

Mission

MISSION

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, through its employees and citizen commission, provides for the stewardship of the fish, wildlife, parks and recreational resources of Montana, while contributing to the quality of life for present and future generations.

Vision for the 21st Century

VISION FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

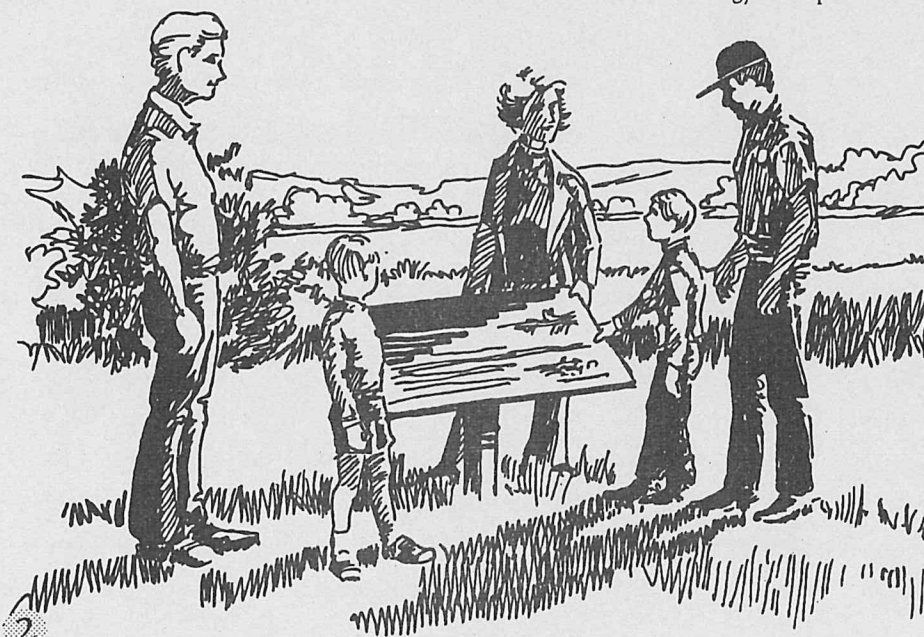
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will provide the leadership necessary to create a commitment in the hearts and minds of people to ensure that, in our second century, and in partnership with many others, we will sustain our diverse fish, wildlife and parks resources and the quality recreational opportunities that are essential to a high quality of life for Montanans and our guests.

Guiding Principles

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We understand that serving the people of Montana to achieve this vision is both a privilege and a responsibility. We also understand that we cannot achieve our vision alone. The following principles will guide FWP as we begin our second century:

- We will maintain the long-term viability of Montana's natural, cultural and recreational resources.
- We will actively involve people in decisions that affect them; help people to participate by providing them with credible and objective information; and, develop programs with a clear understanding of public expectations for FWP service.
- We will serve as an advocate for responsible management and for equitable allocation of public use of the limited resources which we are entrusted to manage.
- We will manage fish and wildlife resources with pride in Montana's hunting and angling heritage.
- We will create and strengthen working partnerships with individuals, organized groups and other natural, historic and cultural resource management agencies.
- We will use innovation and technology to improve our services.



Goals

GOALS

GOAL A: CREATE A WORK ENVIRONMENT WHERE PRIORITIES ARE CLEAR; THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS IS EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE; AND, WHERE EMPLOYEES FEEL A SENSE OF ACCOUNTABILITY, VALUE AND SATISFACTION IN THEIR ACHIEVEMENTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE AGENCY MISSION.

1. FWP will effectively and efficiently utilize our human and financial resources, while fulfilling our role in natural and cultural resource issues.
2. FWP will complete strategic and six-year

There is increased demand by the public for involvement in resource decisions and for accountability of FWP.

The number of special interest groups is expected to increase both within and outside the state. Many are at odds with each other, either in their basic missions or the solutions they advocate. Most publics are aware of how FWP operates and of opportunities to influence decision making. Many groups want increased involvement and oversight of FWP operations. There is a growing role for FWP in managing conflicts between interest groups and an increased need for communication with the public, employees and elected officials to ensure short-term special interests do not jeopardize the long-term viability of the resources we manage.

There is an increasing value of and competition for the fish, wildlife and parks resources FWP manages.

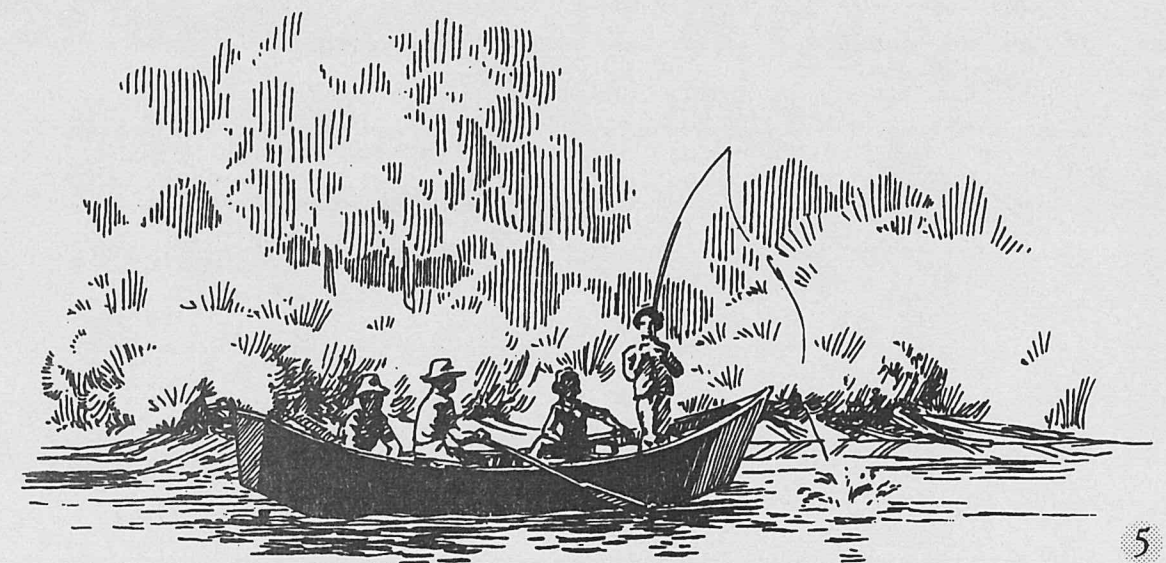
Increased use and demand for some high value recreational opportunities have created user conflicts and often result in more complex and restrictive regulations. The increased value of some game species has resulted in increased outfitting, more leased lands with no or limited public access, commercial game farms and more illegal harvesting and trafficking of animals. The number of private ponds, shooting preserves and game farm applications has greatly increased. These types of activities can contribute to local economies; they also reduce opportunities for the general public and can create problems with regulating population numbers and game damage, and result in more complex regulations.

Implications are that resource use will become more regulated and restrictive if the resource base cannot be expanded through enhancement of habitat, access and recreation facilities and by reducing illegal and other potentially damaging activities.

There will be increased opportunity to enhance fish and wildlife habitat and parks resources.

FWP will continue its work to conserve fish and wildlife habitats from unacceptable degradation. Threats to those habitats will continue to be addressed. There also will be significant opportunities to enhance or restore habitats in the future through special programs, including the critical wildlife habitat (HB 526), upland game bird habitat, the federal CRP, river restoration, and wetland enhancement programs, as well as water leasing, Superfund activities and the actions of many new landowners. In addition, there is an increasing sensitivity by other agencies, industry and the public for the need to conserve these resources.

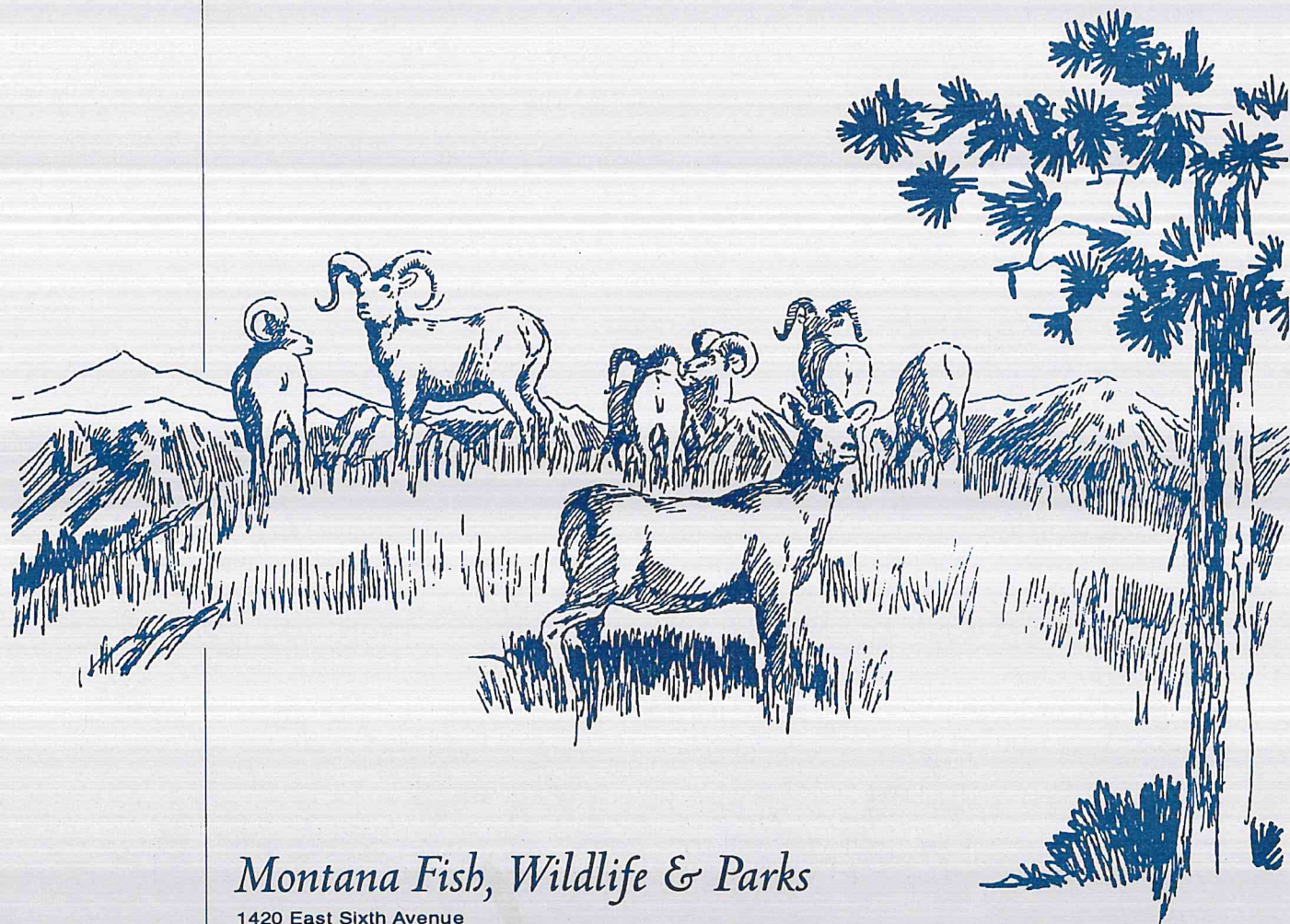
Use at state parks is increasing and puts pressure on existing resources and facilities. Residents want to maintain some park resources in a primitive state, while most out-of-state visitors believe our developed sites are primitive.



The Lewis and Clark bicentennial celebration is expected to greatly increase tourism to Montana. In the past, parks cultural and historic resources have received less protection and will require increased attention and financial resources to conserve in the future.

FWP will likely see expanded responsibilities and increasing needs to define, defend and coordinate management decisions.

Court decisions interpreting the Fair Labor Standards Act are limiting the flexibility with which FWP and employees can address their work week. There will be limited fiscal and personnel resources available in the future. These trends are occurring at a time when public demands for services and accountability are expected to result in expanded responsibilities and an increased need to define, defend and coordinate management decisions. Some implications include lower employee moral, increased public dissatisfaction when services are reduced, increased competition for resources within the agency, and a reduced ability to react to changing societal needs and values.



Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Illustrations by Len Eckel

IN THE BEGINNING

As we enter the 21st Century, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will embark on our second century of serving the people of Montana. This occasion gives us pause to reflect on where we have been, as well as to imagine the future we want to create.

In Montana, as around the world, changes are occurring which will result in challenges in the years ahead. To put today's issues in perspective, consider for a moment the challenges Montanans faced at the dawn of the 20th Century. Market and subsistence hunting and fishing had nearly eliminated once common species of fish and wildlife. There was no Fish, Wildlife & Parks agency. There also weren't any funds dedicated to wildlife conservation.

MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS *Vision for the Future*

The people of Montana took a bold step in 1901 by creating the framework for an agency and imposing a hunting license fee to support wildlife conservation. They recognized a challenge, and they took action. As the need for immediate protection grew into an idea of restoration, rebuilding fish and wildlife populations became a community-wide partnership among landowners, hunters and anglers that spanned more than half a century.

The early 20th Century vision would be broadened to include a new understanding of the importance of the preservation of heritage resources, starting in 1937 with the establishment of Lewis and Clark Caverns as our first state park.

As we begin FWP's second century, we have an opportunity to revitalize that vision, rekindle partnerships and build on one of the most successful conservation stories in the world.

A NEW BEGINNING

In response to public comment gathered through surveys, public forums, informal contacts, employee workshops, Commission meetings, our internet site and more, we are presenting FWP's vision and goals to meet the challenges anticipated as we enter the 21st Century. The operating environment examines the forces that will affect the resources we manage, the people who live and work in Montana and our guests. The goals reflect areas of emphasis and are followed by what we believe the public expects of us as an agency and what we expect of ourselves. Guiding principles set the manner in which we will work to meet those public expectations.

WHO WE ARE

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks is a state agency. The director is appointed by the governor. The agency's operating budget and hunting and fishing fees are approved by the legislature. The five-member citizen Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission also is appointed by the governor. Commissioners set fish, wildlife and parks regulations, set park fees, must approve all land matters, set policy and approve the department's budget prior to submission to the legislature. The director oversees the development of department policy, planning, management and operations.

Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks



Operating Environment

We cannot predict the future. We can gain some insights on how today's events and trends may affect FWP's ability to manage resources and provide services in the future. This section identifies seven significant factors we believe will be shaping our operating environment as we enter the 21st Century.

The demographics of the state are changing.

Montana's population is expected to reach one million by 2010. It has grown 10 percent since 1990. The majority of new residents are between the ages of 45 and 65. There is a shift in population from east to west and from rural to urban. The number of households headed by single parents and females has increased. The number of married couples with both spouses in the labor force is increasing. Retirement is occurring at an earlier age. Montanans have less disposable income compared to the national average. The average age of Montanans increased from 29 to 36 from 1980 to 1995. These trends will result in new recreational demands, changes in participation, changes in revenue and shifts in political influence.

Resource management decisions are increasingly being influenced by interests outside the state and changes in the state.

The reintroduction of wolves into Yellowstone National Park, media attention surrounding bison leaving Yellowstone Park and decisions to manage some federal reservoirs in Montana in a way that is detrimental to Montana's interests illustrate the change. Listing of endangered species will also continue to impact many Montanans and result in a loss of management control by the state to the federal government.

Since 1980, three million acres of agricultural land has been converted to other uses. Between 1986 and 1996, state staff reviewed over 11,000 subdivision proposals; nearly half were in four counties. Since 1990 the number of farms and ranches has declined by 11 percent. Timber harvest on federal lands decreased 66 percent from 1980-1995, while it increased on private land by 20 percent during that time.

These changes create a very unsettled feeling in many Montanans. They fear a loss of control and stability because of challenges to their traditional values and practices; they are concerned about limits to personal choices due to loss of access, competition for resources, and more. Some even see their livelihoods threatened.

Other implications are that people with values that differ from the traditional values served by FWP may look to others for leadership, if they believe FWP is not sensitive to their values. The increasing role being assumed by federal agencies in endangered species management and recreation and fish and wildlife management will affect the viability and role of FWP in the future.

Public values toward fish, wildlife and parks resources are changing.

There is an increasing interest in maintaining and preserving biological diversity and ecological systems. Fish and wildlife are increasingly being valued for their aesthetic and cultural values. There is also an increased recognition of the recreational value of fish, wildlife and parks resources and the need to preserve unique cultural and historic resources and endangered species. The conservation and management of large predators—wolves, grizzly bears and mountain lions—is an example of the challenges we will face conserving biological diversity while finding acceptable means to manage these populations in balance with the desires of hunters, rural landowners and other wildlife.

plans for fish, wildlife and parks programs to clarify public expectations, allocate resources and define a common direction for FWP and our partners.

3. FWP will foster personal and professional growth of employees by developing and using meaningful employee agreements and performance standards.
4. FWP will create and maintain a professional, diverse and responsive workforce by improving employee recruitment, selection and career development.

GOAL B: PROVIDE QUALITY OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC APPRECIATION AND ENJOYMENT OF FISH, WILDLIFE AND PARKS RESOURCES.

1. FWP management decisions will equitably balance the interests of hunters, anglers and other outdoor recreationists, visitors to historic sites, landowners, the general public and the needs of Montana’s fish, wildlife and parks resources.
2. FWP will manage its wildlife program to balance game damage, human/wildlife conflicts and land-owner/recreationist conflicts with the perpetuation and protection of wildlife populations.
3. FWP management decisions recognize that Montana’s agricultural community is integral to the management of Montana’s fish and wildlife populations and the habitats that support them.
4. FWP will provide diverse and equitable opportunities for people to experience a variety of outdoor recreation and historic and cultural experiences on public lands and in cooperation with private landowners.
5. FWP will provide quality services for people who use Montana State Parks.
6. FWP will fairly and equitably enforce all regulations and maintain public safety at FWP sites.

GOAL C: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE HEALTH OF MONTANA’S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE VITALITY OF OUR FISH, WILDLIFE, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES THROUGH THE 21ST CENTURY.

1. FWP programs will be consistent with ecologically sound and sustainable practices and managed within funding capabilities.
2. FWP will provide and support programs to conserve and enhance high quality aquatic habitat and protect native aquatic species.
3. FWP will provide and support programs to conserve and enhance Montana’s terrestrial ecosystems and the diversity of species inhabiting them.
4. FWP will provide and support programs for the long-term protection and enhancement of Montana’s cultural, historic, prehistoric and natural resources.

GOAL D: EMPHASIZE EDUCATION, COMMUNICATION AND RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOR TO AFFORD CITIZENS THE OPPORTUNITY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND AND PARTICIPATE IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES THAT SUSTAIN OUR NATURAL, RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

1. FWP will help Montana citizens to understand and participate in FWP’s decision-making processes.
2. FWP will provide regulations, program information and educational materials that are accurate, reliable and easy for people to use and understand.
3. FWP will help people to be aware of and appreciate Montana’s fish, wildlife, cultural, historic and natural resources.
4. FWP will provide family-oriented educational opportunities to help all ages learn to participate in and enjoy Montana’s many and varied outdoor recreation opportunities.
5. FWP will encourage high standards of outdoor behavior by recreationists who participate in FWP-regulated activities.

“Outdoor recreation and wildlife are receiving more of the attention of the people than ever before. Our still abundant supply of Fish and Game is one of the great resources of the State and their protection and conservation are matters of vital importance....”

Governor
John E. Erickson,
Message to the
19th Montana
Legislature,
January 6, 1925.