

# Design for the Future Strategic Plan

Mission

To protect and manage the fish, forest, and wildlife resources of the state; to facilitate and provide opportunities for all citizens to use, enjoy, and learn about these resources

Vision

A future with healthy fish, forests, and wildlife where all people appreciate nature

Values

Dedicated to our Mission | Responsible Stewards | Trusted Professionals | One MDC

Goals

**Take care of nature**

**Connect people with nature**

**Maintain public trust**

Outcomes

Missouri has healthy land, water, and forests

Missouri has sustainable fish and wildlife

Missourians have places to go to enjoy nature

Missourians value nature

Missourians are confident their investments are used wisely

Missouri is a recognized leader in conservation

Strategic Priorities

**Change the trajectory of Missouri's most imperiled natural communities**

**Connect a diversity of people with nature**

**Enhance customer experience**

Initiatives

Landscape assessment and monitoring  
Grasslands  
Wetlands  
Bottomland forests  
Stream communities

Recreational use planning  
Pathways to Relevancy  
Community Conservation relationship building  
Recruitment, retention, reactivation of hunters and anglers

Customer Experience Plan

**Advance the recovery of high priority species**

**Renew the infrastructure portfolio**

**Implement the Performance Excellence framework**

Wildlife diversity  
Turkey habitat  
Quail habitat

Infrastructure renewal

Governance and role clarity

**Minimize the impacts of invasive species and diseases**

**Develop a diverse and engaged workforce**

Chronic wasting disease

Employee Engagement Plan

Program Delivery

We deliver conservation through our day-to-day work, guided by program objectives and work plans at all scales. Program objectives help us move the needle on outcomes, goals, and strategic priorities. Program objectives linked to the strategic priorities and their initiatives become our work plan priorities.

# Strategic Initiatives

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**Landscape Assessment and Monitoring** — Develop tools to assess our conservation success across priority geographies and how management actions influence future conditions. This will be accomplished by implementing a baseline landscape health index for each priority geography and developing achievable desired future conditions using the Missouri River Hills priority geography as a pilot.

**Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)** — Improve CWD communication, evaluate alternative methods of localized CWD management, increase efficiencies of surveillance efforts, and inform future management. This will be accomplished by determining the optimal scale to monitor changes in sample prevalence, establishing targeted removal goals for core areas, developing a pilot study on core area hunter harvest, and researching targeted removal success factors.

**Quail Habitat** — Increase quail populations within MDC's quail restoration landscapes (QRLs). This will be accomplished by determining and removing barriers to staff and partners for creating and improving quail habitat and by completing quail management on at least 30 percent of open land acres on QRL public land.

**Wildlife Diversity** — Identify and prioritize species recovery and conservation goals across taxa groups and align these goals with related Comprehensive Conservation Strategy and habitat system strategic initiatives. This will be accomplished by establishing taxa working groups that will develop program objectives for regional work plans and measures for evaluating progress.

**Stream Communities** — Focus efforts to protect, restore, and promote healthy native species communities and habitat conditions in small, high-priority stream systems. This will be accomplished through intensive management of model watersheds to achieve specified future conditions, establishing a blend of progress measures with streamlined monitoring approaches, and implementing communication and outreach strategies.

**Turkey Habitat** — Increase the number of acres with high-quality nesting and brood-rearing cover. This will be accomplished through increased awareness and knowledge among MDC land managers, partner land managers, and the public of what good cover looks like, the practices used to create it, and cost-share opportunities to help offset costs for private land managers.

**Bottomland Forests** — Restore bottomland forest ecosystems and their functions to support a healthy forest, fish, and wildlife community while promoting clean water, advancing social attributes, and contributing economic benefits. This will be accomplished through identification of priority bottomland forest areas, technical guidance, land acquisition, external coordination, increased management, and reconstruction standards.

**Grasslands** — Protect and improve biodiversity, structure, and ecological function of native grasslands while promoting native grasslands as a vital part of diverse and resilient working lands. This will be accomplished through active management, reduction of brush cover, Partners in Flight model landscapes, and strike teams.

**Wetlands** — Position the wetland program to plan more strategically, make new connections, and increase the appreciation and use of wetland habitats. This will be accomplished by updating elevational hydrography mapping and National Wetland Inventory datasets, expanding native aquatic plant communities, and using decision science to identify optimal management actions for diverse wetland conditions.

**Community Conservation Relationship Building** — Enhance the delivery of community conservation through strong relationships. This will be accomplished by equipping staff to navigate community dynamics, leverage shareholders and stakeholders, and find unique solutions for each community.

**Pathways to Relevancy** — Develop mutually respectful, broad-based, beneficial relationships with a cross-section of Missourians, specifically 18 to 34-year-olds and urban Black Missourians. This will be accomplished through staff training and development, programming, agency culture, targeted communication, and partnerships.

**Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation of Hunters and Anglers** — Increase participation in hunting, trapping, fishing, and shooting sports in Missouri. This will be accomplished through a mentorship program that targets those 18 years of age and older.

**Recreational Use Planning** — Complete a recreational use plan that will inform future policy and regulations, area maintenance, land acquisition and disposal, and infrastructure asset management, ranking areas of highest priority. This will be accomplished through a tiered approach to recreational use focused on trails, fishing, hunting, boating, primitive camping, shooting ranges, and wildlife viewing.

**Infrastructure Renewal** — Repair, renovate, or replace infrastructure that is in poor condition or functionally obsolete, with extra emphasis on reducing the number of assets and improving life safety systems and compliance. This will be accomplished through the development of a capital plan with defined targets and measures for levels of service, asset age and condition, improved safety, and reduced liabilities.

**Customer Experience Plan** — Improve how MDC staff builds relationships to consistently meet or exceed customer expectations. This will be accomplished through customer data improvements, customer relationship management system and processes, and operational improvements such as employee knowledge-sharing databases, communication practices, and print and digital materials distribution.

**Employee Engagement Plan** — Develop and implement a strategy that better equips MDC managers to lead, communicate with, and develop employees. This will be accomplished through effective manager-to-direct-report ratios, manager role charters, and core competencies.

**Governance and Role Clarity** — Enhance lines of communication and decision-making clarity for the implementation of department programs. This will be accomplished through program-focused working groups, role clarity, communication processes, and program objectives.