to reflect the agency’s commitment to excellence and progressive operations.
- Use the web site as a functional link between the agency and its constituents by allowing for timely interaction through surveys and other communications tools. Develop more interactive Internet capabilities, such as web cameras and chat rooms.
- Put as much information on the web about the Division as possible. Provide good updated information about hunting/fishing opportunities (dove field outlooks, etc.) or links to the useful information (weather report). Include more pictures.
- Provide e-mail for all associates and allow the public to link directly to e-mail.
- Advertise the Division web site through the use of television, bumper stickers and signage. Put the web site address on all hunting and fishing licenses.
- Develop a Division Intranet page so that regions can share information on local issues.
- Provide regional offices with the capabilities to make faster changes to information on the web site.
- Hire a Division web master or a private contractor to maintain the web site.

Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the media.

- Develop better relationships with newspapers to generate more coverage on outdoors issues. Encourage associates to write regular columns in local papers.
- Develop more of a television presence for Division issues.

- Require more mass media contacts from field staff and encourage them to localize headquarters news releases. Encourage associates to hand deliver press releases to local media and provide a local angle to get them run.
- Establish a biologist call-in show in large media markets such as WSB in Atlanta.
- Establish a weekly column in the Farmers Market Bulletin.
- Establish a regular article in the Georgia EMC magazine.
- Work with the Georgia Wildlife Federation to include more Division issues in *Georgia Wildlife* magazine.
- Recruit a celebrity spokesperson to promote Division programs and services in commercials and public service announcements.

Educating and informing citizens about wildlife conservation and recreation issues through the sponsorship of *Georgia Outdoors* on Georgia Public Television

- Investigate the possibility of moving *Georgia Outdoors* to prime time.
- Encourage *Georgia Outdoors* to cover more “hook and bullet” shows.

Educating and informing minorities about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.

- Review minority relations programs in states such as Texas, Arizona and California.
- Consider language barriers and develop programs and/or publications to meet the needs of customers who do not speak English. Consider bilingual materials (public service announcements, publications, signs, advertising campaigns, etc.) to reach minorities.
- Provide Spanish language training for associates working in areas of the state with high minority populations. Consider bilingual skills when hiring new associates.

Educating and informing rural constituents about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.

- Develop more tax incentive programs for large landowners to protect land from development.
- Develop stronger relationships with county extension agents, NRCS, and other farming-oriented organizations to promote Farm Bill opportunities and other agency programs.
- Develop a tractor check-out program to allow landowners to borrow equipment to initiate wildlife-friendly practices on private lands.

Educating and informing urban/suburban constituents about wildlife conservation and recreation issues.

- Develop a greater Division presence in urban areas by creating a metro-Atlanta region, including public relations support, to deal with exclusively urban issues.

Internal Administration

Administering the boat registration system.

- Allow the counties to handle boat registration.

Administering the licensing system.

- Eliminate the harvest record for does and only require it for bucks.
- Implement a date-of-purchase system for hunting and fishing licenses.

Developing a clear vision for the future of fish & wildlife management.

- Conduct more public meetings to determine what the public wants.
- Conduct more human dimensions surveys to get reliable data on public preferences.

Developing conservation land acquisition programs.

- Develop a statewide land acquisition plan that sets a goal on how much land needs to be protected (such as 20-25 percent of the state's of total land area) and work to meet this goal through a combination of state-owned property, national forest land, state and national parks, conservation easements, etc.
- Develop a proactive public relations campaign for any new land acquisition program so that it does not get defeated based on misinformation from opponents. Explain the need for and address the arguments against land acquisition (for example, the agency is not taking land away from people, but protecting it for people). Publicize successes of prior land purchases and use it to educate voters on what is done with the property (Preservation 2000, Rivercare, NAWCA). Promote new acquisitions to the public.
- Prioritize land acquisition based on the need for the habitat. Don't just purchase land because it is available. Stress quality over quantity, but recognize that some areas tend to meet user needs while other areas tend to meet resource needs (most areas will be a combination).
- Use the Wildlife Conservation Fund managed by the Nongame Wildlife/Natural Heritage Section to establish an earmarked land acquisition fund.
- Recognize that acquiring additional land will require additional staff to manage the land and develop a land acquisition program that also includes funding for operations.
- Acquire more land where there is a demand for it with a goal to evaluate and buy land in each county in the state to provide recreation opportunities within 50 miles of every citizen.
- Place some emphasis on purchasing or cooperatively managing tracts near metro areas, even if small, to provide fishing and hunting access near population centers.
- Acquire lands that meet both consumptive and non-consumptive uses.

Facilitating communication between sections.

- Develop ways to facilitate better communication within the Division both from the headquarters level to the regional level and among sections at the regional level to coordinate resource management, education, and other efforts.
- Facilitate better communication about what each section does to provide a better understanding across the board. Provide more cross-section training opportunities.
- Centralize regional offices to one location per region.
- Allow law enforcement to work more closely with the rest of the Division. Increase opportunities for exchange of information between sections.

Identifying new or non-typical sources of funding.

- Determine the feasibility of a user fee or other funding mechanism for non-consumptive users to help pay for maintenance and operations on state-owned lands. Consider a parking fee for people using state-owned lands who do not possess a hunting or fishing license. Consider how to deal with national forest lands and other leased areas.
- Re-evaluate license costs and other services currently provided at no cost. Simplify and/or consolidate licenses with a slight increase in fees. Establish a one-time fee for honorary and/or disability licenses. Institute a fee for quota hunt applications. Charge a parking fee at boat ramps using a system such as a Park Pass. Consider adjusting license fees on a regular schedule to account for the inflation rate.
- Continue to work with non-traditional conservation groups (The Nature Conservancy, Trust for Public Land, etc.) to purchase areas identified in need of protection or with high-biodiversity when state funding is not available. Encourage traditional conservation groups to get involved if the area may be of interest to them.
- Set aside a portion of every ticket written by conservation rangers for land acquisition and/or operations on and improvements to state-managed lands.

- Secure a portion of funds collected from toll roads to fund land acquisition projects to combat habitat loss from road building projects. Establish a real estate transfer fee to fund land acquisition programs.
- Develop legislation to establish an account for timber revenues and earmark those funds for land acquisition. Secure a bond for land acquisition and repay it over time with timber revenues.
- Establish a state sales tax on sporting good items to support wildlife-related programs or designate a percentage of the state sales tax or gas tax to fund conservation initiatives. Continue efforts with the Department of Transportation to secure additional gas tax money for public access areas such as boat ramps.
- Solicit corporate sponsorship for various projects and programs. Explore new funding opportunities through private foundations or corporations.
- Access environmental violation fine money and put it back in stewardship and resource programs. Dedicate a portion of the land disturbance fee to riparian acquisitions and management and restoration programs. Implement a groundwater usage fee for conservation programs.
- Develop a tax incentive program that would encourage landowners to donate their property to the Department of Natural Resources.
- Require private landowners to pay for technical assistance (for example, stocking private fish ponds where a landowner does not have to buy a fishing license).
- Develop, market and sell items such as a book on state lands with maps or an interactive game that teaches hunting and environmental issues.
- Consider other funding for conservation initiatives including bottle recycling and/or a bottled water fee, a container tax on all imports coming through the port in Savannah, a lottery scratch off ticket, donation through driver's license renewals, and/or additional wildlife license plates.
- Use recreational trails grant money (ISTEA) for land acquisition.
- Develop an Internet donation mechanism for land acquisition in which sponsors give a donation every time the site is visited.
- Develop an adopt-a-square-foot program for state-owned lands.
- Create a "Friends of the Wildlife Resources Division" to create a network of volunteers and to help raise money for specific projects.
- Hold a benefit concert using Georgia artists.
- Encourage Georgia Outdoor News to allocate part of their subscription fees to agency programs.

Providing timely and accurate information to agency associates.

- Provide e-mail for all agency associates, even if access is from personal home computers.

Recruiting and retaining qualified employees.

- Organize a Division-wide committee to deal with staff recruitment/retention issues and to develop marketing/advertising plan for recruitment.
- Increase marketability for recruitment and retention by making salaries competitive with other agencies and employers.
- Continue to address the mid-level salary compression issue. Develop incentives (promotion opportunities, retirement options, matching 401K program, pay increase based on length of service) and work on the mid-level compression issue by implementing a Master Ranger/Master Biologist program. Recruitment should not be a substitute for retaining experienced personnel.
- Consider a non-financial incentive program for all Division associates (example given was law enforcement annual awards) that would include awards and/or special recognition.

- Consider subsidizing salaries to accommodate for higher cost of living areas or areas of the state where it is difficult to fill vacancies.
- Develop a less restrictive policy concerning county living requirements and allow associates assigned to a specific county to live in close proximity of their assigned county. Create an incentive to encourage associates to stay in the region in which they are hired.
- Reduce the time it takes to be able to offer future employees a job (perception is that law enforcement seems to get quicker answers than other sections).
- Set up a contract period of employment for new associates and require a pay back for POST-certified training if new associates leave.
- Develop an intern program for high school students to learn about Division careers.

APPENDIX D

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

The following action items were suggested by the Direction for the Decade Working Group for other Wildlife Resources Division issues that were not defined as areas of responsibility. These action items were not reviewed by regional supervisors or the Headquarters Staff and have not been quantified by a timeline or Section for responsibility or implementation. These suggested action items should be reviewed and incorporated as appropriate.

Greenspace Program

- Develop an incentive for the Greenspace Program to encourage counties to protect land with hunting, fishing and wildlife recreation opportunities.
- Promote the use of conservation easements as part of the Greenspace program in urban areas.

Office Operations

- Update the directory of Division personnel and include all contact information. Include descriptions of the Sections and different jobs within the Division. Make the final version available on the DNR Intranet website so it can be updated frequently.
- Develop an orientation package for new employees with Division specific information. Include policies for such items as accounting and purchasing procedures and vehicle policies.
 - Clarify purchasing procedures so that field staff can better understand the processes and avoid delays.
 - Standardize agency policies for all POST-certified associates within the agency.
 - Deal with delay in getting computer-related equipment and/or computer support help or provide explanations for the delay in the current processes. Give Division associates the authority to select computer equipment needed.
 - Allow field staff to participate in writing the specifications for new vehicle purchases, especially for trucks (concern is that current vehicles may not be adequate for amount of equipment they are expected to carry).

Personnel Allocation

- Allow the work force to flow to work needs. Allow people to move around (cross sections) to address work needs. Concentrate personnel and financial resources on species in need rather than species in surplus.
- Establish a new region for all Wildlife Resources Division Sections, including Public Affairs, to handle metropolitan Atlanta.
- Expand the canine unit to allow for 2 – 3 teams per region.
- Expand the public affairs and/or education staff by adding a person to each region in order to do a better job of getting information out to the public, responding to the media, providing programs to schools and other groups and localizing agency messages.
- Hire staff with marketing skills.
- Expand personnel to meet current job expectations and handle public requests.
- Designate staff to work on local planning committees.

Personnel Issues - Other

- Continue to express concern about State insurance coverage options.
- Require associates to get involved with local civic organizations such as the Kiwanis Club so that people in local communities have opportunities to interact with Division associates. Include this requirement as part of the annual performance plan review.

Personnel Issues – Law Enforcement

- Upgrade the annual review process and revamp how conservation rangers are evaluated to include a combination of priority list of offenses and contacts.
- Give officers more authority to write citations on non-priority cases.
- Re-institute aerial surveillance.
- Re-institute the Field Training Officer Program and require accountability for officers.
- Re-establish relationships with other agencies, including county sheriff's offices.
- Make the Law Enforcement Section its own Division within the agency.
- Allow the Colonel to have a direct line of communication with the Governor.
- Organize a conservation ranger's association.

Public Relations

- Develop high visibility public awareness campaigns on:
 - The Division and its services
 - The economics of outdoor recreation, especially hunting and fishing
 - Hunter ethics
 - Habitat management on state-owned lands
 - Hunting and fishing opportunities
 - Taking kids hunting and fishing
 - The role of hunters and anglers
 - Wildlife and conservation issues (especially key messages developed by the Education Committee)
- Develop a public awareness campaign to explain to the public that services for non-consumptive users cannot be provided without funding.
- Develop information for landowners to explain the liability of allowing public hunting and fishing on their land.
- Develop a book to sell featuring all Wildlife Management Areas, Public Fishing Areas and Natural Areas that includes maps and other information. Develop high quality maps for all state-operated areas. Add all information to the agency web site in an easy to navigate format.
- Develop media contacts on a national level to showcase Georgia opportunities.
- Standardize the Department's hunting message.
- Use celebrities to promote hunting, boating safety and wildlife issues.
- Create a Division magazine and make it accessible on the Internet.
- Develop a marketing campaign to inform the public about the availability and quality of Wildlife Management Areas and Public Fishing Areas for outdoor recreation. Provide information about the safety of Wildlife Management Areas, especially in regards to hunting. Include information about the role of hunters and anglers in wildlife conservation.
- Develop more "canned" programs for use by associates on a variety of subjects that cross Division and Section lines.
- Purchase more information and education materials and equipment (computer projectors) for use by staff and provide in-service training on programs that can be given with it.

Other Recommendations

- Eliminate the distinction between Wildlife Management Areas and Natural Areas to reduce some of the adversarial internal issues that have developed.
- Encourage a national-level organization to approach Disney or another movie studio to produce a “feel-good” movie about hunting and fishing with a positive ethics message.
- Develop messages to appeal to kids and family-related activities.
- Provide more departmental promotion of other programs and views to encourage environmental stewardship.
- Develop a junior ranger program.
- Separate fish and wildlife research activities into a stand-alone program.
- Promote information on wildlife management areas to state park patrons.
- Target constituent groups and identify where they get information for communications purposes.
- Conduct additional surveys to determine what the types of programs specific groups want.

APPENDIX E

WILDLIFE RESOURCES DIVISION MISSION AND GOALS FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES STRATEGIC PLAN

MISSION

The Wildlife Resources Division has primary responsibility for protecting, conserving, managing and improving Georgia's wildlife and freshwater fishery resources; managing and conserving protected/endangered wildlife and plants; administering and conducting the mandatory hunter safety program; regulating the possession and sale of wild animals; and administering and enforcing the Georgia Boat Safety Act.

GOALS

1. Maintain and manage the freshwater fishery and fish habitat and the recreation supported by these resources so as to provide quality recreational fishing for the present and future generations, while simultaneously working with other divisions to assure water quality and water quantity is supportive of a healthy freshwater fishery.
2. Conserve, restore and manage the state's wildlife resources, including game and nongame species and protected/endangered wildlife and plants, for the recreational benefit of all present and future interest groups.
3. Regulate the possession and sale of wild animals (defined as all species not indigenous to Georgia) to protect public safety, to prevent such animals from becoming established in the wild in Georgia and to ensure humane treatment of such animals.
4. Identify and prevent the destruction or loss of wildlife and plant species protected by the Endangered Species Act of 1973.
5. Manage lands and freshwater habitat for the restoration and propagation of wildlife, the freshwater fishery and protected wildlife and plant species and for public hunting, fishing and educational purposes.
6. Administer and enforce the provisions of the Georgia Boat Safety Act.
7. Enforce all state laws and departmental regulations regarding wildlife, fishery resources, wild animals, boating safety and hunter safety and assist other law enforcement agencies upon request.
8. Study and recommend rivers or sections of rivers to be considered for designation as scenic rivers.
9. Regulate the use of caves to protect indigenous wildlife, prevent vandalism and protect the quality of underground watercourses.

10. Promote programs and initiatives to control undesirable and invasive nonnative plants and animals.
11. Prepare and maintain a long-range plan for Division needs.

APPENDIX F

TIMELINE FOR DIRECTION FOR THE DECADE ACTION ITEMS

Continue to place emphasis on surveys to monitor statewide game and fish populations.	Fisheries Management Section and Game Management Section	Ongoing
Educate the public on survey results, regulation processes and population goals. Target outreach and education efforts to increase awareness of the management of statewide game and fish populations	Fisheries Management Section, Game Management Section and Public Affairs Office.	Ongoing
Continue to improve the in-stream flow policy.	Fisheries Management Section and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section	Ongoing
Place a high priority on establishing a long-term, stable funding source for nongame wildlife and non-consumptive use activities.	WRD	Ongoing
Use available funds for habitat restoration on Wildlife Resources Division managed lands.	WRD	Ongoing
Provide incentives to private landowners using available funds for efforts to restore and conserve threatened, endangered and nongame species.	WRD with Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Set a better example for land management and protect the biodiversity on state lands. Examples for areas of improvement include: erosion and sedimentation control, improved small game management techniques, improved fisheries management on areas other than public fishing areas, road design and construction as it relates to water quality, and monoculture pine/timber stands. Associates should be made aware of and follow closely Best Management Practices for agriculture and forestry.	WRD	Ongoing
Develop and implement a plan for comprehensive timber management on state lands and/or better inform staff of the plan. Decide how to deal with timber revenues generated by timber harvest. Use timber revenue to add foresters as needed to address forest habitat needs on state-owned lands.	WRD with the Game Management Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Work with the Parks and Historic Sites Division by assisting with the development of resource management plans for their facilities.	WRD and the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Work with other state agencies (such as the Department of Corrections) to assist in the development of management plans for state-owned lands. Conduct an assessment of lands available and opportunities that exist for conservation and recreation.	WRD	Ongoing
Look for innovative partnerships and expand cooperative efforts with large private landowners that will protect lands for wildlife habitat. Enhance partnerships with other non-wildlife groups (such as power companies) to manage their lands in a wildlife-friendly manner.	WRD	Ongoing
Review projects that have a major impact on resources.	WRD	Ongoing
Develop an incentive program (such as t-shirts) for people that are obeying the laws and standardize the program statewide. Identify a permanent funding source or solicit corporate partner support for incentive items.	Law Enforcement Section	Ongoing

Annually review hunting and fishing regulations.	WRD	Ongoing
Continue efforts to enforce the Litter Control Act and Waste Control Act.	WRD with the Law Enforcement Section as the lead.	Ongoing
Get involved with the Department of Transportation's land mitigation property program through a Commissioner-to-Commissioner Memorandum of Understanding. Evaluate Department of Transportation-owned lands, including river access at right-of-ways, for potential wildlife management areas or public use areas through lease agreements or other arrangements.	WRD and the Department of Transportation	Ongoing
Capitalize on current Wildlife Management Areas, Public Fishing Areas, and State Parks. Develop a proactive public relations campaign based on current management of state-owned land. Bring existing lands up to a high standard to raise public expectations and generate demand for more public land.	WRD and the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Conduct public outreach to encourage safe boating, focused on raising public awareness.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office	Ongoing
Develop a proactive public affairs campaign to promote safe boating practices.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office	Ongoing
Develop better opportunities for hunting species other than deer and turkeys on Wildlife Management Areas. Enhance quail management on state-owned lands that hold potential for providing sustainable public quail hunting.	Game Management Section	Ongoing
Develop better opportunities for hunting species other than deer and turkeys on Wildlife Management Areas. Redirect some of the Bobwhite Quail Initiative funding (5 – 10%) to develop quail hunting opportunities on state-owned lands.	Game Management Section	Ongoing
Develop more opportunities to hunt on state parks, especially those with high populations of deer such as Red Top Mountain and Hard Labor Creek.	Game Management Section working with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Share areas of expertise with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division to benefit all state lands (for example, provide wildlife management assistance for state parks in exchange for recreation management assistance on wildlife management areas).	WRD in cooperation with the State Parks and Historic Sites Division.	Ongoing
Develop public/private partnerships to establish canoe trails.	WRD	Ongoing
Educate key legislators on specific Wildlife Resources Division issues, not just issues that arise during a particular legislative session. Stress how the Department is working together to protect the environment as a whole, not through the efforts of separate Divisions. Promote an ecosystem management view of Georgia's future. In order to do this, HQ will need to develop an accepted list of topics (briefing points) that are allowed for discussion with legislators. Examples of potential legislative educational opportunities include legislative field days, roundtable discussions or a "Wildlife Day at the Capitol." Provide legislators demographic and economic data on hunting, fishing and wildlife-associated recreation for specific districts. These education efforts also may be beneficial for DNR Board members, state court judges and county government officials.	WRD with guidance from the Director's Office.	Ongoing

Develop public relations opportunities for legislators when they are active in natural resource issues.	Public Affairs Office with input from all Sections.	Ongoing
Continue long-term legislative initiatives rather than annual legislative plans. Communicate these initiatives to field staff.	Director's Office	Ongoing
Work with the Conservation Congress to conduct lobbying efforts on behalf of the Wildlife Resources Division.	Director's Office	Ongoing
Develop a comprehensive land management plan to identify habitats in need of conservation. Develop a map that shows which areas are the most important areas for wildlife habitat. Take a broader approach to management by looking at eco-regions in the state and make sure adequate habitat is protected to manage for wildlife resources. Protect biodiversity and take a more comprehensive approach to management.	WRD	FY 04
Conduct an annual meeting with representatives from all Sections to establish priority resource issues.	WRD	FY 04
Standardize law enforcement education programs that are available for conservation rangers to give to schools and other groups. Make regional education centers more accessible to rangers to borrow "canned" programs. Develop a safety aspect to the annual conservation theme (ACT) in the education plan.	Law Enforcement Section and WRD Education Committee.	FY 04
Provide legislators with a "Direction for the Decade" report so that they are aware of the Division's planning efforts and needs.	Director's Office	FY 04
Implement the Wildlife Resources Division Education Plan.	WRD	FY 04 – FY 09
Develop a comprehensive resource management booklet to incorporate information from all Sections. Implement a cataloguing system with tracking numbers for printed publications. Put all Division publications on the web site.	WRD	FY 05
Establish a Task Force to evaluate the agency's data and communications system and provide recommendations to upgrade the agency's radio and other equipment so that it meets current technology standards.	WRD	FY 05
Develop quality control and accountability processes for Law Enforcement Section databases.	Law Enforcement Section, License and Boat Registration Unit and the Program Support Division.	FY 05
Implement specifications for bonds issued by the Department of Natural Resources that require mitigation lands to be suitable for wildlife-associated recreation.	Director's Office and the DNR Real Estate Unit.	FY 05
Increase public awareness of ongoing environmental enforcement efforts, including enforcement of the Litter Control Act and Waste Control Act.	Public Affairs Office with assistance from the Law Enforcement Section.	FY 05
Investigate user fee system for all state-owned lands.	WRD	FY 05
Develop an accurate inventory of recreation and wildlife viewing opportunities on state-operated lands. Make the public aware of what is available (such as interpretive trails) but under-used. Develop new wildlife viewing opportunities on areas that have unique characteristics that would attract non-consumptive users.	WRD	FY 05

Identify Division associates (Section Chiefs or appointees) and encourage them to contact key legislators. Establish a protocol for these associates to follow. Make sure this information is clearly conveyed to staff (as many have been told not to do this in the past). Provide training to associates on how to properly communicate key issues to legislators. Inform Division contacts when legislators are instrumental in agency legislation so that these decision makers are known.	Director's Office	FY 05
Conduct a review of the 50-year plans for state lands to identify opportunities (such as funding) and to discuss priority issues. Develop a five-year or annual plans with measurable goals and quantitative steps. Consider timber management and include forest management staff in these annual reviews.	WRD Game Management Section is the lead on wildlife management areas, Fisheries Management Section is the lead on public fishing areas, and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section is the lead on natural areas.	FY 06
Promote the management and use of native plants and habitats in order to create habitat for native wildlife.	WRD with Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section as the lead.	FY 06
Develop incentive and recognition based programs (using the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership and Bobwhite Quail Initiative programs for models) for habitat improvement on private-owned lands for game and nongame species.	Game Management and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Sections	FY 06
Identify priority areas and issues within each Region and cooperate with Regional Supervisors to better enforce laws and address other conservation needs. Provide access to the Georgia Natural Heritage Program's database on threatened and endangered species for conservation rangers and other agency associates. (Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section)	WRD	FY 06
Develop a communication system that allows conservation rangers to get real-time information from agency databases such as license and boat registration, the Wildlife Resources Information System (WRIS) and other information using a palm pilot or other hand-held device.	WRD and the Program Support Division.	FY 06
Establish a Task Force of Wildlife Resources Division, Environmental Protection Division and Pollution Prevention Division representatives to identify ways the Department can more effectively enforce environmental laws and regulations.	WRD with the Law Enforcement Section as the lead.	FY 06
Evaluate the effectiveness of the on-line hunter education program.	Law Enforcement Section	FY 06
Use data from the Stream Team surveys or other existing biological data to modify discharge regulations to protect the aquatic environment. Consider special designations for those streams considered to have sensitive areas or those considered pristine and with high biodiversity.	Fisheries Management Section, Law Enforcement Section and Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section with input from EPD.	FY 07

Develop a proactive public relations campaign for any new land acquisition program so that it does not get defeated based on misinformation from opponents. Explain the need for and address the arguments against land acquisition (for example, the agency is not taking land away from people, but protecting it for people). Publicize successes of prior land purchases and use it to educate voters on what is done with the property (Preservation 2000, Rivercare, NAWCA). Promote new acquisitions to the public.	WRD	FY 07
Develop a statewide land acquisition plan and funding mechanism that sets a goal on how much land needs to be protected (such as 20-25 percent of the state's total land area) and work to meet this goal through a combination of state-owned property, national forest land, state and national parks, conservation easements, etc. The plan should include some or all of the following concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife diversity • Alternative user fees • Location and distribution • Ownership • Partnerships • Recreation opportunities • Funding sources • Operational funding 	WRD	FY 07
Develop a cooperative program for individuals owning lands around state-owned lands. This effort would provide a better opportunity for cooperative resource management and improve the potential for future land acquisition.	WRD	FY 07
Evaluate the potential for a courtesy boat inspection program, including working with partners such as the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.	Law Enforcement Section	FY 07
Develop the hunting education and boating safety programs in the mold of project wild.	Law Enforcement Section and the WRD Education Committee	FY 07
Develop a plan to determine what level of service is appropriate for each state-owned area and then provide multi-use areas where possible.	WRD	FY 07
Increase and/or improve fishing opportunities in non-traditional areas, such as county and city park lakes.	Fisheries Management Section	FY 08
Develop opportunities to provide hands-on firearms and archery training for hunter education graduates and others interested in shooting sports, including the expansion of the Archery in the Schools program.	Game Management Section and Law Enforcement Section.	FY 08
Update the hunter education and boating safety education materials, including videos and incorporate hands-on components to these education courses.	Law Enforcement Section and the Public Affairs Office.	FY 08
Add a Nongame Wildlife - Natural Heritage Section associate (at least a biologist and technician) to each Region.	Nongame Wildlife – Natural Heritage Section	FY 09