

focus on education

STRATEGIC PLAN
2020-2024





from the director

Nebraska's outdoor resources are shared by all who revel in the ability to understand, appreciate, and engage with the natural world. At the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, we pride ourselves in taking on the responsibility of connecting the public with our great outdoors through the multiple facets of education we provide. Education is both a conduit for those who seek to continue their outdoor adventure and those who have yet to start their journey of discovery and exploration of the great outdoors.

This Education Strategic Plan is a document that will guide agency-wide education efforts into the future. The demand and understanding of our wild places and wild things are ever-changing. This document helps provide a direction for the Commission to follow to ensure stewardship of the state's fish, wildlife, cultural, park and outdoor recreation resources are met in the best long-term interest of the people and those resources.

This strategic plan outlines visionary goals with strategies and specific action items to meet the needs of the public; and to ensure agency-wide education moves forward in unison. This plan is a living document that will evolve to stay relevant for all facets of education within the agency. In order to better serve the public, we will continue to grow the knowledge and understanding of our outreach and education programs, which will afford the Commission the ability to build conservation-minded, engaged citizenry to protect the vested interest of our wildlife and natural places.

Through our continued commitment and dedication to the people of Nebraska and our partners, we will expand outdoor learning, and uphold our reputation as a leader in conservation, cultural and outdoor recreation education. I'm optimistic about the possibilities that our future holds with regards to conservation of Nebraska's rich fish and wildlife, cultural and recreational resources and look forward to the incredible impact our education efforts will have in connecting our citizenry to these cherished treasures of Nebraska.

Sincerely,

James N. Douglas
Director

focus on education

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 - 2024

COMMISSIONERS

District 1	Dan Kreitman	Wahoo
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District 3	Jim Ernst	Columbus
District 4	John Hoggatt	Kearney
District 5	Robert Allen	Eustis
District 6	Pat Berggren	Broken Bow
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At-Large	Scott Cassels	Omaha

DIRECTOR – Jim Douglas
DEPUTY DIRECTOR – Tim McCoy
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Our Mission, Vision and Values

NGPC AGENCY MISSION

Our mission is stewardship of the state's fish, wildlife, park, and outdoor recreation resources in the best long-term interests of the people and those resources.

NGPC EDUCATION VISION

NGPC strives to develop and sustain a leadership role in ecological, cultural and outdoor recreation education in Nebraska ensuring that our diverse communities have an appreciation and knowledge of our state's natural and cultural resources resulting in greater understanding, support for, and participation in conservation and outdoor recreation.



NGPC CORE EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION VALUES

In 2017, the NGPC Education Working Group and Advisory Committee established core values for education and interpretation efforts within the Agency.

These fundamental principles are intended to guide and support NGPC staff on the pathway of planning, developing and implementing educational programming.

Commitment to Education

- Effective education and interpretation recognizes that our constituents come with a variety of belief systems, experience levels and goals. As an agency, we will meet them where they are and help them along the pathway. We will provide them with multiple experiences throughout their life and help them participate in outdoor recreation opportunities as well as developing an appreciation and understanding of our state's natural resources.
- Effective education is dynamic and constantly changing to meet the needs of our constituents and ensures that quality education principles are followed and sound information is provided.

Science and Research

- Wildlife and land management is deeply rooted in science, innovation, and research with consideration to the public's needs and desires.

Quality of Life

- What is good for wildlife is also good for people; education, scientific research, land management and outdoor recreation enhance quality of life.
- Outdoor recreation and education promotes quality of life, creates lifelong memories, and increases overall health of citizenry.

Gateways and Connections

- State Parks, Recreation and Wildlife Areas are "public gateways" to the outdoors and are ideal platforms for education and interpretation.
- Educational and interpretive efforts strive to connect people to our natural and cultural resources.

Land Stewardship and Ethical Resource Use

- Wildlife is owned by the public and managed by state and federal agencies.
- Private landowners play an important role in conservation.
- Human actions can have negative and positive impacts to natural resources and quality of life.
- Healthy ecosystems and rich biodiversity are essential to the sustainability of our natural resources.
- Education is a critical component of the safe, lawful, and ethical use of our natural and cultural resources.

Inspiring Action

- Development of public appreciation and understanding of cultural and natural resources are key to the future of conservation.
- The conservation actions of today ensure the long-term sustainability of natural resources for tomorrow.
- Effective education and interpretation, founded in passion, knowledge and skills, inspires citizens to have awareness, appreciation, understanding, and to become engaged in, the stewardship of our cultural and natural legacy.

Sustainability

- Fees associated with outdoor recreation and education provide the funding for conservation and greatly enhance statewide tourism, contributing billions of dollars to local economies.

Introduction

From its inception in 1901, the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission has worked to provide stewardship of the state’s fish, wildlife, park, and outdoor recreation resources through research, species conservation, land and aquatic management, development of outdoor recreation opportunities and education. Each aspect of the Commission’s work is critical; without research, we would not have the most accurate data to properly manage the land, water and wildlife; without quality land and aquatic management we would not have the habitats necessary for our diverse species; without development of outdoor recreation opportunities we would not have a place for Nebraskans to go to connect with nature or a funding mechanism to support conservation. And, equally important, without education we would not develop the ecologically literate, culturally engaged and skilled outdoor enthusiasts we need to ensure the conservation and appreciation of our state’s natural and cultural legacy.

The diversity of educational offerings from the Commission are as varied as our constituents. From online hunter education courses to Community Fishing Nights and Project WILD, each of our education programs seek to engage our state’s diverse communities in a way that meets the user’s needs and desires. We recognize the needs and desires of our constituents are ever-changing and educational principles and practices are constantly progressing. Furthermore, we do not pretend to know the future – what funds will be available, what staff will change, or what social or environmental challenges we will face.

Because of this, the plan before you is a working document. The writing team spent countless hours critically thinking about the agency’s current state of education, what we wish to see for the future of Agency education, and how we can work towards a common education vision. But, we recognize this can change. Change is inevitable and without adaptive management and growth, education within the agency will not realize its full potential.

Also, please keep in mind this is a five-year plan. The writing team strived to recognize this throughout the writing process. That said, you will notice the goals in this plan are lofty. We strongly believe that with the passion instilled within our agency, the goals in this plan are attainable. However, additional resources and support are paramount in enabling each goal to be achieved.

Many of the strategies within this plan are establishing a baseline. Because this is the first comprehensive education strategic plan for the Commission, it is critical that we first understand where we have been and where we are at currently before we look to the future. This is also noted in the “Immediate Recommendations” section.

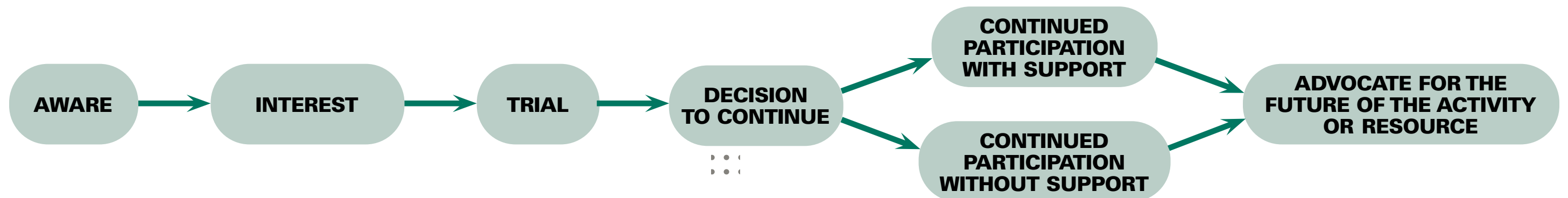
Additionally, you will notice the first three goals have numerous similar Strategies and Action Items. Furthermore, the Goals themselves are similar in nature. The main difference is the type of education focused on in each of these goals – natural resource, cultural and historical, and outdoor recreation. Throughout the writing process



it became evident that the subtle differences in the type and presentation for each kind of education were important enough to warrant a separate goal for each. The overlap in the Strategies and Action items are an indicator of their need for all three kinds of education.

Understanding that education and engagement are processes by which users move from awareness to advocacy, the Agency works to provide opportunities along this pathway – this plan seeks to reinforce this concept. Regardless if the activity is spring

turkey hunting or understanding the biodiversity of Nebraska’s plant communities; hiking the trails in our state parks or fishing; appreciation of Nebraska’s biologically unique landscapes or participating in a weekend naturalist program; the ultimate goal of education is to engage the public in awareness, understanding, appreciation and active participation. It is important to understand that for some constituents, their “path” along this spectrum may stop at entry-level participation and appreciation, but for others the “path” takes them to advocacy for the activity or resource.



EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN COMMITTEE

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The Process

In September 2017, the Commission established an “Education Workgroup” and an “Education Advisory Group” to help advance education efforts and awareness. The workgroup was made up of two staff from each of five divisions which provide education on a regular basis – Communication, Fisheries, Law Enforcement, Parks and Wildlife. The Advisory Group consisted of the division administrators of each division. The workgroup immediately began to coordinate education efforts across the Agency, including the development of “Core Values” of Commission education. Additionally, the monthly meeting provided a place for some Education staff to discuss, collaborate and problem-solve. As work progressed, it became evident that an agency-wide Education Strategic Plan was needed.

Work on this plan began in January 2019 with workshop sessions facilitated by the Planning and Programming Division. The purpose of the workshop in January was to establish the vision for the plan, the types of goals that would be in the plan, and to conduct a Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Challenges (SWOT) Analysis to assess agency-wide education. These initial meetings provided the collective voice that was needed to create this document; without the preliminary input of a diverse group, we would not have the powerful Education Strategic Plan before you.

Once the initial input was captured, a small group came together to carefully combine this information, look towards the future of education within the Commission and strategically create this plan. Nearly 15 meetings were held to discuss, write and create the plan.

After the main goals, strategies and action items were written, three reviews were completed – one with the Education Workgroup, one with the Education Advisory Group and one with Commission leadership. At each step, input, changes and recommendations were implemented into the plan.

The plan before you is truly a team effort that incorporates the different viewpoints, educational programs and divisions of the Commission.



Agency Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities

At the start of the Strategic Planning process, an assessment of the agency's education-related strengths, challenges and opportunities was conducted. Below you will find a summary of the findings.

Internal Challenges for Commission Education

- **Lack of Coordination:** Extensive work has already been done to grow education efforts within the Commission. Yet, this work is often done in silos with separate divisions. Although many educators have attempted to build coordination, this goal has failed due to over tasking staff and providing little time for needed coordination.
- **Lack of Funding and Resources:** Although the Commission has greatly expanded our funding and resources devoted to education initiative, more must be done to ensure the demands and desires of our constituents in relation to education are met.
- **Lack of Planning:** Creating new programs, providing staff and support for every requested event, and lack of evaluation of existing programs have led to the Commission's limited education staff being overburdened. With proper planning, better evaluation and a strong strategic plan to guide education staff, we will ultimately see more coordination and better education taking place along the awareness-to-advocacy spectrum.



External Challenges for Commission Education

- **Funding Priorities:** Although the Commission has sought increased funding for education efforts, our commitment is often not enough. Partners, including organizations, agencies and schools, must place natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education as a priority to ensure the funds and support are secure to enact this plan.
- **Disconnect with the Outdoors:** Regardless of the fact that some outdoor recreation participation numbers are increasing, the overall trend is down for both knowledge about natural and cultural resources and participation in outdoor recreation. This presents multiple challenges to the Commission and our education efforts.
- **Perceptions and Misconceptions:** Our constituents come from a wide variety of backgrounds, education levels and cultures, which leads to a wide variety of perceptions, misconceptions, beliefs and opinions. This can lead to challenges when providing interpretation and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Changing Demographics:** Although changing demographics in our state can provide many new educational opportunities, it can also present challenges. Staff training, diversity outreach and resources developed for our diverse audiences are needed to meet this challenge.

Current Strengths of Commission Education

- **Staff:** The staff of the entire agency are passionate and supportive of educational efforts. Additionally, the Education Staff are enthusiastic and receptive to growing education and being a national leader in natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education. Furthermore, the Education Staff have a diverse set of skills, which only further enhances our ability to grow and lead education efforts.
- **Resources:** Due to agency support of education within the recent past, we are fortunate to have exemplary resources including state-of-the-art shooting ranges and nature centers, agency publications and education-specific resources.
- **Existing Programs:** We recognize the importance of the established education programs led, coordinated and developed by the agency. This critical detail puts the agency's education efforts well on their way to growing and leading natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education across the state and nation.
- **Partnerships:** Local, regional and national partners – including volunteers – are critical to the implementation of many of our education programs. The agency is fortunate to have strong relationships with many partners and volunteers.

Future Opportunities for Commission Education

- **Resources:** Expansive natural, cultural and outdoor resources across the state allow for a wide variety of education and interpretation programming for Nebraska's diverse audiences. Our ability to engage and connect the public to our natural legacy is dramatically increased because of our state's wealth of natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- **Demand:** Diverse constituents who desire more education. Regardless of the geographic, cultural, racial, or age differences of our constituents, they desire more education from the Commission. This provides



immense opportunities for the Commission to expand our education efforts.

- **Funding:** Although the Commission has worked diligently to expand funding for education, we know more must be done. New funding opportunities are varied and include private donors, federal grants and foundation support. These potential opportunities provide hope for the funding needed to accomplish this plan.
- **Technology:** Once thought to be the downfall of outdoor recreation, we now know that technology can be a powerful tool in exciting, engaging and expanding our audience. Using technology should not be viewed as a hindrance to engagement, but rather a means to help our constituents to fully appreciate, understand and participate in natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education.
- **Partnerships:** The Commission has a long-standing tradition of strong partnerships. From national organizations to individual volunteers, our existing and potential future partnerships provide expansive opportunities for the Commission to expand our educational offerings.



Immediate Recommendations

Although all of the strategies and action items within each goal are important, there are immediate recommendations that are considered necessary to be completed before other strategies and action items can be addressed. They are summarized below, with additional details outlined in the goals section of this plan.

- Develop the baseline knowledge including an assessment of Nebraska’s diverse communities, needs of these diverse communities and how current programs do or do not meet these needs.
- Develop a matrix of current NGPC education programming offerings to establish a baseline including program goals, target audience, program cost, evaluation, NGPC core education values, potential growth of the program, and needs of the program not currently met.
- Conduct a robust evaluation of all current NGPC education programs.
- Further develop and enhance effective existing programming.
- Develop an implementation plan for the NGPC Education Strategic Plan.
- Determine the goals and focus of the Fish and Wildlife Education Division.
- Assess the impacts of development of new education-specific positions and work to develop these position descriptions thus creating a coordinated hierarchy of education job classifications.
- Assess the need for additional staff with the initial positions to include, but not limited to: Watchable Wildlife Coordinator, Agency Volunteer Coordinator, Diversity Outreach Program Manager and an Adult Education Coordinator.

- Assess current and potential partners – including non-traditional partners – focusing on a broad variety of natural resource, cultural and historical and outdoor recreation education opportunities.
- Assess current education-related revenue sources/income and expenditures.
- Develop a current list of education projects and initiatives, and sources of matching funds, which can be used for new funding sources such as Recovering American’s Wildlife Act funds.



NOTE FOR THE READER

Throughout this document, you will see **some text highlighted in blue**. This text highlights the need to assess potential new staff positions in order to accomplish key strategies. These positions are not a complete list of the total staff needed to implement this plan. The success for this plan is predicated on additional resources – including staff – to be allocated for overall education within the agency.

Throughout this document you will see there is no mention of “Parks Education,” “Fisheries Education,” “Wildlife Education,” “Law Enforcement Education.” This document is an AGENCY-WIDE plan. Removing the silos from this plan ensures we are working collectively to implement this plan across all divisions with a focus on outcomes. As you read this document, please be thinking of how the programs, staff and initiatives in each division are incorporated into each goal, strategy, and action item, and how each division can take part in the implementation of this plan.


Goals, Objectives and Desired Outcomes

As you read this document, you will see four things – goals, strategies, action items and desired outcomes. GOALS are broad statements detailing what the Commission seeks to accomplish. STRATEGIES are the methods used to accomplish the goals. ACTION ITEMS are specific actions that the agency seeks to take in the next one to five years; action items will assist in accomplishing the specific strategy and meeting the desired outcomes. DESIRED OUTCOMES are the results towards our goals achieved from the implementation of strategies and action items. Desired outcomes can change over time because they are contingent upon the objectives and available funding. This section identifies and describes the goals, strategies, action items and desired outcomes for education at NGPC over the next five years.



Goal 1: Develop the understanding, appreciation and engagement of Nebraska’s diverse communities in the stewardship of Nebraska’s NATURAL RESOURCES.

Nebraska is fortunate to have a wide variety of land and water resources, from tallgrass prairies to cool water streams, from pine and deciduous forests to rivers and reservoirs. Ensuring Nebraska’s diverse communities are aware, knowledgeable and appreciative of these resources is paramount in creating conservation-minded constituents. In turn, constituents who are knowledgeable and appreciative of our natural resources are more likely to be engaged in the conservation and advocacy for these natural resources. The Commission serves as a leader in providing high-quality, science-based conservation and natural resource education. We seek to grow our natural resource education leading to increased support and conservation actions.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>1.1 Develop a baseline of knowledge including an assessment of Nebraska’s diverse communities, needs of these diverse communities and how current programs do or do not meet these needs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the needs of Nebraska’s diverse communities in relation to natural resource education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Determine what additional information is needed and develop a standardized data collection process for acquiring information. ▪ Use federal census data to determine age, culture, rural/urban, sex and income information of Nebraska’s diverse communities. ▪ Use Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) information to further investigate Nebraska’s demographics and desires in relation to natural resources. ▪ Investigate and utilize other resources and opportunities to assess diverse communities. ▪ Use USFWS Participation Review data to further investigate Nebraska’s demographics and desires in relation to natural resources. ▪ Identify Nebraska’s communities based on culture, population, rural vs. urban and generational needs. • Determine what current NGPC natural resource education efforts are meeting the needs of Nebraska’s diverse communities, and conduct a gap analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host an annual roundtable to assist with the gap analysis to prioritize current and future natural resource education programs and education needs. • Determine gaps in current data collection methods. • Develop methods for real-time analytical analysis of our diverse customer data, including permit purchasing and visitation (and additional data as developed) to make better, more informed decisions on current and future education efforts.
<p>1.2 Further develop and enhance effective existing natural resource education programming focusing on understanding and appreciating natural resources and the need for stewardship of these natural resources.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a matrix of current NGPC natural resource education offerings. • Matrix should include: program goal, target audience, program cost, evaluation components, NGPC core concepts covered, and number of participants, longevity of program, potential growth of program, unmet needs of program, and other information as determined necessary. • Conduct a robust evaluation of all current education programs to ensure they are effective and mission driven, including a clear definition of the program’s ultimate goal and audience, role within the larger education effort and the future plan for this program. • Increase coordination amongst NGPC education programs to ensure programs are efficient and effective in engaging more people in natural resource education. • Maximize current education programs to reach existing and new audiences. • Implement staff training focused on general natural resource knowledge, as well as program development and implementation. • Increase resources, including staff, to ensure expanded educational efforts are relevant to the public, make a significant impact and are fulfilled in a meaningful way.

Strategies *(continued)*

Action Items

1.3 Develop new and innovative educational programming focusing on understanding and appreciating natural resources and the need for stewardship of these natural resources.



- Based on data collected from the needs assessment (see Goal 1, Strategy 1.1) of Nebraska’s diverse communities, develop prioritized action items to meet diverse audiences’ needs.
 - Increase social media-based education that focuses on natural resources and threats to Nebraska’s natural resources.
 - Develop easy-to-find and easy-to-understand information regarding natural resources and threats to Nebraska’s natural resources.
- Increase resources, [including staff](#), to ensure expanded educational efforts are relevant to the public, make a significant impact and are fulfilled in a meaningful way.
- Develop strategic new efforts and programs based on prioritized needs assessment with emphasis placed on passive education/interpretation, sensory education and active learning.
 - Ensure all staff understand and utilize Education Strategic Plan and Agency Core Educational Concepts when developing new programs.
 - Look to expand education and interpretation taking place at sites currently not engaged in education and interpretation. Examples include WMAs.
 - For each new program, ensure they are effective and mission driven, and develop a plan to include a clear definition of the program’s ultimate goal and audience, role within the larger education efforts and future plan for the program.
- Implement staff training focused on general natural resource knowledge as well as program development and implementation.
- Develop more self-directed learning opportunities that do not require additional staff. Examples include wayside/wayfinding signs, interpretive trail signs and technology-based applications.

1.4 Ensure that Nebraska’s diverse communities understand and appreciate natural resources and understand their role in fish, wildlife and land management and the role NGPC shares in this endeavor.

- Use multiple avenues to reach a broad audience to ensure the public has a basic understanding and appreciation of Nebraska’s natural resources and ecological concepts.
- Use multiple avenues to reach a broad audience to ensure the public has a basic understanding of the role and relevancy of [NGPC](#) as well as the role the [public and communities](#) play in fish, wildlife, and land management.
- Provide training to NGPC education staff focused on education and interpretation to ensure the Commission is providing effective education to diverse communities.
- [Assess the need for a full-time Diversity Outreach Program Manager.](#)

1.5 Provide better marketing of educational opportunities.

- Utilize the Education Matrix (see Goal 1, Strategy 1.2) to develop a plan for specific marketing efforts focusing on natural resource programs and events.
- Request that the Communications Division include the Education workgroup in their annual and monthly marketing needs meetings to ensure education efforts are better represented in agency-wide marketing efforts.
- Work with Communications Division to increase strategic marketing on natural resource education programs, events and facilities.
- Look for more funding and time to allow more marketing of natural resource education.

Strategies *(continued)*

Action Items

1.6 Increase communication to Nebraska’s diverse communities regarding land ethics, land and aquatic management and challenges to our natural resources, including how Nebraska’s diverse communities can be part of the solution.

- Provide demonstration sites which showcase high-quality natural-resource based land management (pollinator gardens, prescribed fire, range management, outdoor classrooms, natural playgrounds, pond management, planting for wildlife, stream protection, etc.).
- Develop a coordinated, agency-wide online toolbox for landowners (large and small, rural and urban) to ensure people know about existing land and aquatic management resources.
- Develop “how-to” or “self-help” education for homeowners focused on attainable stewardship-driven land and aquatic management for acreages and backyards.
- Develop a social-media campaign to keep focus on ever-changing stewardship initiatives and needs and how the public can be engaged in these initiatives – including how these initiatives are funded.
- Continue to host and develop landowner workshops focusing on natural-resource focused land and aquatic management.
- Develop strategic new efforts and programs based on prioritized needs assessment.
 - Ensure all staff understand and utilize Education Strategic Plan and Agency Core Educational Concepts when developing new programs.
- Implement staff training focused on general natural resource knowledge as well as program development and implementation.
- [Assess the need for a full-time watchable wildlife coordinator to lead stewardship initiatives for existing and new or expanding audiences.](#)

1.7 Develop and work with a diverse group of partner organizations to advance stewardship of natural resources.

- See Goal 5 Action Items.





Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>1.8 Increase and expand agency capacity for citizen science.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Agency staff to determine research and data needs. • Maximize current and future technologies to better serve agency citizen science initiatives. • Determine current NGPC and Partner facilities that lend themselves to citizen science. • Educate NGPC and Partner staff to the role citizen science can play in stewardship and natural resource conservation. • Integrate citizen science opportunities within state parks and formal classrooms. • Assess the need for a full-time citizen science coordinator to lead citizen science initiatives.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public that understands, appreciates and values Nebraska’s natural resources. • A public that is engaged in the stewardship of Nebraska’s natural resources by demonstrating sound natural resource conservation practices through their day-to-day actions. • A public that understands and appreciates the agency’s management of our fish, wildlife and natural resources. • Information related to Nebraska’s natural resources is easily accessible. • Public understands the value and economic worth of Nebraska’s natural resources and involvement in stewardship of these natural resources to enhance the quality of life. • Public is satisfied with outreach and education efforts focused on natural resources and conservation education. • Expanded understanding and appreciation of our state’s natural resources to typically underserved audiences. 	



Goal 2: Develop the understanding, appreciation and engagement of Nebraska's diverse communities in the stewardship of Nebraska's CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Highlighted at our state historical parks, Nebraska has a rich cultural and historical past, from the Overland Trail to prehistoric fossils; from apple orchards to a working ranch; from military posts to the Pony Express. In addition to our state historical parks, we have many cultural and historical resources at our state parks and state recreation areas. Together, these sites allow our culture and history to come alive. Providing opportunities for our constituents to view, interact and learn about these resources is critical to developing diverse communities that understand our past is as important as our future.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>2.1 Develop a baseline of knowledge including an assessment of Nebraska's diverse communities, needs of these diverse communities and how current historical and cultural education programs do or do not meet these needs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities in relation to historical and cultural resource education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what additional information is needed and develop a standardized data collection process for acquiring information. Use federal census data to determine age, culture, rural/urban, sex and income information of Nebraska's diverse communities. Use SCORP information to further investigate Nebraska's demographics and desires in relation to historical and cultural resources. Investigate and utilize other resources and opportunities to assess diverse communities. Engage members of diverse communities to contribute their perspective to historical and cultural resource education and interpretation. Determine the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities in relation to historical and cultural resource education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify Nebraska's communities based on culture, population, rural vs. urban and generational needs. Develop a method for real-time analytics of our diverse customer data including permit purchasing and visitation (and additional data as developed) to make better, more informed decisions on current and future education efforts. Determine what current NGPC historical and cultural resource education efforts are meeting the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities, and conduct a gap analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an annual roundtable to assist with the gap analysis to prioritize current and future historical and cultural resource education program and education needs.


Strategies (continued)	Action Items
<p>2.2 Further develop and enhance effective existing cultural education programming in Nebraska's historical parks, state parks and recreation areas.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a robust evaluation of all current education programs to ensure they are effective and mission driven including a clear definition of the program's ultimate goal and audience, role within the larger education effort and the future plan for this program. Develop a matrix of current NGPC historical and cultural resource education offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matrix should include: program goals, target audience, program cost, program audience, evaluation components, NGPC core concepts covered, number of participants, longevity of program, potential growth of program, needs of program not met and other information as determined necessary. Provide professional development for new and established staff on current education methods and best practices related to cultural resource education and interpretation. Develop innovative approaches to retain, recruit and train staff and volunteers to maintain and enhance living history demonstrations and other hands-on learning opportunities within historical parks, agency events, and other relevant venues. Develop new, or evaluate and enhance existing, educational displays in visitor's centers and historic sites that interpret history, heritage and cultural resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acknowledge that a variety of interpretive approaches, focusing on varied content (cultural, scientific, historic and aesthetic), can promote greater understanding and engagement of Nebraska's history and cultural resources. Provide multiple levels, avenues and points-of-entry into historical and cultural content, taking into consideration the diversity of audiences as well as barriers to education (physical, cultural, generational). Enhance visitor experiences by using appropriate technologies that expand access to knowledge and self-directed learning.
<p>2.3 Develop new and innovative educational programming that demonstrates our commitment to present historic and cultural resources with accuracy, clarity and relevance to a wide variety of audiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new, interactive activities and events that attract non-traditional visitors to our state historical parks. Diversify educational programming within state historical parks to include interpretation of natural and recreational resources. Expand passive or self-directed learning opportunities within parks and historic sites. Incorporate technological advances into new and existing exhibits, visitor centers, interpretive trails, etc. Enhance and develop cultural resource education into existing statewide education programs such as BOW, Expos and Outdoor Discovery Programs. Develop strategic new efforts and programs based on prioritized needs assessment. Enhance existing, or develop new, interpretive programming to better serve Nebraska's K-12 classrooms based on Nebraska College and Career Ready Standards.

Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>2.4 Provide better marketing of educational opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the Education Matrix (see Goal 1, Strategy 1.2) to develop a plan for specific marketing efforts focusing on cultural and historical programs and events. • Have communication planning meetings for education messages and opportunities. • Work with Communications Division to increase strategic marketing on cultural and historical education programs, events and facilities.
<p>2.5 Develop and work with a diverse group of partner organizations to advance preservation and interpretation of our cultural resources and heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Goal 5 Action Items
<p>2.6 Through information gathering and assessment, provide evidence of visitor learning and impacts of cultural resource education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In an ongoing and ethical manner and in conjunction with History Nebraska, collect data from historical park visitors to measure learning and document the impact of their experience. • Collect data from visitors, non-visitors and schools to determine the best education services to meet their needs and interests. • Incorporate historical and cultural education program evaluation findings into planning and/or revision of interpretation efforts.
<p>2.7 Ensure that Nebraska's diverse communities understand and appreciate our history, cultural resources and heritage.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work to develop new, and enhance existing, historical and cultural education to meet the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities. • Assess the need for a full-time Diversity Outreach Program Manager.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public that understands and appreciates the agency's management of our state's historical and cultural resources. • A public that understands and appreciates Nebraska's historical and cultural resources. • Through gaining knowledge, understanding and appreciation of Nebraska's historical and cultural resources, a citizenry that is engaged in the preservation and interpretation of these resources. • Information related to Nebraska's historical and cultural resources is easily accessible. • Public understands that there is an economic, educational, community and inherent value to the conservation, preservation and research or understanding of our cultural resources and heritage. • Public is satisfied with outreach and education efforts focused on historical and cultural resources. • Expanded understanding and appreciation of our state's historical and cultural resources to typically underserved audiences. 	

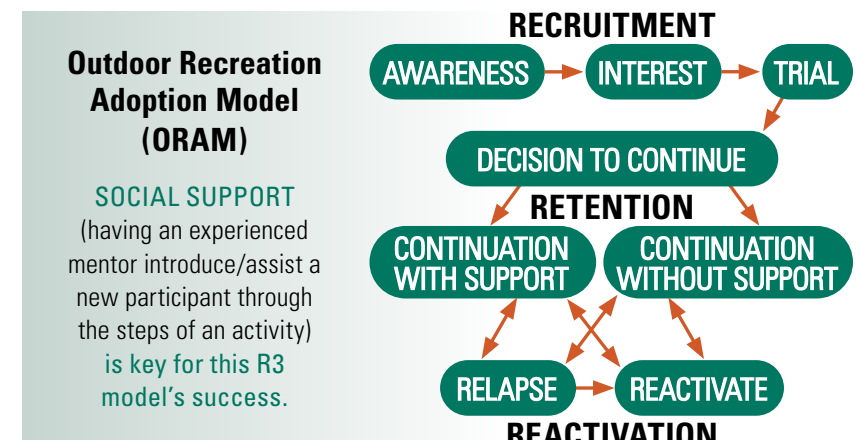


Goal 3: Develop the understanding, appreciation and engagement of Nebraska's diverse communities in OUTDOOR RECREATION opportunities.

Engaging our diverse constituents in outdoor recreation is critical for our state's ecosystems, economy and health. Having a public that appreciates our state's variety of species and understands the Commission's management of these species is invaluable to advancing outdoor recreation opportunities. The Commission seeks to provide ample opportunities for the public to learn about and be supported in their outdoor recreation endeavors – whether that be hiking, bird watching, hunting, fishing, or one of the many other opportunities in our state – which ensures our constituents are supportive of the role outdoor recreation plays for people, the economy and the ecosystems.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>3.1 Develop a baseline of knowledge including an assessment of Nebraska's diverse communities, needs of these diverse communities and how current outdoor recreation programs do or do not meet these needs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities in relation to outdoor recreation education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Determine what additional information is needed and develop a standardized data collection process for acquiring information. Use federal census data to determine age, culture, rural/urban, sex and income information of Nebraska's diverse communities. Use SCORP information to further investigate Nebraska's demographics and desires in relation to outdoor recreation. Investigate and utilize other resources and opportunities to assess diverse communities. Use USFWS Participation Review data to further investigate Nebraska's demographics and desires in relation to outdoor recreation. Identify Nebraska's communities based on culture, population, rural vs. urban and generational needs. Determine what current NGPC outdoor recreation education efforts are meeting the needs of Nebraska's diverse communities, and conduct a gap analysis. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Host an annual roundtable to assist with the gap analysis to prioritize current and future outdoor recreation education program and education needs. Use the Nebraska R3 Gap Analysis (Oct 2017) as a model. Develop a method for real-time analytical analysis for our diverse customer data including permit purchasing and visitation (and additional data as developed) to make better, more informed decisions on current and future educational offerings.

Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>3.2 Further develop and enhance effective existing outdoor recreation education programming focusing on understanding and appreciating outdoor recreation education and the need for outdoor recreation opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct or expand a robust evaluation of all current education programs to ensure they are effective and mission driven, including a clear definition of the program's ultimate goal and audience, role within the larger education effort and the future plan for this program. Develop a matrix of current NGPC outdoor recreation education offerings. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Matrix should include: program goals, target audience, program cost, program audience, evaluation components, NGPC core concepts covered, number of participants, longevity of program, potential growth of program, unmet needs of program, where the program fits in the ORAM Model and what other program connections exist before/after the program and other information as determined necessary. Increase coordination amongst NGPC education programs to ensure programs are efficient and effective in engaging more people in outdoor recreation education and that educational programs are providing a pathway for customers to logically follow. Maximize current education programs to reach existing and new audiences. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Based on data collected from the needs assessment (Strategy 1.1) of Nebraska's diverse communities, develop prioritized action items to meet diverse audiences' needs. Coordinate with existing partners to develop efficient customer pathways toward recruitment into key recreational activities. Ensure partners are working together to provide effective customer pathways. Increase self-help, media-based education focused on outdoor recreation. Develop easy-to-find and easy-to-understand information regarding outdoor recreation. Educate diverse audiences in regards to outdoor recreation ethics, societal expectations, regulations and laws. Increase resources, including staff, to ensure expanded educational efforts are relevant to the public, make a significant impact and are fulfilled in a safe and meaningful way. Implement staff training focused on outdoor recreation knowledge and program development and implementation. Assess the need for full-time skills-based educators (NASP, Explore Archery, fishing, bow fishing, Archery in the Parks).



Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>3.3 Develop new and innovative educational programming focusing on understanding and appreciating outdoor recreation education and the need for outdoor recreation opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate diverse audiences in regards to outdoor recreation ethics, societal expectations, regulations and laws. • Increase resources, including staff, to ensure expanded educational efforts are relevant to the public, make a significant impact and are fulfilled in a safe and meaningful way. • Implement staff training focused on outdoor recreation knowledge and program development and implementation. • Develop strategic new efforts and program based on prioritized needs assessment. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure all staff understand and utilize Education Strategic Plan and Agency Core Values when developing new programs. • Assess the need for full-time skills-based educators (NASP, Explore Archery, fishing, bow fishing, Archery in the Parks). • Assess the need for a full-time adult education outdoor recreation educator (examples include BOW, Parks Education, Learn to Hunt, collegiate programs, etc.)
<p>3.4 Ensure that Nebraska's diverse communities understand and appreciate outdoor recreation and the role the Commission and Nebraska's communities share in outdoor recreation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use multiple avenues to reach a broad audience to ensure the public has a basic understanding and appreciation of Nebraska's outdoor recreation opportunities. • Use multiple avenues to reach a broad audience to ensure the public has a basic understanding of the role of NGPC, as well as the role the public and communities play in outdoor recreation. • Use multiple avenues to reach a broad audience to ensure the public understands the role outdoor recreation plays in Nebraska's economy, communities and health. • Incorporate information and opportunities for outdoor recreation into other NGPC educational initiatives. • Provide training to NGPC education staff to provide more effective education to diverse communities. • Assess the need for a full-time Diversity Outreach Program Manager.


Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>3.5 Provide better marketing of outdoor recreation educational opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize the Education Matrix (see Goal 3, Strategy 2) to develop a marketing plan for specific marketing efforts focusing on outdoor recreation programs and events. • Have communication planning meetings for education messages and opportunities. • Work with Communications Division to increase strategic marketing on outdoor recreation, events and facilities. • Allow for broader opportunities for marketing including, but not limited to, partner organization marketing.
<p>3.6 Develop and work with a diverse group of partner organizations to advance Nebraska's outdoor recreational opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Goal 5 Action Items. • Expand the R3 Task Force and develop a direct link between Task Force efforts and Administration. • Work with existing partners to enhance collaborative efforts to move new participants along the ORAM Pathway. • Work with partners to ensure each partner is focusing on the initiatives that they can do effectively and efficiently and work to build partnerships from these initiatives. • Work with partners to expand R3 efforts by asking partners to take a more active and focused role in R3.
<p>3.7 Develop an internal taskforce to review initiatives and developments that have positive and negative impacts on outdoor recreation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop specialized agency workgroups to focus on specific initiatives (R3, watchable wildlife, camping, etc.). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Look at laws and regulations and how they impact specific initiatives, and make recommendations to ensure we provide a positive experience for users. ▪ Reference and expand upon R3 Plan. • Develop a mechanism by which an internal R3 workgroup's needs and initiatives are communicated to NGPC administration.



Desired Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A public that understands and appreciates the agency's management of our state's outdoor recreation opportunities. • A public that understands, appreciates and values Nebraska's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. • A public that is actively engaged in a wide range of outdoor recreation activities in an ethical and responsible manner. • Information related to Nebraska's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities is easily accessible. • Public understand the value and economic worth of Nebraska's outdoor recreation opportunities and that involvement in these resources enhances the quality of life. • Public is satisfied with outreach and education efforts focused on natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. • Expanded understanding and appreciation of our state's natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities to typically underserved audiences.

Goal 4: Become a stronger, more cohesive high-performance education team that meets the mission of the Agency.

Over the past 10 years, the Commission has expanded educational efforts greatly; that forward momentum is only the beginning. And while we have worked to expand education and program offerings, we have often lacked the coordination and synergy that is needed to allow the Commission to be a national leader in natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education. The Commission desires a stronger, more cohesive education team spanning the multiple divisions within the agency, more highly-trained educators to lead our expanding educational initiatives, and the resources and funding needed to accomplish this goal.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>4.1 The agency internally and externally demonstrates its commitment to natural, cultural and outdoor recreation education.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an implementation plan for the NGPC Education Strategic Plan. • Promote the Education Workgroup as an advisory entity, which administration relies on for advice, coordination and education priorities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reinvigorate the priorities of the Education Workgroup. ▪ Review staff assignments to the workgroup to ensure all education-related divisions are represented (Fisheries, Wildlife, Parks, Communications, Law Enforcement and F&W Education) and that the best, most involved education staff are able and willing to take an active role in the Education Workgroup. ▪ Task the Education Workgroup with producing a quarterly report. ▪ Develop sub-groups to work on specific priorities. • Develop a mechanism by which the Education Workgroup's needs and initiatives are communicated to NGPC administration. • Ensure NGPC education efforts are represented at all division meetings. • Include an overview of all NGPC education efforts at the Day-One New Employee Orientation to ensure new staff understand the importance of education to the NGPC mission and vision. • Appreciate the nuances and differences amongst education programs, but seek to coordinate all agency education programs to ensure the mission and vision of NGPC progresses. • Ensure the Fish and Wildlife Education Division provides direction for ecological education across the agency and provides support to all NGPC divisions in a strategic and relevant manner. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Education Division will work with the Education Workgroup and Education Advisory Committee to ensure overall NGPC education is coordinated. ▪ Ensure all divisions and all education staff (temporary and permanent) are working collectively as one team and have unified support in their approach and daily work.

Strategies (continued)	Action Items
<p>4.2 Develop a plan for the Fish and Wildlife Education (FWE) Division.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the goals and focus of the FWE Division. • Determine how the FWE Division will work with other divisions and the role it will play in the agency.
<p>4.3 Ensure education staff engage in professional development activities that continue their lifelong education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education staff will participate in professional development annually. • Ensure funding is available for sending staff to, or bringing trainers in for, professional development. • Assess, evaluate and expand internal training opportunities provided for and by education staff.
<p>4.4 Participate and expand research focused on outdoor and ecological education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek existing and cutting edge research to help guide our new education efforts. • Participate in national outdoor and ecological education research initiatives. • Create a team to identify a prioritized list of educational research needs for the agency and pursue funding and partnerships for research. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand Human Dimensions research focused specifically on education (examples include, but are not limited to, the best natural, cultural and outdoor recreation education methods, motivation for education and interpretation participation, and results of participation).
<p>4.5 Develop new and expanded position descriptions and a hierarchy of education-specific job titles.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the impacts of development of new education-specific positions and reclassification of existing positions on current programs, budgets and overall agency workload. • Develop new education position descriptions that accurately reflect job duties by which a coordinated hierarchy of education positions is created. • Reclassify existing positions based on new education position descriptions.




Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>4.6 Create a plan for the future of NGPC education based on needs and goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using this overall Education Strategic Plan, create a prioritized list of educational projects and initiatives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand staff. ▪ Support existing staff through professional development. ▪ Expand statewide access to educational resources and equipment. ▪ Develop new educational facilities and/or maintain and renovate existing educational facilities. Examples of educational facilities include ranges, nature centers, historical park visitor centers/museums, outdoor classrooms, meeting spaces, hatcheries. ▪ Ensure existing education facilities are being managed in a way that maximizes educational objectives. ▪ Enhance and develop mobile classrooms and educational resources (trailers, kits, trunks, etc.). ▪ Create and develop new or expanded programs.
<p>4.7 Provide training for ALL NGPC staff to gain skills related to education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with the New Employee Orientation Committee to ensure education is a part of the week-long New Employee Training. • Develop strategic opportunities for NGPC staff to develop and expand their education knowledge and skills. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop an annual NGPC staff training schedule to ensure NGPC staff are aware of future education trainings. ▪ NGPC Education Team will provide education-related professional development opportunities for all NGPC staff.
<p>4.8 Ensure NGPC staff reflect the cultural, demographic and general diversity of Nebraska's communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide training to a diverse audience to ensure diverse individuals have the skills needed to become successful candidates for hiring. • Provide training to NGPC education staff to provide more effective education to diverse communities. • Assess the need for a full-time Diversity Outreach Program Manager.
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NGPC Education Team is recognized as a state and national leader in natural resource, cultural and outdoor recreation education. • A more professional and well-trained education staff that is ready to meet the needs of the agency and challenges of the future. • More effective focus on agency education objectives. • Increased collaboration and communication amongst education staff, leading to more effective and efficient education efforts. • Agency education staff have appropriate educational tools (including technology) to engage a diverse audience in a wide variety of NGPC education initiatives. • Agency is more prepared to address current and future opportunities and challenges. • Increased capacity, through increased funding, more staff and increased resources, for agency and national education initiatives. 	



Goal 5: Grow strategic partnerships based on mutual interests in outdoor pursuits and ecological education.

Much of the education initiatives the Commission leads require strong partnerships. Whether the partners are local or national organizations, state agencies or volunteers, their mutual interest and commitment to outdoor recreation and education allows for more to be accomplished and greater resource availability. The Commission recognizes the importance of these partnerships and seeks to not only maintain but also grow strategic partnerships.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>5.1 Develop, maintain and enhance effective partnerships that serve mutually beneficial needs.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current and potential partners focusing on a broad variety of natural resource, cultural and historical, and outdoor recreation education opportunities. • Based on NGPC’s focus on education, work with existing partnerships to ensure education is one of their priorities for their organization. • Network with other like-minded organizations to ensure there is a connection or link between mutually beneficial programs. • Identify, expand and enhance priority partnerships that align closely with the NGPC mission and vision. • Enhance and expand partnerships to provide pre-K through 12th-grade students and teachers with natural resource, cultural resource and outdoor recreation education opportunities. • Develop a mechanism for current and potential partners to meet and work with NGPC staff to advance education opportunities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Host an annual roundtable to help with a partnership gap analysis and determine how NGPC staff can lead education programs in which partners can participate or assist with partner education programs.
<p>5.2 Expand partnerships to reflect the cultural, demographic and general diversity of Nebraska in order to grow audiences and programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the needs of Nebraska’s diverse communities in relation to natural resource, cultural and outdoor resource education. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prioritize the top three cultural communities based on population, rural vs. urban needs, and generational needs. ▪ Prioritize rural vs. urban needs. ▪ Prioritize generational needs. • Seek non-traditional partners that can help NGPC reach new audiences based on Nebraska’s cultural, demographic and general diversity. • Work with non-traditional partners to develop and implement programs which meet the specific needs of Nebraska’s diverse cultural and demographic communities. • Assess the need for a Diversity Outreach Program Manager.



Strategies *(continued)*

Action Items

5.3 Work to develop and maintain a vast network of volunteers.



- Assess current volunteer programs and databases within the Agency to determine demographic and geographic information.
- Look to gain volunteers from new and diverse groups.
- Determine desires of future volunteers and their skill sets.
- Work to coordinate and create a more consistent volunteer recognition program.
- Work to maintain and expand collaborative work with the Nebraska Master Naturalist Program.
- Seek volunteers from colleges and universities in an effort to provide these students with the knowledge, skills and experiences needed for a future career with NGPC.
- Provide quality training opportunities for agency volunteers to ensure they have the necessary skill sets.
 - Continue to help provide ecological knowledge trainings and provide more skills-based trainings to Nebraska Master Naturalists.
 - Provide trainings to park naturalists focusing on a broad array of topics including skills and ecological knowledge.
 - Provide Hunter Education, range instructors, boater education and youth fishing instructor volunteers with basic education trainings (how to be a good educator), natural resource education and outdoor skills development.
- [Assess the need for an Agency volunteer coordinator](#) to provide education staff with the volunteer management tools and resources they need for managing and expanding education program volunteers.

5.4 Partner with colleges and universities to ensure people entering the natural resource, outdoor recreation, historic preservation, and conservation field have basic skill sets associated with education.

- Assess the current coursework at Nebraska’s colleges and universities to determine what students are currently learning; work with colleges and universities to help provide students with the coursework and experiences they will need for future employment in the natural resource, outdoor recreation, historic preservation, and conservation field.
- Offer trainings specific to college and university students.
- Seek volunteers from colleges and universities in an effort to provide these students with the knowledge and skills they need to be hired at NGPC in the future.
- Look into the potential of hiring college interns.
- [Assess the need for a full-time adult education outdoor recreation educator \(examples include BOW, Parks Education, Learn to Hunt, collegiate programs, etc.\)](#)

Strategies *(continued)*

Action Items

5.5 Foster the development of and maintain existing “Friends” groups and other similar partnerships to provide sources of volunteers, promote community engagement and as a means for funding and grant opportunities.

- Assess “Friends” organizations and other similar partnerships related to agency education efforts.
- From this assessment (Goal 5, Strategy 5.5, Action 1), develop models of successful partner groups including information on how they function, types of agreements, benefits to the agency, challenges, etc.
- Develop ways to further enhance and utilize existing partnerships.
- Identify areas or programs that have strong community/partner support and work towards the development of new partnerships following the path of successful models.

Desired Outcomes

- A broad network of partnerships that provide effective and high-quality natural resource, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation education.
- More efficient delivery of natural resource, cultural resource and outdoor recreation education.
- Advancement of the agency’s mission of stewardship of natural and cultural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities through a more extensive network of partners and volunteers.
- Increased capacity – through increased funding, political support, educators and resources – for natural resource, cultural heritage and outdoor recreation opportunities.





Goal 6: A sustainable funding plan for all natural resource, cultural resource and outdoor recreation education.

Without adequate funding, much of the work the Commission accomplishes would not be possible. We understand that our funding sources must remain diverse to ensure sustainable and steady funding. This requires us to maintain current sources of funding and consistently be looking for new sources. We also recognize that the Commission’s budget must continue to accurately reflect our commitment to education and our desire to grow education initiatives.

Strategies	Action Items
<p>6.1 Utilize Education Matrix to explore <u>current</u> agency-wide education expenditures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess current education-related revenue sources/income and expenditures (PR, DJ, ML License Plates, Parks Cash, Game Cash). • Use information gained to help in the program evaluation initiative and better drive future funding priorities and opportunities.
<p>6.2 Develop a strategy for obtaining <u>new</u> funding sources for educational programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determine the needs and budget for each prioritized education program and determine if they currently have sustainable funding. • Determine potential income derived from user fees. • Develop a list of potential grants and donor/sponsor organizations that can help provide additional funding for education. • Maximize the use of federal aid and matching sources of funding.
<p>6.3 Create a plan for education spending based on <u>existing</u> agency funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using this overall Education Strategic Plan, create a prioritized list of educational projects and initiatives to be funded with current agency funding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategically expand staff. ▪ Support existing staff through professional development. ▪ Expand statewide access to educational resources and equipment. ▪ Develop new educational facilities and/or maintain and renovate existing educational facilities. Examples of educational facilities include ranges, nature centers, historical park visitor centers/museums, outdoor classrooms, meeting spaces, hatcheries. ▪ Ensure existing education facilities are being managed in a way that maximizes educational objectives. ▪ Enhance and develop mobile classrooms and educational resources (trailers, kits, trunks, etc.). ▪ Create and develop new or expanded programs.



Strategies <i>(continued)</i>	Action Items
<p>6.4 Create a plan for education spending based on <u>future</u> agency funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using this overall Education Strategic Plan, create a prioritized list of educational projects and initiatives to be funded with new funds. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expand staff. ▪ Support existing staff through professional development. ▪ Expand statewide access to educational resources and equipment. ▪ Develop new educational facilities and/or maintain and renovate existing educational facilities. Examples of educational facilities include ranges, nature centers, historical park visitor centers/museums, outdoor classrooms, meeting spaces, hatcheries. ▪ Ensure existing education facilities are being managed in a way that maximizes educational objectives. ▪ Enhance and develop mobile classrooms and educational resources (trailers, kits, trunks, etc.). ▪ Create and develop new or expanded programs. • Identify current and new sources of matching funds for future income.
<p>6.2 Partner with “Friends” groups as a means for funding and grant opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See Goal #5
<p>Desired Outcomes</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of current programming and the funding needed for each. • Prioritized budget of all current NGPC Education initiatives. • Prioritized plan for future education funding. 	



Conclusion

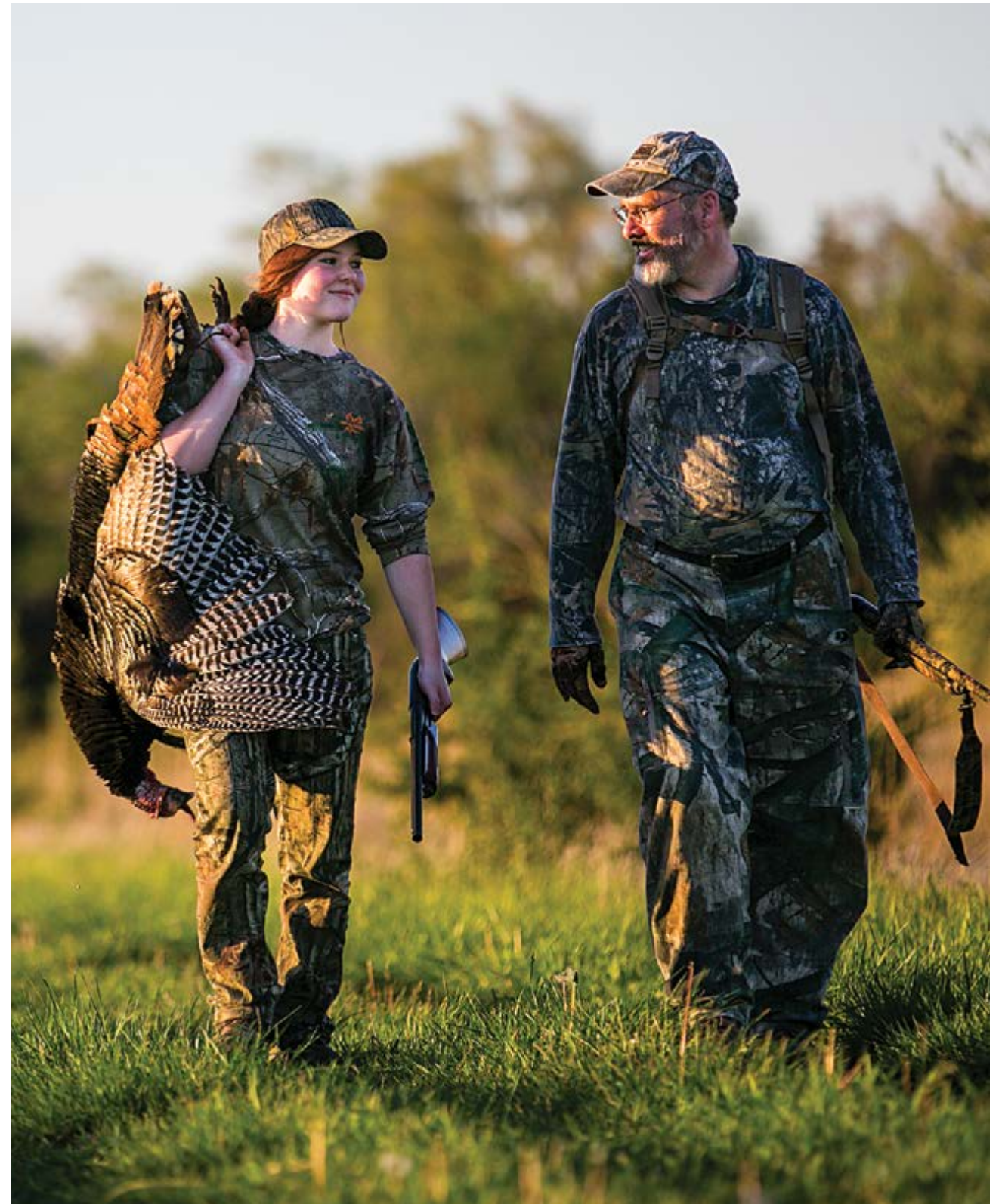
The Commission’s vision for education is an agency that works more boldly, strategically and in coordination to better engage our citizenry in multiple dimensions of education. From ecological, historical and cultural to outdoor recreation education, the reach of our education efforts spans the entire state across various cultures, genders, socio-economic backgrounds and generations. Our educational goals focus on creating ecological advocacy, cultural and historical appreciation and outdoor recreation participation. We seek to do this with adequate funding in a focused and coordinated way as a unified team. In the end, it is about helping our citizenry find their own land ethic while understanding their role in conservation and the many opportunities for their involvement.

While the Immediate Recommendations are necessary to set the stage for the rest of the plan, implementation will need to be coordinated in a collective approach through the Education Workgroup coordinating amongst all divisions, especially the newly formed Fish and Wildlife Education Division. Each division leader will need to identify and understand their team’s role and where they can make the greatest impacts in supporting the goals of this plan. This initial five-year plan provides a road map as to where we can go with our educational efforts if we work together. The desired outcomes suggested in this plan reflect critical needs within Nebraska

that will support the Commission’s overall mission. This plan will elevate the relevancy of education within our agency, building a solid framework from which to act upon in the future.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission can only achieve its mission when we have a citizenry who understands that mission, cares about it, sees their role in it and is engaged. As a public service agency, our success will only be possible if we are heading in the same direction as our citizenry desires. The future of Nebraska’s fish and wildlife conservation will be dictated by a public that is not only aware and interested but is actively engaged and ultimately an advocate for our rich and diverse ecological, historical/cultural and recreational resources that we so deeply cherish.

The Education Strategic Plan provides a high-level view that describes where agency-wide education efforts want to be in the future and how we intend to get there. This plan will be the foundation for implementation of operational actions that will lead to achieving the goals, strategies, and desired outcomes outlined in this document. As a public service agency, this plan allows us to fulfill the expectations assigned by the public and further our footprint with regards to education. With forward thinking, collaboration, and continued commitment to fulfilling our vision, we can propel education into the future.



Appendix A: Definitions

- **Active education:** Education that involves the student through the use of relevant activities and or discussions (games, challenges, hands-on activities, open discussions)
- **Citizen science:** Involvement of citizens in research of the natural world
- **Community (identify what communities are in relation to this plan; identify the markets):** Regions of people within small boundaries in the state that interact with their environment that share a similar space, resources, culture, age, religion
- **Cultural/Historical education:** Education that develops a personal connection to the cultural or historical relevance of a location, person, group or event with the visitor
- **Diverse communities:** Communities made up of different ages, gender, rural vs. urban, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic, habitat use and ideology
- **Education staff:** Key staff within the Commission whose primary job description or assignments focus on one or more areas of education (natural, cultural, outdoor recreation)
- **Formal education:** Education that occurs within the boundaries of a classroom or school setting utilizing a set curriculum or lesson plan (preschool, kindergarten – high school, college)
- **Gap analysis:** Understanding the gaps in the life journey support of our customers as they adopt outdoor lifestyles and conservation actions
- **Informal education:** Education that occurs outside of a classroom or formal school setting without a curriculum or structured lesson plan (social media, web pages, Expos, natural playscapes, unguided hikes, unconstructed outdoor play)
- **Interpretation:** a form of communication that helps people understand, appreciate, and emotionally connect with the rich natural, cultural heritage and recreational activities in Nebraska
- **Natural resource education/knowledge:** Education that imparts understanding, appreciation or stewardship of fish, wildlife and other natural resources, ecoregions or habitats
- **Non-formal:** Education that occurs outside of a structured classroom/school while still utilizing a curriculum or education principles (parks naturalist programs, workshops, camps, field trips, Outdoor Discovery Programs)
- **Outdoor Recreation Adoption Model:** Basic model showing the pathway a person takes from the moment they become aware of an activity to the stage where they are an active participant without outside support
- **Outdoor recreation education:** Education focusing on outdoor skills or related activities (hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife viewing, kayaking)
- **Passive education:** Education where the student absorbs the information on their own terms (online education, assigned readings, lectures, interpretive signage, pamphlets and brochures)
- **Relevancy:** A personal understanding of what the Commission does or could do and how it impacts the day-to-day lives of our citizenry
- **Self-help education:** Independent self-led education in which the student learns information, concepts and skills without the help of a present instructor (web based education, interpretive signage)
- **Sensory experience:** Experiencing nature, recreation or culture by use of one or more of the five senses that results in a human connection with a place, object or living organism
- **Sustainable funding:** Funding that provides consistent and significant support for various outdoor education efforts





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