



THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

Leaders in Wildlife Science, Management and Conservation

THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2023

“The privilege of possessing the earth entails the responsibility of passing it on, the better for our use, not only to immediate posterity, but to the unknown future, the nature of which is not given to us.”

Aldo Leopold, *Some Fundamentals of Conservation in the Southwest (1923)*
President, The Wildlife Society, 1939-40

Introduction

The Wildlife Society (TWS), founded in 1937, is an international non-profit association dedicated to excellence in wildlife stewardship through science and education. Our mission is to inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and wildlife habitat through science-based management and conservation. The Wildlife Society’s membership in 2019 includes approximately 10,000 professionals and students with expertise in all aspects of wildlife biology, research, conservation, and management.

Over the next five years, TWS will maintain or improve its performance in five core areas: wildlife sustainability, leadership, member services, organizational integration, and the Society’s organization sustainability. Directions and actions in these areas are described below in terms of outcome-based themes and associated execution strategies. Implementing annual operational plans will be aligned with these strategic themes and strategies, along with performance metrics, human resources and budgets needed to drive results. Operational flexibility will be essential for the plan to remain relevant in the face of today’s rapid change. Thus, each year the Society will assess and adjust the level of effort and resources in each of the areas, as needed to best serve the Society’s strategic goals and member needs.

Vision

The Wildlife Society is a strong and effective voice in representing wildlife conservation and management, and ensuring sustainable wildlife populations in healthy ecosystems.

Mission

To inspire, empower, and enable wildlife professionals to sustain wildlife populations and wildlife habitat through science-based management and conservation.

Values

The Wildlife Society is committed to the following values:

- Integrity
- Service
- Excellence
- Knowledge
- Inclusiveness

Core Area Strategies

1. Wildlife Sustainability: The Wildlife Society achieves a positive impact on the sustainability of wildlife populations.

It is the continuing opportunity of future generations to appreciate and experience appropriately functioning ecosystems, and the diversity of wildlife that is integral to them, which will most effectively express the long-term realization of The Wildlife Society's vision and values.

- a. The Wildlife Society helps develop future generations of wildlife professionals by maintaining its outreach activities such as mentoring, internships, training, and certification; by continuing its support for developing and growing of student chapters; by increasing its work with colleges and universities on curricula; by increasing effective engagement with federal, state, and provincial natural resource agencies, and conservation organizations; and by fostering an inclusive environment to facilitate increased human diversity within the profession.
- b. The Wildlife Society influences decisions and actions affecting wildlife populations and wildlife habitat by providing the best available science-based information. The Wildlife Society looks for continual improvement opportunities for developing position statements, technical reviews and fact sheets, and increases their dissemination to students, professionals, and policymakers.
- c. The Wildlife Society expands its efforts to deliver credible wildlife-related science and information to a broad audience by effective partnerships with external organizations, increasing awareness, encouraging dialogue, and promoting best practices through print media, e-media and conferences.
- d. The Wildlife Society enables wildlife professionals and partners to foster active public involvement and participation in conservation by initiating calls to action, providing networking opportunities, and distributing information on current issues. The Society increases engagement of its members and partners in policy issues through the Conservation Affairs Network, the use of action alerts, and other mechanisms.

2. Leadership: The Wildlife Society is a recognized and trusted organization for expertise on science-based wildlife management and conservation.

Media and policymakers at the state/provincial and federal levels seek out the expertise of staff and members of TWS on issues related to science-based wildlife management and conservation.

- a. The Wildlife Society increases efforts to enhance its visibility, influence, and audience through the proactive sharing of useful and newsworthy information and through developing effective partnerships.
- b. Natural resource agencies and conservation groups collaborate and partner with TWS as a recognized authority and primary source of expertise on wildlife management and conservation.
- c. The Wildlife Society maintains effective liaisons with other conservation and natural resource organizations and agencies by exchanging information, collaborating on actions, and leading selected initiatives in support of wildlife and wildlife professionals.
- d. The Wildlife Society maintains ethical standards for science-based research and management through its advocacy of a code of ethics and standards of professional conduct in wildlife conservation and management.
- e. The Wildlife Society maintains its emphasis on importance of ethical standards to wildlife professionals through print media, e-media, networking, and certification.

3. Member Services: The Wildlife Society supports, encourages, and enables its members to conserve and manage wildlife through the application of science.

The Wildlife Society seeks to be the premier membership organization for wildlife professionals, students and partners through its services and promotion of science-based wildlife conservation and management.

- a. The Wildlife Society delivers outstanding member service and support to wildlife professionals, students, and partners by assessing, prioritizing, and delivering key benefits.
- b. The Wildlife Society provides insightful and useful information on current issues concerning wildlife science, conservation, management, and policy by increasing its outreach of information through print media, e-media, member input, and other mechanisms.
- c. The Wildlife Society sets educational and experiential standards for science-based wildlife research and management by maintaining and promoting its certification program for wildlife biologists.

- d. The Wildlife Society enhances networking and collaboration opportunities for its members through e-media, conferences, and other mechanisms to enhance their professional and academic development.
- e. The Wildlife Society promotes professional growth of its members by maintaining its professional development program, mentorship opportunities, and conservation leadership training.

4. Organizational Integration: The Wildlife Society supports and encourages networking among TWS organization units (student chapters, state/provincial/territorial/tribal chapters, sections, working groups), Council, and staff to leverage synergies and communications that advance science-based wildlife conservation.

The Wildlife Society integrates cooperative efforts across all levels of the organization. It encourages sharing of information and coordination of messages, so as to advocate and implement science-based wildlife conservation.

- a. The Wildlife Society staff and members increase their support for organization units by becoming members of these organization units, attending their meetings, and providing technical support, financial support, and consultations on business operations.
- b. Members of TWS organization units increase their support of TWS by becoming members of TWS, networking with professionals and students outside of their organization units, attending TWS annual conferences, and sharing information about organization unit activities and needs.
- c. The Wildlife Society and its organization units develop more effective communication channels that promote the sharing of membership information to keep members at all levels informed and strengthen the voice of the organization.
- d. The Wildlife Society strategizes its presence and involvement in international wildlife conservation by networking with international organizations, participating in international events that meet TWS' strategic objectives, and encouraging international collaboration through TWS and its organization units.

5. Organizational Sustainability: The Wildlife Society is professionally managed and financially robust.

The Wildlife Society is committed to professionally managing all aspects of its operations including communications, human resources, project management, and financial management. As such, TWS is committed to best management practices for non-profit organizations that are grounded in transparency, accountability, and sustainability.

- a. The Wildlife Society adheres to professional and ethical business practices, including staffing and human resources, rules of governance, organizational structure, legal and tax obligations, record-keeping, and reporting to its membership.

- b. The Wildlife Society strives to be inclusive and recruit and retain a diverse staff and membership at all levels through diversity initiatives, both internally and through partnerships.
- c. The Wildlife Society complies with and maintains generally accepted practices for finance and generally accepted accounting principles, including conducting annual independent audits, careful tracking of revenues and expenses, transparent financial reporting, and management of investments.
- d. The Wildlife Society engages professional accounting and auditing advice/support, as needed, to ensure adherence to acceptable financial practices.
- e. The Wildlife Society is committed to ensuring that its operating reserves are compliant with levels specified in its financial policy and in accordance with best practices for non-profit organizations and generally accepted accounting principles.
- f. The Wildlife Society actively seeks opportunities to expand its financial assets while providing valued benefits and services to members and ensuring the achievement of its overall mission.

Implementation

To be useful in guiding TWS over the next five years, strategic planning must be based on a comprehensive framework that includes not only a vision and core areas, but also an implementation process that ties operations, human resources, and budgets to the vision and themes. Thus, TWS's strategic planning framework includes the following elements:

- The Strategic Plan itself, with its statement of TWS's vision, strategic themes, and objectives;
- Annual operational plans for TWS's business units that are aligned with its strategic themes and available resources, and include metrics by which to measure progress;
- Mechanisms by which new initiatives and opportunities can be introduced, evaluated, and prioritized;
- Annual program budgets that are aligned with the annual operation plans.

The Annual Operations Plan Process will follow this sequence of events:

September-October (Regular Annual Meeting of Council)

- Current major initiatives are reviewed with Council to determine whether to discontinue any of them at the end of the fiscal year.
- Council members propose new initiatives they would like to introduce for consideration for the next fiscal year.

November-December

- Staff will evaluate the financial and staff resources impact of each proposed new initiative.

January-February

- CEO shares the outcomes of analyses during a special meeting of Council (conference call or video chat) in conjunction with a preliminary proposed budget overview.
- Council provides feedback to the CEO as guidance for preparing the proposed budget.

February-March (Spring Special Meeting of Council)

- CEO presents the proposed budget for the next fiscal year.
- Council reviews the list of new, unfunded initiatives.
- Council determines which—if any—new unfunded initiatives will be funded and the method of funding.
- Operations plans are adjusted to include any approved new initiatives.