



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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In reply refer to:
80200

JUL 28 2006

Memorandum

To: Assistant Managers, California/Nevada Operations
Project Leaders, California/Nevada Operations

From: Manager, California/Nevada Operations
Sacramento, California

Subject: California/Nevada Operations (CNO) Strategic Plan

Attached, please find CNO's Strategic Plan. My intention for this document is that it be used to establish the philosophy for how we implement the Service mission within California, Nevada and the Klamath Basin. The plan attempts to capture principles and actions that I believe are important if we are to realize successful on-the-ground conservation in our time. This plan was conceived through a variety of discussions here in the CNO office and informed through numerous interactions with you, our partners and our customers over the past several years. It was improved by the comments we received during our May review.

It is my expectation that this document will be distributed to each of your employees and that you will facilitate discussions around how your office can support implementation of the stated goals. I also intend to use it as a regular touchstone in the review of how we do business and make progress throughout CNO. I recognize that many of you have already adopted some of these approaches, yet I believe we still have to think in some different ways if we are going to make significant progress in establishing a lasting conservation legacy.

I look forward to working with you as we implement this plan and refine our approaches to meeting the Service mission:

"Working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people."

Attachment

TAKE PRIDE
IN AMERICA 

CALIFORNIA AND NEVADA OPERATIONS STRATEGIC PLAN

July 28, 2006

Vision: Acknowledged excellence in enhancing the environmental quality of California's, Nevada's, and Klamath's diverse ecological resources.

Mission Statement:

California and Nevada Operations (CNO) is dedicated to providing biological expertise and leadership to the conservation and restoration of the Service's trust resources through the application of creditable science, sound managerial techniques, and community-based partnerships.

Strategic Goal 1 – It starts with the land and waters we manage in public trust:

Foster a strong land ethic, as embodied by our National Wildlife Refuges, that is the underpinning for landscape-level habitat restoration, and conservation, and land stewardship.

Action 1: Provide guidance and resources so that Refuges can promote the Service's land and conservation ethic by example on refuge and neighboring properties and through meaningful visitor experience, enhanced public outreach, and community relations. National Wildlife Refuge lands should be regarded as leading examples of how to manage lands and water for people and wildlife.

Action 2: Assist Refuge Managers in fulfilling a leadership role in wildlife habitat conservation and restoration. Encourage the transfer of their land management expertise to the larger landscape through participation in regional and State planning efforts and large-scale restoration projects.

Action 3: Provide all CNO employees with first hand experience in land management.

Strategic Goal 2 - Help each other, do the right thing, and have fun doing it :

Engender a unique approach to managerial operations through minimizing line and signature authority and ensuring a streamlined, coordinated communication process between the Washington Office, California Nevada Operations Office, and field offices.

Action 1: Maintain CNO Office staffing and funding levels at an established percentage of total CNO funding to ensure responsive and efficient operational support to the field and WO.

Action 2: Foster trust and reliance on project leaders and staff in order to minimize CNO Office oversight or involvement in programmatic activities.

Action 3: Provide the highest level of transparency practicable in decision formulation, budgetary allocations, and personnel management.

Action 4: Continually review approval levels and delegate to the lowest levels practicable.

Strategic Goal 3 – Leadership with the best science available:

Provide leadership in fostering a philosophy that is predicated on the use of the best available science in formulating management decisions.

Action 1: Insure that all staff has access to necessary technological and intellectual properties by providing appropriate mechanisms for communication and coordination and/or funding for equipment and supplies.

Action 2: Formally recognize field staff that has produced outcomes that exemplify the highest standards of scientific application and integrity and adaptive management.

Action 3: Continually encourage field staff to share information, techniques, and best practices between offices. Incorporate the involvement of scientific personnel from other agencies and universities in finding solutions to the environmental problems the Service needs to respond to.

Action 4: Encourage the use of independent peer reviews, expert panels and structured decision-making for formulating key biological decisions.

Action 5: Encourage and support employee involvement in professional societies and publication of professional papers.

Strategic Goal 4 –Functional Solutions that help people and help wildlife:

Encourage creative thinking and problem solving skills in all of our employees that result in functional solutions translated to conserving and protecting our trust resources on the landscape. This should be the cornerstone of CNO's approach to the myriad trust resource issues that confront the Service.

Action 1: Encourage field staff to explore functional solutions that may not fit the norm or that may not be the traditional approach within the current interpretation of regulations.

Action 2: Approach our mission from a position of stature before statute. Lead by example, by suggesting or engendering solutions in the field that are realistic and pragmatic.

Action 3: Foster an attitude of collaborative problem solving that seeks to engage others in practical solutions that result in long-term comprehensive conservation outcomes. Engage stakeholders early in the process of addressing conservation challenges.

Action 4: Develop and maintain partnerships and alliances with federal, state, and local governments as well as private individuals, companies and not for profit organizations in order to develop beneficial projects, and to establish mutually acceptable resolutions to conservation challenges.

Action 5: Formally recognize individuals or offices that effectively employ creative problem solving to finding mutually acceptable resolutions to contentious environmental problems.

Action 6: Focus on Service mission and cross-programmatic coordination for solving resource issues.

Strategic Goal 5 – Interesting and Relevant:

Cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation, reliance, and trust between the national, state, and local political leaders, constituents, and the Service, to facilitate better communication and cooperation concerning the Service's mandated responsibilities.

Action 1: Encourage direct linkage with constituents by the field staff, so that the public garners an understanding of what we do and why it is important to them to conserve natural resources. Advocate participation in appropriate media, school, and community activities to educate the public regarding what we do and why it is important and relevant.

Action 2: Maintain open communication with political leaders and their staff to transfer information germane to projects of special interest and to promote environmental success stories beneficial to all parties.

Strategic Goal 6 – Initiative Areas for Maximizing Conservation :

Determine cross-program bio-geographical areas where the Service can have the greatest influence on trust species and their habitats as a way of maximizing our fiscal resources for conservation impact. By focusing on high priority resources, we hope to accomplish not only environmental improvements, but to marshal the support of the public and political leaders for future resource projects. All program areas will assist in identifying these areas and identifying how they support priority conservation actions.

Action 1: Collaborate with field stations to determine focal species and/or areas that would be most beneficial for concentrating conservation efforts, including land acquisition/protection opportunities.

Action 2: Emphasize landscape-level resource issues that have both an imperative and high probability of success.

Action 3: Encourage cooperation and partnership with state, federal, and private conservation organizations to ensure efficient pursuit of priority conservation areas.

Action 4: Conduct a periodic review of progress and success within initiative areas to assess accomplishments. As initiatives are completed, potential new focal areas will be considered using input from field offices/refuges.