

25-Year Recreational Angling Enhancement Plan Overview Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Recreational Fisheries Enhancement Directive

To enhance, develop, and promote diverse and productive recreational fishing opportunities that are consistent with the conservation needs of native species; provide balanced economic and social benefits; and connect Oregonians with fish, water and the outdoors.

Goal 1: Provide diverse, stable, and productive angling opportunities

The Department seeks to maintain and restore naturally-produced fish to provide opportunities for consumptive and non-consumptive recreational fisheries and to manage non-native fish and hatchery-based fisheries to optimize user benefits. The Department must increase opportunities for fishing by increasing the quality and quantity of fisheries in Oregon and access to those fisheries.

Goal 2: Increase angling participation

Diverse, stable and productive angling opportunities are the basis for increased angling participation. The Department must work to increase the number of Oregonians and others participating in these fisheries. We need to both retain our current angler base and recruit new anglers, especially young people. Programs should foster life-long participation in fishing and the outdoors based on simple, easily available opportunities and skills that can be learned at any age.

STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL ANGLING

- a) **Enhance natural production of fish stocks to levels that allow for recreational fishing opportunities.** Protecting and enhancing naturally-produced fish in their native ranges is the foundation for long-term recreational fishery management in Oregon. The Department will work to recover fish stocks to levels that will allow for consideration of recreational fishing.
- b) **Use hatchery fish, where appropriate, to enhance recreational fisheries.** Many successful recreational fishing opportunities rely on our state fish hatcheries. The Department will work to ensure its hatchery system has the resources and staff to meet current and future recreational angling needs.
- c) **Involve the public in planning and implementation.** The Department seeks to understand the interests and preferences of the public and incorporate that information into management decisions.
- d) **Use the best science available to assess fish populations, provide for maximum sustainable catch, and respond to angler preferences.** The Department will maintain or improve assessments of fish population numbers

and their performance to provide the best information possible on which to base decisions regarding harvest management.

- e) **Actively manage fisheries to provide recreational angling opportunities.** The Department will use available tools and resources to actively manage recreational angling to provide maximum sustainable opportunities for the public in accordance with the Department mission, statutes, rules, and policies.
- f) **Develop and maintain access to water bodies to provide diverse angling opportunities.** The Department will maintain current and develop new access sites for angling on publicly- and privately-owned properties.
- g) **Educate the public regarding fish, fisheries and the natural environment.** Understanding of fish, their habitats, and the natural world is important for the Department to accomplish its mission of protecting and enhancing fish and wildlife resources for present and future Oregonians.
- h) **Market and promote sport fishing and outdoor activities.** The Department recognizes that we must actively market angling to retain and recruit anglers.
- i) **Reduce barriers to fishing participation.** The Department must identify barriers to participation, such as language, mobility, and lack of time, and work to overcome those barriers.
- j) **Develop partnerships.** Partnerships with other state agencies, other states, federal agencies, municipal and county governments, schools, outdoor-oriented non-profits, conservation groups, retail stores and equipment manufacturers based on shared or similar goals enhance recreational angling opportunities and allow the Department to achieve more with limited resources.
- k) **Incorporate information from other disciplines.** The Department will incorporate information from other disciplines of study such as recreation planning, sociology, and economics into recreational fisheries management.
- l) **Staff and organize the Department to support recreational fishing.** Good recreational fisheries management relies on adequate staffing that is able to plan, investigate, and recommend solutions to fishery management questions and respond quickly and efficiently to opportunities and questions.

ACTIONS AND PILOT PROGRAMS TO ENHANCE RECREATIONAL ANGLING

Evaluate existing fisheries and identify new opportunities (Goal 1; Strategies c, d, e, f). The Department will systematically evaluate opportunities to improve or initiate fisheries in waters throughout the state to identify the management actions needed and the constraints for the waters of Oregon to realize their fishery potential.

Develop and implement actions within the hatchery system to enhance angling opportunities (Goal 1; Strategy b). The Department's hatchery system will, using guidance provided by the Native Fish Conservation Policy and the Hatchery Management Policy, increase hatchery production to meet growing needs; develop more reliable, tested, and cost-effective ways to produce hatchery fish; monitor, evaluate, and work to minimize the impact of fish pathogens on the hatchery product and on co-existing species in Oregon waters; and install technologies that improve the efficiency of hatchery production.

Develop mechanisms for on-going maintenance of angling sites (Goal 1; Strategy f). The Department will develop a funding and administrative mechanism to ensure maintenance of existing and new properties.

Use the Salmon and Trout Enhancement Program (STEP) to enhance recreational angling (Goal 2; Strategies a, b, c, g). The Department proposes modifying the current STEP program to directly address recreational fishing priorities of providing opportunity, access, and mentoring. This restructuring would focus on youth anglers but would provide direct and indirect benefits to all anglers.

Initiate an inland sport fisheries advisory board (Goal 2; Strategies c, e, g, h, i). The Department will improve communication with stakeholders by developing the framework and initiating an inland sport fisheries advisory board that will complement other Department advisory boards.

Develop and implement a marketing plan (Goal 2; Strategies g, h, j). The Department will develop and implement a marketing plan aimed at the retention and recruitment of anglers that will target youth, non-traditional anglers, newcomers, and visitors.

Improve existing and develop new angler education programs (Goal 2; Strategies g, h, j). The Department will implement a coordinated approach to angler education that is closely aligned with STEP, uses new and existing education programs, targets youth and non-traditional anglers, is coordinated with the marketing program, and includes evaluation of the success of each activity.

Develop resource centers for angling (Goal 2; Strategies g, h). To promote public interest for angling and involvement in outdoor activities, we propose interactive and comprehensive fishing learning and resource centers. Concepts include expanding opportunities at Department facilities; partnerships with nature centers, parks, and other endeavors; developing a traveling fishing and nature center; and building statewide or regional centers.

Evaluate and improve the process to update fishing regulations and revise the fishing regulation document into a more user-friendly format (Goal 2; Strategy i). The Department will evaluate the process for developing angling regulations and

recommend changes to ensure the process is efficient, that regulations are based on the best science available, and there is opportunity for broad public participation.

Evaluate the use and accuracy of the Combined Angling Tag and Hatchery Harvest Tag (Goals 1 and 2; Strategies d, e). The Department will evaluate the use and return rate of the Harvest Tag and identify means to improve the accuracy and timeliness of information reported.

Increase use of information from disciplines such as sociology, economics, recreational planning and other areas in recreational fisheries management (Goal 2; Strategies d, k, j). The Department should work with universities and others to have access to professionals with these skills to aid in management decisions regarding recreational angling, either through training current staff, hiring new staff, working with agencies from other states, or contracting with outside consultants.

Increase Department staffing to improve support for recreational fishing (Goals 1 and 2; Strategies a - l). The Department will seek to increase staffing devoted to managing recreational fisheries and providing opportunities in order to provide the Department with the tools to use the best science in managing recreational fisheries.

MONITORING PROGRESS OF THE PLAN AND SUCCESS OF THE ACTIONS UNDERTAKEN

Successful management requires evaluation of actions taken. We will use appropriate monitoring tools to measure success. In addition to evaluating outcomes of specific activities listed, some items can be monitored to measure success of the Plan overall, including:

- number of licenses sold by user group,
- number of access enhancements developed by each district, and
- participation in angling education programs and outreach activities.

The Department will also pursue avenues to monitor and understand interests of anglers (young people and certain seniors) and non-anglers who do not purchase licenses.