

Strengthening the Future of Fish and Wildlife Management in Colorado

Keeping the Public in the Public Trust Doctrine

Madeleine West, Candidate for Master of Public Administration,
University of Colorado Denver School of Public Affairs

PUAD 5361 – CAPSTONE PROJECT

Instructor: Dr. Jessica Sowa

Client: Colorado Department of Natural Resources

Spring 2012

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TAB 1:

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 1

INTRODUCTION..... 3

CHANGE IN PUBLIC AGENCIES..... 5

 AUDIENCES FOR DEMONSTRATING PUBLIC VALUE..... 6

 STRATEGIES FOR DEMONSTRATING PUBLIC VALUE..... 8

CHANGE IN WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AGENCIES 11

PROJECT PURPOSE 13

METHODS 14

ANALYSIS 16

RECOMMENDATIONS..... 21

TAB 2: REFERENCES

TAB 3: LIST OF TABLES

- TABLE 1. CASE STUDY DESCRIPTIONS
- TABLE 2. LEADERS OF CHANGE
- TABLE 3. PUBLIC INCLUSION IN VISION DEVELOPMENT
- TABLE 4. STRATEGIES FOR UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC VALUES

TAB 4: ATTACHMENT A – GENERAL PUBLIC VALUES TOWARDS WILDLIFE IN COLORADO

Executive Summary

Government agencies are currently faced with a number of pressures to increase services while doing so with fewer and fewer resources, as they experience the growth of a diversifying and aging population, limits to revenues, an increasing distrust in government, an advance in reliance on technology, and changing environmental patterns. All of these factors are causing governments to review the type of services they undertake and the methods with which those services are provided.

State wildlife agencies are challenged to increase services in response to both biological and social pressures, while simultaneously witnessing a collapse of their traditional funding structure. Historically funded by a user-pays model, state wildlife agencies are experiencing a steady decline in their traditional user base, along with an increase in demand for services necessary to meet their mission of protecting wildlife – a common resource held in trust by governments for the benefit of the public. With the recent merger in Colorado to a combined Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW), the agency is positioned to embark on a strategic change effort in response to these challenges.

In support of strategic change, public value theory suggests that change efforts will be most successful if they produce increased value to the public. Responding to values of the public first requires a clear understanding of what the public finds important. Followed closely is development of a clear vision and action plan for what an agency could accomplish that meets the interest of the public. Several state wildlife agencies have attempted such strategic change to increase their value to the public, and ultimately a small number were successful in harnessing that support to secure additional public funding for the agency.

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The goal of this project is to answer the following question: how can CPW strategically position itself to increase its value to the public, and justify a long-term need for funding to maintain that value.

CPW has already begun structural and strategic changes through the recent merger of the Parks Division with the Wildlife Division and strategic planning is underway to connect the mission and mandates of both agencies. This project applies public value theory to a number of successful cases where strategic change efforts resulted in increased revenue for wildlife management. Data from five cases was analyzed to identify common themes of success. The results are a series of recommendations for the Colorado Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and CPW to undertake in current strategic planning efforts in order to improve public support for wildlife management in the state.

The recommendations provide a process to clearly demonstrate the value CPW can provide for the citizenry of Colorado. This is an initial element in productively moving towards agency change because increased wildlife services cannot be institutionalized without new funding streams. And any efforts to develop new funding streams will require a compelling justification for the value the agency provides to the public.

Introduction

Government agencies face a myriad of challenges today that will affect how they serve the public. The country is experiencing a diversifying and aging population, limits to revenues, a growing distrust in government, an increase in reliance on technology, and changing environmental patterns. All of these factors are causing governments to review the type of services they undertake and the methods with which services are provided (Bryson, 2004). State wildlife agencies are one type of agency that is struggling to respond to a unique set of challenges in order to continue to provide value to the public.

A primary purpose of state wildlife agencies is to manage wildlife for the benefit of all people. The public trust doctrine primarily holds that wildlife is a common (i.e. public) resource held in trust by governments for the benefit of present and future generations (Bean, 1983). Over the last decade state wildlife agencies have increased the wildlife management services they provide in order to fulfill their mission to protect fish and wildlife populations within the public trust (Jacobson and Decker, 2006). These public services are increasing largely in response to biological impacts on species and their habitat from climate change and increased social pressures from human growth and development across the landscape. Demographics in western states are also shifting to more urban residents, and state wildlife agencies need to respond to an increasingly engaged public and interest groups that support wildlife conservation above traditional wildlife management for hunting and fishing (Jacobson and Decker, 2006).

Agencies across the country are feeling pressure from the public to increase the wildlife services they provide (Jacobson and Decker, 2006), while simultaneously dealing with decreases in traditional revenue sources, namely consumptive user fees in the form of hunting and fishing licenses. Most state wildlife agencies, particularly in the Western U.S., receive almost all of

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

their funding from license fees (i.e. traditional revenue sources). State wildlife agencies are finding themselves in the position where, in order to fully meet their public trust mandate, they must embrace new management actions focused on wildlife conservation. But those new management actions are either not supported by traditional funding sources or take resources away from traditional services. Jacobson and Decker suggest that the challenges facing these agencies require a significant strategic change - a transformation (2006).

Colorado's Division of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) has recognized the need to increase the services they provide to a growing and diverse population, and to manage wildlife in the state for future generations to enjoy. Change for the agency will require structural and strategic decisions, and it will require the identification of new revenue streams to support new activities that serve the public. Structural and strategic changes are already beginning, with the decision of the Colorado General Assembly in 2011 to merge the Division of Parks with the Division of Wildlife. Through the merger, wildlife management is being connected with land and recreation values. Internally, strategic planning is occurring that broadens missions and mandates to accommodate values from both agencies. Presumably, the merger will identify opportunities for CPW to undertake new activities that speak to a broader section of the public. CPW's planned strategic planning efforts provide a significant opportunity for the agency to utilize public value theory in order to support both internal and external changes for the merged agency.

When pursuing new strategic activities it will be important for CPW to identify long-term revenue streams that can sustain those changes. Current revenues are not adequate enough to support additional activities from either the Parks Division or Wildlife Division sides of the agency. And any attempt to generate increased revenue for CPW will require clear and effective communication of the value that the agency provides to the public by increasing services. The

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

goal of this project is to answer the following question: How can CPW strategically position itself to increase its value to the public, and thereby justify a long-term need for funding to maintain that value? This is an early element in successfully institutionalizing change, because change that requires providing new services to the public will not be sustainable without adequate funding.

Change in Public Agencies

Change in the public sector is often difficult to obtain. Public agencies can be politically protected to maintain the status quo (Nutt and Backoff, 1993). Leaders within public organizations today can also feel overwhelmed by the size and scope of necessary changes, to the point of inertia. Since the mid-1990s, public value theory has been referenced as a framework to help public agencies support strategic change. The theory seeks to broaden a public manager's purpose beyond responsive policy implementation, to a more proactive frame of creativity and innovation to serve the public interest (Williams and Shearer, 2011). When considering how public agencies can successfully change, public value theory suggests that support for change lies in the ability of the agency to produce and communicate their value to the public.

Mark Moore maintains that if a stated mission for change expresses a value or purpose for which the community advocates, then the community will be inclined to support that change (1995). When applied to agency change, public value theory offers a fundamental approach for focusing agency efforts. In order to support successful change the agency must begin by identifying for whom they are attempting to produce value. Target audiences will likely broaden beyond traditional customers if population and demographic changes are occurring. Once target audiences are identified, the agency must consider what strategies to employ to successfully

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

produce and communicate their value. These strategies may vary from one audience group to the next, and the ultimate value statements used for each may also be different.

Audiences for Demonstrating Public Value

It can be challenging for public agencies to identify the key audiences to target when producing and communicating their value. Customers in the private sector are clearly identified as those interested in purchasing the company's product. In the public sector, customers cannot be identified in such a straightforward way. Moore argues that in the public sector agency support is articulated through representatives like legislators or regulatory commissioners who are elected to represent the collective public interest (1995). This representative democracy creates a collective "we" from individual interests, which can make decisions to raise taxes and pay for public sector products. Representative groups are also the bodies to which agencies are directly accountable. Therefore, one very important audience for communicating public agency value is legislators and other representative bodies.

Giving the label of customer to a key stakeholder group is common for public organizations, particularly those that are undertaking a change effort (Bryson, 2004). Moore warns that public agencies should not focus entirely on serving a specific "customer" base because public agencies are not solely service providers. A group of customers can receive services from a public agency, but they can also be made to lose services through that agency's regulatory functions. State wildlife agencies offer a good example where sportsmen are considered a primary customer to serve, yet their access to hunting is restricted by the agency. This example shows a direct impediment to the pure customer/producer relationship that exists in the private sector. Several authors caution that a customer label can undermine the value of the

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

public in government agencies, leading the agency to fail in their service to the general citizenry (Bryson, 2004; Moore, 1995; Denhardt and Denhardt, 2000).

By broadening an agency's definition of stakeholder to demonstrate and communicate value to the general citizenry as well as to direct customers, an agency can also broaden support for the services they provide. Successful strategies can thus come from a stakeholder analysis where agency leaders better understand the context that their organization exists within (Bryson, 2004). In general, public agencies need to consider as their audiences for communicating public value; citizens within their jurisdiction, specific clients or customers, and representative authorizing bodies (Moore, 1995). Other audiences for communicating public value are the media, which can be important in shaping the context for political decisions, and interest groups, who can help advance public values that match with those of their members (Moore, 1995). Stakeholder environments for public organizations are often complex, and determining the breadth of stakeholders for an agency is a strategic exercise (Bryson, 2004).

During times of change, stakeholder communication often overshadows internal communications. As agencies change, and particularly when they broaden their stakeholder base, employees need to be responsive to those changes and understand the interests they are representing. Internal communication strategies can be utilized to motivate employees to be "customer conscious" (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010, p362). Research conducted in the private sector has established the idea that internal marketing or communication can be an important tool in helping employees be responsive to customers' needs (Rafiq and Ahmed, 2000). This would be largely relevant in the public sector for employees that have direct contact with the public in their government position. Applied to the public sector, marketing-like strategies could be applied internally to help employees better understand the interests of the

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

public and to use public interactions as an opportunity to build public awareness and interest in the work of the agency.

Additionally, change can be hardest on agency staff on the front lines of implementation. Internal communication is important for securing buy-in from employees for a change effort, and it can also help justify short-term sacrifices that will be required of employees during times of change (Kotter, 1993). In any organization there is an interest to keep employees motivated and satisfied, and the private sector ties this very closely to service delivery, contending that, “to have satisfied customers, the firm must also have satisfied employees” (George, 1977, p.91). Research conducted in the private sector has proposed that marketing-like tools can be one way of motivating employees, in addition to traditional human resources strategies (Finney and Scherrebeck-Hansen, 2010).

Strategies for Demonstrating Public Value

By understanding the benefit of demonstrating the value of change in government, and the audiences to target for communication of public value, agency efforts can turn to developing effective strategies for successful communication. Successful change must include clear communication of the vision for change, in order to garner support for the activities needed to increase public value (Kotter, 1993). Public organizations are more apt to produce transformational change if they communicate a broad vision, or ideals, in place of more bureaucratic goals or objectives (Nutt and Backoff, 1993). This work begins with foundational questions to determine the ideal state for an organization, such as: whom do we serve? What activities should we be doing? How do we want the public to perceive us? And results in a vision for what the organization can become (Nutt and Backoff, 1993). A strong vision for change that

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

is linked to increasing public value, can direct, align and inspire large numbers of people inside and outside of the organization to support strategies necessary for change (Kotter, 1993).

Public value theory emphasizes how the public will be more likely to support agency change if they understand the value that change provides. The value of change can be clearly articulated through a vision or set of ideals that communicate new possibilities. In order to be fully persuasive, both the vision and value must be communicated internally within the organization and externally with customers, citizens and representative bodies. Whenever possible, public agency messaging should be augmented through efforts of the media and interest groups in order to reach target audiences.

A number of theorists consider the application of private sector public relations or marketing activities to the public sector in support of communicating public value. Historically, the public sector has looked down on private sector marketing strategies, viewing them as unethical attempts to spin the sale of poor quality products to customers (Rothschild, 1979). Liu et al suggest that this bias has led to a devaluing of public sector communications activities, leaving most public agencies with limited marketing capacity (2010). Current research indicates, however, that public sector management is beginning to understand the value marketing can play in communicating value and improving their internal efforts (Liu et al, 2010).

While interest may be growing in the public sector for marketing strategies to the public, there are challenges to its adoption. Public agencies have difficulty communicating the value they provide because of the intangible nature of most public services (Rothschild, 1979). They are also challenged to communicate value to a number of diverse audiences. Additionally, public agencies have been found to have greater political influences on their daily communication activities, which reduces the level of creativity and innovation in those efforts (Moore, 1993).

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

The public sector experiences greater pressure to meet their primary publics' information needs, is more often perceived negatively in media coverage, and reports having inadequate budgets for conducting communication activities (Liu et al, 2010).

The impediments to communicating public value are many, which is why it is important to focus on what strategies may help agencies be more successful. Fundamental to successful communication of an agency's value to the public is to ensure the organization is able to identify and respond to citizens' interests (Moore, 1995). Communication of public value will fail if there is no real value being provided to the public by agency activities. Change efforts can be designed to meet this fundamental need.

Assuming that agencies are pursuing change in order to maximize their value to the public, there are a number of strategies for successful communication of that value. Moore supports strategic communication efforts in order to help government become more responsive to citizens' interests (1995). Private companies use marketing strategies to better understand consumer interests. Companies then respond to consumers by incorporating their interests into product development. Strategic communication and marketing in the private sector is therefore a two way street that begins with an interest in selling a product, but concludes with responding to consumer interest. Public agencies miss out on an important opportunity to gain feedback on their "product" if they overlook this strategy.

Applied to the public sector, marketers can determine what features of the agency are most relevant and important to clients, citizens and their political representatives (Moore, 1995). This activity can create a valuable feedback loop, making public agencies more accountable and responsive to the public. Responding to what the public values is critical to supporting a change

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

in activities because the higher the perceived value of an activity to an individual the easier it is to change their behavior through communication efforts (Rothschild, 1979).

Public agencies are well positioned to use marketing-like strategies to gain feedback from the citizenry because they are more likely than other sectors to interact with multiple external groups (Liu et al, 2010). Since public value cannot be delivered without ongoing public engagement and dialogue, and as the continuation of public funds depends on support from citizens, this level of engagement is a strength that public agencies should develop upon (Williams and Shearer, 2011). Seeking public support for programs and initiatives that add public value should be a primary strategy for agencies.

Yet, how to understand and respond to values of the public is a constant struggle for the public sector. In the last two decades public agencies have become more adept at conducting surveys and focus groups to seek feedback on the services they provide. The savvy-ness of agencies to public relations efforts has grown and technology advances have opened up a number of opportunities beyond traditional advertising mechanisms. Given the breadth of outreach and communication strategies it appears too prescriptive to limit an organization to merely a few. Most importantly, when considering strategies to communicate an organization's value to the public one must ensure that the messaging conveys a response to interests of customers, the broader citizenry and their political representatives (Moore, 1995).

Change In Wildlife Management Agencies

State wildlife agencies are one type of public sector organization that is feeling pressure to change from a traditional "user-pays" model of funding in response to a decrease in traditional constituencies and demands to increase services. Anderson and Loomis explain that state wildlife agencies have traditionally managed wildlife to fulfill the public trust doctrine in ways

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

“in which ‘expert’ managers catered to the interests of their traditional ‘clients,’ (i.e., the hunters, anglers, and trappers who paid for wildlife management through taxes and fees)” (2006). This arrangement was largely created and perpetuated in the mid-1900s by the North American Wildlife Conservation Model, which established the “user pays” model for funding wildlife management. Today, most state wildlife agencies, particularly in the West, are still funded almost entirely from user-based license fees from sportsmen.

Peterson et al gives as examples of traditional wildlife management activities “research, habitat or population manipulation, and publication” (2007), along with other practices focused on the maintenance of game species populations – those species that can be hunted. Ecological and societal pressures are changing what has been traditionally necessary to fulfill the public trust doctrine. Wildlife managers are witnessing changes in species habitat use and migration patterns due to changes in climate. Human growth and expansion across the landscape is also limiting the land mass available for species survival, leading to more human conflicts with wildlife. Wildlife managers must be prepared to respond to all of these changes. Much of the research cites ecological and societal change as reasons that agencies are expanding their view of management beyond those species that are important largely for the sale of hunting and fishing licenses (Jacobson and Decker, 2006; Jacobson et al, 2007; Jacobson et al, 2010).

Societal pressure to increase wildlife management services is also coming from an increasingly engaged and aware public. The number of groups interested in wildlife conservation, from local communities to large national organizations, has diversified, and their expectation for involvement in wildlife management decisions has increased (Riley et al, 2002). A number of authors posit that stakeholders are becoming a central component of contemporary wildlife management (Riley et al, 2002; Decker et al, 1996; Anderson and Loomis, 2006;

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Jacobson et al, 2007; Jacobson et al, 2010). Anderson and Loomis observe the growing interest of U.S. citizens in wildlife welfare and management, as evidenced by a number of recent ballot initiatives (2006). Some experts even suggest that wildlife management must respond to a shift in human value orientations towards wildlife, away from a “domination” mindset and towards a “mutualization” frame (Teel and Manfredo, 2010; Manfredo et al, 2003). Agencies are feeling ecological and societal pressures to give the same level of attention to habitat and non-game species conservation that they currently give to managing population numbers of game species.

Jacobson and Decker argue that state wildlife agencies will be most effective, and their perceived value to the public will dramatically increase, if they actively change in response to current pressures, as opposed to having changes forced upon them (2006). Additional funding streams will be required to support any expansion of services in state wildlife agencies to meet the changing needs of wildlife and the shifting interest of the public.

Project Purpose

Like many other state wildlife agencies CPW is facing a decrease in traditional customers along with a decrease in revenues with which to provide necessary services. CPW is also experiencing pressure to undertake new wildlife management services from a changing public demographic. In an effort to respond to these changes, Colorado DNR, is seeking assistance to determine strategies that can inform future planning efforts within CPW to help them adapt to meet their public trust responsibilities for wildlife and provide public value to clients and citizens in the state. With the merger of the Division of Parks with the Division of Wildlife in 2011 CPW has already begun to substantially consider the potential for broadening the mission of wildlife management to include complimentary aspects of management of state parks. One example is

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

how state park lands serve as habitat for important wildlife and support wildlife-related recreation opportunities for the public.

This project answers the following question: How can CPW strategically position itself to increase its value to the public, and thereby justify a long-term need for funding to maintain that value? The recommendations included in this project can contribute to the transformation of CPW by providing both an impetus and roadmap for action on key elements of long-term change. Included in the recommendations is a process to clearly demonstrate the value CPW can provide for the citizenry of Colorado. This is an initial element in productively moving towards agency change because increased wildlife services cannot be institutionalized without new funding streams. And any efforts to develop new funding streams will require a compelling justification for the value the agency provides to the public.

Methods

Organizational change theory and public value theory emphasize that support for change relies on the ability of the agency to produce and communicate a vision for change that will resonate with values of the public. Over the last 30 years several state wildlife agencies have successfully expanded the services they provide in response to demands from a changing demographic. Of those agencies, only a small number have been successful in establishing long-term funding to sustain their changes.

In order to identify strategies that CPW could employ to financially support agency change, I conducted a case study analysis with a sampling of agencies that have successfully achieved long-term funding streams to support increased wildlife services. A case study approach is appropriate because my research seeks to explore a complex relationship between agency change and the communication of public value (Gerring, 2007).

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Broader case studies have been written about all of the conservation funding initiatives I assessed. These studies primarily focus on either the political and functional aspects of the ballot initiatives themselves or on the internal agency change process that resulted in the need for a ballot initiative. My intent through these interviews was not to replicate existing case studies, but to focus on how increased services from a state wildlife agency were ultimately supported (both financially and politically) by key interest groups and the general public. Through this effort I sought to understand how agencies determined what new activities to undertake and how to communicate these activities to key partners and the general public in a way that gained their support. The assumption is that if the public responded positively to messages about the work that the wildlife agency would undertake with increased funding, then that agency must have touched on deep public values in their communications.

I conducted semi-structured telephone interviews with staff from five state wildlife agencies across the country. I used a causal model of case selection, focusing on agencies that have secured dedicated funding for increased wildlife conservation activities through a statewide ballot initiative. This sampling strategy was chosen based on its ability to illuminate features from common cases for possible application to similar organizations (Gerring, 2007), in this case specifically CPW.

Since there are a limited number of states that have pursued agency change and subsequent funding for that change in the last half-century, both the quantity and quality of qualitative data is limited. My case selection was therefore relatively straightforward and focused on states that had secured voter-approved funding streams to support new activities (Gerring, 2007). Agency staff from the following agencies were interviewed: 1) Missouri Department of Conservation; 2) Arkansas Game and Fish Commission; and 3) Arizona Game

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

and Fish Department. In each case the respondent was an individual in the agency who had been intimately involved with the initiative or its subsequent implementation. Two cases involved campaigns that were initiated, or are now managed, by non-governmental organizations. In those instances I interviewed NGO representatives who had been intimately involved in the initiatives: 4) Minnesota Conservation Federation; and 5) Great Outdoors Colorado. Table 1 provides a description of each case.

Interviews were conducted with six individuals, one from each of the states except Colorado where the interview was conducted with two individuals. The interview guide consisted of eight open-ended questions. Interviews were conducted over the telephone, except for in Colorado where the interview took place in-person. Conversations lasted for an average duration of 60 minutes. Qualitative data collected during these interviews was entered into a spreadsheet to more easily identify trends among all of the cases.

Analysis

Every effort to secure long-term funding was initiated by the broad recognition that natural resources were not being adequately supported in the state. In order to respond to this concern, elected officials, agency employees and key interested parties began by envisioning a future that would support conservation needs in the state. At their foundation, every case was a strategic change effort that resulted in a request for the funding necessary to meet a broad vision for change. Activities to involve outside partners and key supporters, and outreach and communication with the public existed in every case, but specific strategies varied across the states. A number of trends emerged across the five cases.

Gain Support from Key Leadership: Leadership from key agency officials and interest groups was essential to beginning a change effort. Significantly, key leaders appreciated that a change

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

in the status quo was necessary to adequately protect natural resources in the state for the enjoyment of its citizens. Who the key leaders were varied across the cases, however strong agency leaders were integral to the ultimate success of change efforts because they secured buy-in from both outside partners and agency staff. Table 2 shows the type of leaders who were strong in each case.

Develop a Vision for the Future: One of the most significant activities that lead to successful change efforts was the development of a clear vision for what the state needed to achieve in natural resource protection. The vision communicated broad values for natural resource management and guided development of a more detailed agency work plan. The work plan then clearly communicated to the public what new activities would occur if provided with additional funding. The commitment and trust that went into vision development lead one respondent to refer to their state's guiding document as a "contract" with their citizens. A vision and associated work plan not only communicate the agency's plan for change, but also can create transparency and trust with the public by specifically outlining how a new funding mechanism will support their values.

Don't Go It Alone: Every state developed a vision for change, and the vision was developed with significant input from key partners and interest groups. Input received from specific customers and broader clients created ultimate buy-in for agency change necessary to meet that vision. Securing buy-in from a broad set of groups allows those outside the agency to call for necessary changes. This moved the agency out of the uncomfortable position of advocating publicly and politically for additional resources. One respondent explained that agencies are good at soliciting input from their key interest groups, but not as good at reaching out to a broader public because the level of effort involved is significantly higher. Despite challenges and apprehensions, every

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

case showed that including input from the general public into the long-term vision of the agency was integral to the success of the change effort.

Engaging key partners and the general public in a guiding vision added a confidence in the legitimacy of the vision, and confidence in the funding request necessary to meet that vision. Confidence in the vision allowed all partners to aggressively campaign for those values. One respondent indicated that by reflecting the interests of the general public their initiative had the “ammunition” necessary to be successful. When the public backed an agency’s vision for change any related funding requests moved beyond government asking for more funding to grow government, and became a public call for increased support of natural resources in the state. Table 3 shows different levels of public involvement in vision identification across the cases. *Include General Public Values:* Support for change lies in the ability of an agency to respond to the values of the public. A vision can be initially developed by agency and partner leaders, and then delivered to the public for input, or it can be developed from the bottom up with a foundation of public input. Incorporating general public values, beyond those of key agency customers, helped the agencies focus their efforts on activities that resonate the most with the broad public. Understanding and incorporating public values into a change effort lead to a broadening of the original vision, which strengthened public support. When an agency opened up their visioning process to customers or general citizens it helped the agency build relationships they had not previously had, and discover new allies for the change effort.

Public values can be obtained through a number of nominal or more intensive efforts. Early assessments of public values supported the initiation of change by an agency and galvanized support from key political leaders such as Governors and Fish and Game Commissions. Further into a change strategy, efforts to communicate necessary changes to the

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

public built off of initial value assessments, and expanded as awareness of values grew. Efforts to achieve public buy-in for changes were both time and resource intensive, however respondents indicated that the reward for this cost was significant. Table 4 shows how different strategies for understanding public values were used across the cases.

Mobilize Agency Employees: Key agency leaders were integral to communicating the need for change to the public because they understand best the needs of the agency, and their position requires them to have relationships with key agency customers. When agency employees bought-in to the ultimate vision for change they communicated the benefits of change in their formal agency capacity. Some staff members who believed in the benefits of change also volunteered their personal time outside of work to communicate the vision to the public and advocate for funding to support change.

Internal support can be important to ensure that the changes promised in the strategic change effort and public funding initiative are actually implemented within the agency. In one instance agency employees were not bought in to the change effort, so even after a successful funding initiative changes were not institutionalized within the agency. Without the investment of staff at all levels of the agency, commitments made to key partners and the public through the change effort may not be met. Unfortunately, this case analysis was not able to dig into the strategies utilized to engage agency staff in the vision for change. This is largely due to the age of existing case studies; few agency staff that participated in the initiatives are still employed by the agency. For some initiatives, agency staff were engaged in the effort but did not publicly lead in funding advocacy effort due to legal restrictions on state employees who engage in political activities. Additional studies could explore the inclusion of personnel in change efforts.

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Include Something for Everyone: All of the cases combined wildlife management with other natural resource values during the visioning process. This occurred because when identifying public values (see Tables 3 and 4) agencies found that the general public did not significantly differentiate between types of natural resources (i.e. wildlife, water and lands). In one instance, an initiative to bring increased funding to the wildlife agency was significantly augmented when the initiators broadened the discussion to include priorities around clean water. Clean water had been consistently polling high for average households in the state, and thus a natural alignment formed in an effort to gain dedicated funding for fish and wildlife. Even though broadening the tent of issues in a vision for change diluted the new funding pool, the cases showed that a significant key to success was broadening the vision beyond fish and wildlife. See Table 1 for a description of the breadth of issues included in each successful initiative.

Don't Be Distracted by the Funding Mechanism: The case studies recognize that any statewide funding initiative today would be much more difficult to pass given the current state of the economy and the general climate of fiscal conservatism. Worries over revenue sources should not preclude other states from initiating a change effort, however, as a primary driver of the cases was the need for agencies to adapt to maintain relevancy to the public. One respondent recommended the “build it and they will come option,” counseling that instead of starting with an argument that the agency needs more funding, first build a strategy for meeting a broadly supported vision for the future. Then, the agency can develop a request for funding that would be necessary to meet the vision. Given the limit on tax increases and public spending in Colorado, leadership should think creatively about how they could financially harness a growing interest from the public, like increased utilization of the Wildlife and Parks Foundations.

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

Maintain a Feedback Loop: The impetus for each case was the desire to better connect the public with natural resource issues in the state. Public interests shift over time, so agencies found that after a successful initiative they had to constantly monitor how they are responding to public values. This suggests that a feedback loop between priorities of an agency and priorities of the public needs to be constant. Respondents recommended that public advisory groups be kept current and utilized on a regular basis to inform agency actions and future strategic planning. Regular polling of public opinion on broader issues, as well as agency activities, was used in some cases to monitor the agency's ability to track the interests of their public. More detailed focus groups or a continuation of the citizen committees around key topics would have been useful to inform ongoing efforts.

Recommendations

In order for CPW to respond to changing demographics and maintain relevancy for the citizens of Colorado they should begin a strategic change effort that 1) creates a new vision for natural resource conservation in Colorado; and 2) builds towards a sustainable funding stream to support that vision. Colorado DNR and CPW have a unique opportunity with upcoming strategic planning efforts, in light of the recent merger of the Parks Division with the Wildlife Division, to adapt the mission of the agency to closely align with the public's values. Previous successful funding initiatives functioned largely as strategic change efforts, beginning years ahead of when the agency publicly pursued any new funding mechanism. Given the recent CPW merger, DNR has the opportunity to change how natural resources are supported, and bring together key leaders in the community to develop a new vision for conservation in the state. A public involvement campaign would initially build support for the vision of change. This broad vision would be the foundation for a new strategic work plan for CPW. And, if adequately

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

structured to respond to what the public sees as the future of natural resources in the state, that work plan would be the foundation for a public funding request to support agency activities.

The below recommends implementation steps that could be undertaken to initiate and support such an effort:

- 1. *Establish a Group to Lead Change:*** With the right leadership in place, strategic planning around the CPW merger provides a significant opportunity to redefine what is necessary for the future of fish, wildlife and park resources, as well as other resources, in Colorado. Leadership within DNR (Executive Director), with close coordination with the CPW Director, should initiate a process for strategic planning. Very quickly these leaders should work to bring in key members of the Parks and Wildlife Commission, the Governor's office and other relevant state agencies.
- 2. *Identify Key Partners:*** DNR and CPW should quickly identify a few key non-governmental partners in the states who would support the visioning effort. These partners should be expected to help secure early funding for public polling and outreach efforts. Ultimately, this group of partners will be expanded, but DNR will need to begin with a few very committed and connected groups to initially leverage political and financial support.
- 3. *Identify the Need for Change:*** Strong support came from processes initiated outside of the agency. Leadership should consider commissioning a small external team to assess the needs of the agency and recommend necessary activities to sustain its future. This neutral needs assessment can then be the foundation of a visioning exercise led by DNR and CPW staff. Simultaneously, conduct statewide analyses to begin to gauge where public interest exists for natural resources, as this will determine the breadth of issues in

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

the vision. While more in depth public outreach will be necessary later on in the process, early assessments of broad public interest in natural resources will help provide a starting point for DNR and CPW. Recent assessments have been conducted in western states that can provide initial insights for Colorado. These assessments, which can be used as a starting point for CPW, highlight the public's general values towards wildlife, and the priorities they place on specific activities of state wildlife agencies. Attachment A summarizes two relevant assessments.

- 4. *Develop a Vision for Change:*** Using the needs assessment and state-wide analyses as a foundation DNR, CPW and key partners can begin to develop a vision that will guide change within the agency. Ideally, a citizen committee would be formed to better incorporate public values into development of a vision for change. Strategies to employ include open-ended efforts such as statewide meetings, focus groups, and citizen advisory groups. CPW staff should also be included in vision development to understand the benefit it will have for them. As a vision is established, agency staff should use it to set internal strategic planning activities, including development of a more detailed work plan of activities necessary to achieve the vision.
- 5. *Communicate the Vision for Change:*** Once a broad vision has been outlined by agency leaders and key partners, public input should be incorporated in order to receive critical feedback on the connection of the vision to public values. DNR, CPW and partners should present the vision, along with agency work plans, and listen to the reactions of the public. This will require more than outreach to key interest groups and regular attendees at Commission meetings. Citizen advisory groups, focus groups and key partners who

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

were involved in the visioning effort should be utilized to communicate the plan to the general public and solicit feedback.

6. ***Finalize a Strategy:*** After receiving and incorporating public input on the vision and preliminary agency work plan, DNR, CPW and other key partners will need to finalize a formal strategy for achieving the vision. This will lead to the development of a long-term strategic plan for all impacted government agencies. Again, internal agency support for this work will be essential to successful implementation.
7. ***Determine Funding Goal:*** Simultaneous to strategy development, DNR, CPW and key partners can work with political and legislative staff to assess the most palatable funding mechanism to pursue in support of the strategic plan. Leadership should consider forming a committee through the Wildlife and Parks Commission, legislature or Governor's office to assess long-term, dedicated funding opportunities. This is an opportunity to think creatively about funding solutions, so including private sector representatives will be valuable.
8. ***Begin Public Campaign for Funding:*** This will be the first time the public will hear a specific funding request associated with their vision for natural resources. Once a funding mechanism is identified, the effort will become a public campaign to support natural resources in Colorado. Aggressive marketing will commence, and DNR and CPW should mobilize key partners from the visioning exercise to help fundraise for this campaign. Leadership will have to be as strong as ever to support a funding request, and political support from the Governor is essential. Agency staff can play a role within the limits of the law. By the time this process reaches the funding stage all parties can feel

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

confident that they are working towards a goal that is broadly supported by the public,
which will significantly strengthen the advocacy efforts.

References

- Anderson, L.E., & Loomis, D. K. (2006). Balancing stakeholders with an imbalanced budget: how continued inequities in wildlife funding maintains old management styles. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 11*, 455-458.
- Bean, M. J. (1983). *The evolution of national wildlife law*. Praeger, New York, New York, USA.
- Chase, L. (2011). Strategic Direction of Arizona Game and Fish: A Comparison of Priorities.
- Decker, D.J., Krueger, C.C., Baer, R. A., Knuth, B.A., & Richmond, M.E. (1996). From clients to stakeholders: A philosophical shift for fish and wildlife management. *Human Dimensions of Wildlife, 1*(1), 70-82.
- Denhardt, R. & Denhardt, J. (2000). The New Public Service: Serving Rather Than Steering. *Public Administration Review, 60*, 549-559.
- Finney, S., Scherrebeck-Hansen, M. (2010). Internal marketing as a change management tool: A case study in re-branding. *Journal of Marketing Communications, 16*(5), 325-344.
- George, W.R. (1977). The retailing of services – a challenging future. *Journal of Retailing, Fall*, 85-98.
- Jacobson, C.A. (2008). *Wildlife Conservation and Management in the 21st Century: Understanding Challenges for Institutional Transformation*. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- Jacobson, C. A., & Decker, D. J. (2006). Ensuring the future of state wildlife management: Understanding challenges for institutional change. *Wildlife Society Bulletin, 34*(2), 531-536.
- Jacobson, C. A., Decker, D. J., & Carpenter, L. (2007). Securing alternative funding for wildlife management: Insights from agency leaders. *Journal of Wildlife Management, 71*(6), 2106-2113. doi: 10.2193/2006-442.
- Jacobson, C. A., Organ, J. F., Decker, D. J., Batcheller, G. R., & Carpenter, L. (2010). A Conservation Institution for the 21st Century: Implications for State Wildlife Agencies. *Journal of Wildlife Management, 74*(2), 203-209. doi: 10.2193/2008-485.
- Kotter, J.R. (1993). *Leading Change*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Liu, B.F., Horsley, J.S., & Levenshus, A.B. (2010). Government and Corporate Communication Practices: Do The Differences Matter? *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 31*:2, 189-213. doi: 10.1080/00909881003639528

STRENGTHENING FUTURE FISH AND WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT

- Manfredo, M. J., T. L. Teel, & Bright A.D. (2003). Why are public values toward wildlife changing? *Human Dimensions of Wildlife*, 8:287-306.
- Moore, Mark. (1995). *Creating Public Value: Strategic Management in Government*. Harvard University Press.
- Nutt, P.C. & Backoff, R.W. (1993). Transforming Public Organizations with Strategic Management and Strategic Leadership. *Journal of Management*, 19, 299. doi: 10.1177/014920639301900206.
- Rafiq, M. & Ahmed, P.K. (2000). Advances in the internal marketing concept: definition, synthesis and extension. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 14(6), 449-462.
- Riley, S. J., Decker, D.J., Carpenter, L.H., Organ, J.F., Siemer, W.F., Mattfield, G.F., & Parsons, G. (2002). The essence of wildlife management. *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, 30(2), 585-593.
- Rothschild, M.L. (1979). Marketing Communications In Nonbusiness Situations. *Journal of Marketing*, 43, 11-20.
- Teel, T. L., & Manfredo, M. J. (2010). Understanding the Diversity of Public Interests in Wildlife Conservation. *Conservation Biology*, 24(1), 128-139. doi: 10.1111/j.1523-1739.2009.01374.x
- Williams, I. & Shearer, H. (2011). Appraising Public Value: Past, Present and Futures. *Journal of Public Administration*, 89(4), 13367-1384. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.2011.01942.x

Appendix A

General Public Values Towards Wildlife in Colorado

Focusing on the values prioritized by earlier funding initiatives will not be very valuable or relevant to CPW today. Key findings from my research indicate that CPW needs to build their change efforts around activities that the public values. Therefore, an important first step is to help CPW better understand the values their public currently holds towards land and wildlife. Specific strategies should be broadly employed to understand the values that the public holds, but recent assessments have been conducted in western states that can provide initial insights for Colorado. These assessments, which can be used as a starting point for CPW, highlight the public's general values towards wildlife, and the priorities they place on specific activities of state wildlife agencies.

Drs. Teel and Manfredo conducted a mail survey in 2004 across Western states for the purpose of categorizing people on the basis of their value orientations toward wildlife. Their research sought to broaden the value-attitude-behavior framework, which contends that a hierarchy of cognitions guides individual behavior with individual values located at the top (Teel and Manfredo, 2010). The mail survey was administered to a sampling of residents across 19 Western states and results were summarized for each state. For residents surveyed in Colorado, the highest percentage of people were categorized as mutualists at 34.9 percent. Almost equal were traditionalists, with 34.1 percent of respondents.

The value orientation survey indicates that the majority of Coloradoans are split between those that consider wildlife deserving of rights and care (mutualists) and those

that hold a utilitarian view of human mastery over wildlife (traditionalists) (Teel and Manfredo, 2010). Additionally, 21.8 percent of respondents were classified as pluralists, meaning that they indicated a value orientation of both mutualists and traditionalist. The study results suggest that in Colorado, strategic change within CPW should be guided by the aspects of wildlife management that provide wildlife with care and positive protections, while still prioritizing human well-being and dominance over wildlife. These activities would include habitat protection and wildlife management to prevent species extinction and support hunting, fishing and wildlife watching values, and the reduction of human-wildlife conflicts.

Teel and Manfredo found similar percentages of mutualists and traditionalists in the state of Arizona (2010). Given the similar responses between Arizona and Colorado residents, we can assume that the public in Arizona would value wildlife management activities similarly to the public in Colorado. Therefore, it can be valuable to DNR and CPW to consider findings from a 2010 Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) study that measured the priorities of the general public in Arizona, along with key interest groups and AGFD employees (Chase, 2010).

The purpose of AGFD's study was to inform a strategic planning exercise in the agency, guiding what activities agency leadership devotes personnel and resources to in order to respond to the priorities of the general public and key interest groups. The study also included a survey of priorities for AGFD staff, and while some staff priorities aligned with the public many activities of value to the public were not highly valued by staff. This supports earlier assertions that state wildlife agencies should seek to better understand the values of the general public and respond to them.

AGFD concluded from their survey that the agency has nine activities they should strengthen and maintain: promoting conservation, preserving habitats, researching impacts of development, protecting corridors, ensuring public access for wildlife-related recreation, water catchments, maintaining wild areas, and protecting habitat from OHV damage (Chase, 2010). The survey also allowed AGFD to determine activities of low importance to the public. This information gives AGFD a starting point from which to address misinformation and better communicate the value of that activity, or strongly consider whether that activity is an appropriate use of agency resources.

While not accurate to Colorado, the results of this study could broadly inform initial planning within CPW. CPW leadership may want to consider conducting a similar survey through their social science department.