



United States Department of Agriculture

Wildlife Services Strategic Plan: FY 2020-2024



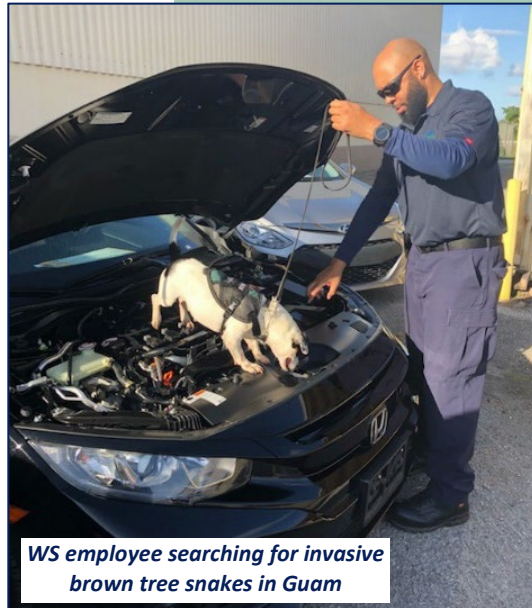
WS employee protecting livestock



WS biologist relocating a red-tailed hawk from an airport to protect air safety



WS Canine handlers use detector dogs to locate invasive nutria and feral swine



WS employee searching for invasive brown tree snakes in Guam

September 2019

United States Department of Agriculture
Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

Table of Contents

A MESSAGE FROM THE DEPUTY ADMINISTRATOR	ii
INTRODUCTION	1
PURPOSE	1
BUILDING THE WS STRATEGIC PLAN.....	1
WS MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY, VISION, AND MISSION	1
WS OPERATIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS	2
WS AUTHORITIES	2
WS CORE VALUES	3
WS GUIDING PRINCIPLES.....	4
KEY STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS, AND COOPERATORS	4
ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE THEMES.....	6
LINKAGE TO USDA AND APHIS STRATEGIC PLANS	7
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND GOALS.....	8
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES.....	9
STRATEGIC GOALS	11
STRATEGIC GOAL 1: PROVIDING WILDLIFE SERVICES	12
STRATEGIC GOAL 2: DEVELOPING METHODS	15
STRATEGIC GOAL 3: VALUING AND INVESTING IN PEOPLE.....	17
STRATEGIC GOAL 4: ENHANCING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION	19
CONCLUSION.....	20
APPENDIX A: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	21
APPENDIX B: STRATEGIC PLAN TIMELINE AND ENGAGEMENT PROCESS	24
APPENDIX C: WS ORGANIZATIONAL CHART.....	27

A Message from the Deputy Administrator

Wildlife is a public trust natural resource that is managed by government in trust for citizens, to benefit current and future generations. In contributing to this Public Trust Doctrine, Wildlife Services employees and cooperators increase the public value of wildlife by reducing the negative aspects of human-wildlife interactions and also by valuing and supporting wildlife’s positive aspects. WS has a long history of delivering public service that matters. The Program’s earliest authorities identified livestock protection, wildlife disease control, research and the economics of bird damage to agriculture as the Program’s priority endeavors. These efforts continue, and they are accompanied by additional and emerging mission areas.

Every day, Wildlife Services employees build public trust and deliver public service – two important themes which emerged during employee engagement sessions and from feedback during comment periods on the draft Strategic Plan. These themes incorporate our important work in the wildlife damage management field and serve as the framework of the WS Strategic Plan for FY2020-2024. WS works on farms and ranches to reduce predation on livestock and wildlife damage to crops, aquaculture, and other agricultural resources. Employees protect people from wildlife strike hazards at airports and protect sea turtles and shorebirds from the impacts of more abundant species on beaches along the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf Coasts. WS employees and partners deliver rabies vaccine baits to protect communities from the ecological and economic impacts of this deadly disease. We restore trout streams and protect bridges, roadways, timber and crops from beaver dams and flooding. WS researchers are developing and refining management tools, and also answering questions and building knowledge to better-inform our decisions. We are increasingly working to control and even eliminate populations of harmful invasive species including brown tree snakes, nutria, feral swine and Burmese pythons. WS consistently provides expert support to emergency responses related to hurricanes, floods and disease outbreaks. WS employees teach students about conservation, damage management and wildlife values in elementary and high school classrooms and at universities and colleges around the country. WS employees take students outside, and those experiences are unforgettable. We communicate at conferences and in meetings, through media events and with our website. None of this is easy. It is only possible through mission accomplishment of a WS workforce that is connected to each other, the larger USDA organization, the wildlife management profession, agency and organizational partners, stakeholders and WS cooperators. WS shows up at the table of wildlife professionals for the future of land stewardship and wildlife conservation.

I am grateful for the dedication and accomplishments of every WS employee - wildlife specialists, biologists, researchers, administrative personnel, pilots and so many others. I am thankful for all of those who provided perspective and ideas during the formation of our strategic plan. With our partners we have produced a strategic plan to deliver wildlife damage management research and operational accomplishments that value and support current and future generations of our nation’s people and wildlife.



Grazing sheep

Introduction

PURPOSE

The Wildlife Services (WS) Strategic Plan (Fiscal Years 2020-2024) encourages WS employees to achieve mission results focused on building public trust and delivering public service. The Plan informs employees and WS partners, stakeholders, and customers about WS' vision, mission, values, guiding principles, goals, and objectives in delivering the WS mission and contributing to the missions of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The Plan's Executive Summary can be found in Appendix A.

BUILDING THE WS STRATEGIC PLAN

Wildlife Services' Strategic Plan development process included more than six months of employee, partner and stakeholder engagement through town hall-style meetings, surveys, round-table discussions, one-on-one calls, and email feedback (Appendix B). The input is summarized in the Strategic Priorities and Goals Section of this document, and serves as a foundation for developing and implementing WS operational and research priorities and goals.

WS MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY, VISION, AND MISSION

In the United States, wildlife is managed based on the Public Trust Doctrine – wildlife is a public resource held in trust and managed by the government for present and future generations. Wildlife Services' approach to its public service responsibilities is described in WS Directive 1.201 (Mission and Philosophy of the WS Program). Government agencies, including WS, conserve and manage wildlife in a manner that is responsive to public values – this includes both accentuating wildlife's positive values and managing or reducing wildlife's negative aspects. Wildlife Services focuses on science-based wildlife damage management - the protection of resources, and health and safety from damage or other problems caused by or related to the presence of wildlife. It is an integral part of the wildlife management profession and is essential to conserving our Nation's wildlife resources.

Wildlife Services' vision is to improve the coexistence of people and wildlife. Vision implementation requires consideration of a wide range of public interests that can conflict with one another. These interests include wildlife/natural resource conservation, biological diversity, animal welfare, harvest/game management, agricultural production, human health and safety, property protection, and many others.

Wildlife Services' mission is to provide Federal leadership and expertise in resolving wildlife conflicts to allow people and wildlife to coexist. Program professionals apply a science-based integrated wildlife damage management approach to address wildlife-related issues. Wildlife Services is a recognized leader in collaborative, partnership-based wildlife damage management and success is achieved through the accomplishments of our employees as they work with our stakeholders, collaborators, and the public.

Wildlife Services employs more than 1,900 biologists, scientists, technicians, and administrative personnel. The WS Office of the Deputy Administrator, located in Washington, DC, provides national Program leadership and oversight. The WS Operational Support Staff (OSS), in Riverdale, MD, provides technical and administrative support to all WS

Programs and the Deputy Administrator’s office. Field operations are directed from two WS Regional Offices – the Eastern Regional Office in Raleigh, NC, covering the eastern United States (including Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands), and the Western Regional Office in Fort Collins, CO, covering the western United States (including Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands). The WS National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC), headquartered in Ft. Collins, CO, with eight field stations throughout the country, is the Program’s research unit. The NWRC conducts foundational basic and applied research providing wildlife damage management methods and tools to better understand and prevent/mitigate wildlife damage problems, and assists the Program with library, pesticide registration, and Program assessment services. The WS organizational chart is provided in Appendix C.

WS OPERATIONAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

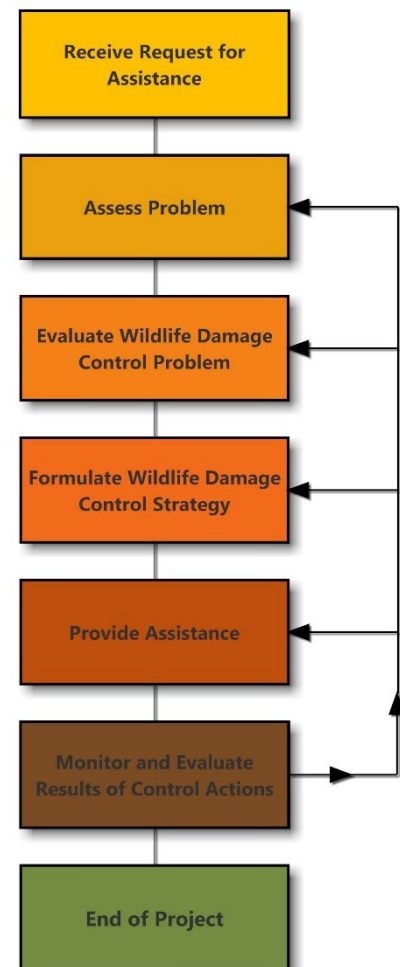
Before WS personnel respond to wildlife damage problems, they assess and select from available, practical, cost-efficient, and environmentally and socially sound options. To promote the vision of coexistence of people and wildlife, WS employees strive to reduce damage caused by wildlife to the lowest possible levels, while at the same time reducing negative impacts on wildlife.

Wildlife Services uses an integrated wildlife damage management (IWDM) approach to resolve conflicts with wildlife (WS Directive 2.105: The WS Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program) by integrating practical methods of prevention and control. In selecting damage management techniques, personnel consider the species responsible and the frequency, extent, and magnitude of damage. Also, personnel assess the status of target and potential nontarget species, local environmental conditions, relative costs of applying management techniques, environmental impacts, and social and legal status. These factors are evaluated in formulating management strategies and may include the application of one or more techniques (WS Directive 2.101: Selecting Wildlife Damage Management Methods). The WS Decision Model (WS Directive 2.201) provides a simplified example of the thought process involved in addressing wildlife damage issues through implementation of the IWDM approach.

WS AUTHORITIES

The primary statutory authorities for WS are: 1) The Act of March 2, 1931, 46 Stat. 1468-69, 7 U.S.C. §§ 8351-8352, as amended, and 2) The Act of December 22, 1987, Public Law No. 100-202, § 101(k), 101 Stat. 1329-331, 7 U.S.C. § 8353. The authorities give agents and employees of the USDA, APHIS, WS the ability to conduct a program of wildlife services and to enter into agreements with States, local jurisdictions, individuals, and public and private agencies, organizations, and institutions for the purpose of conducting such services.

WS Decision Model



The Act of March 2, 1931, as amended (7 U.S.C. § 8351 – Predatory and other wild animals and § 8352 – Authorization of expenditures for the eradication and control of predatory and other wildlife animals), authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a program of wildlife services with respect to injurious animal species and take any action the Secretary deems necessary in conducting the program. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this authority to WS.

The Act of December 22, 1987 (7 U.S.C. § 8353 - Control of nuisance mammals and birds and those constituting reservoirs of zoonotic diseases; exception) authorizes, except for urban rodent control, the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct activities and to enter into agreements with States, local jurisdictions, individuals, and public and private organizations and institutions for the control of nuisance mammals and birds and those mammal and bird species that are reservoirs of zoonotic diseases. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this authority to WS (WS Directive 1.210: Legal Authority).

Additionally, the Brown Tree Snake Control and Eradication Act of 2004 (7 U.S.C. § 8501-8503 – Brown tree snake control and eradication) authorizes the Secretaries of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, with respect to matters under their respective jurisdictions, to provide for the control and eradication of the brown tree snake on the island of Guam and reduce the risk of the introduction or spread of any brown tree snake to areas in the United States and the Freely Associated States in which the brown tree snake is not established. The Secretary of Agriculture has delegated this authority to WS.

WS CORE VALUES

Wildlife Services' Code of Ethics (WS Directive 1.301) provides the ethical guidance employees apply in their work. Complying with the Code of Ethics is WS' foundational Core Value.

The WS Code of Ethics requires that all WS employees:

- Will affirm strict adherence to the laws, regulations, policies, and Executive Orders that guide the WS Program.
- Will conduct themselves in a manner that embodies the traits of honesty, integrity, accountability, dedication, and a strong work ethic.
- Will promote competence in the field of wildlife damage management through continual learning and professional development.
- Will show exceptionally high levels of respect for people, property, and wildlife.
- Will promote the conservation of natural resources.
- Will respect varying viewpoints regarding wildlife and wildlife damage management.
- Will utilize the WS Decision Model to resolve wildlife damage problems and strive to use the most selective and humane methods available, with preference given to nonlethal methods when practical and effective.
- Will respond to requests for WS services to manage wildlife damage.
- Will present an image worthy of the WS Program and the wildlife management profession.
- Will work in a safe and responsible manner.



WS biologist releasing waterfowl

- Will respect and adhere to program civil rights and equal employment goals and opportunities and will promote a diverse, inclusive workplace that does not tolerate discrimination.
- Will support the mission of the WS Program.

WS GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Six principles guide WS employees in delivering their public service mission:

- **Safety** - The safety of employees and the public is top priority. Wildlife Services' work often requires employee use of specialized tools in environments that pose unique safety challenges. Programmatic safety reviews, directives, and training, and the WS National Safety and Health Manager and the National Training Academy (NTA) support WS' commitment to and investment in safety.
- **Valued Employees** – Wildlife Services employees are its most valued asset. Employee development, training, and engagement ensure that the WS workforce is capable and committed to mission delivery.
- **Ethics** - The WS mission to provide Federal leadership in managing wildlife conflicts is founded on strong ethics. Our employees follow the WS Code of Ethics.
- **Public Service Conservation** – Wildlife Services is a non-regulatory, service-oriented Program that embraces the Public Trust Doctrine and the North American Model of Wildlife Conservation to ensure that native wildlife populations are conserved and conflicts are managed. Wildlife Services uses a science-based management approach.
- **Administration** – Wildlife Services administers programs and activities according to accepted business principles, pursuant to USDA, APHIS, and WS Program regulations, policies, and practices.
- **Partnership** – Wildlife Services partnerships ensure that priorities are aligned with values and goals of Program recipients, stakeholders, and the American public. Key strategic partners of WS include The Wildlife Society (TWS), Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA), National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA), National Association of State Aviation Officials (NASAO), Tribes, and other Federal entities including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Department of Defense (DOD), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM).



KEY STAKEHOLDERS, PARTNERS, AND COOPERATORS

Wildlife Services' stakeholders are agencies, Tribes, organizations, businesses, industry groups, individuals, and other entities with an interest in or who may be affected by WS' actions or policies. Wildlife Services' partners are those who actively work with WS to achieve a shared vision, goals, or objectives. Wildlife Services' cooperators are those who request and typically fund (in whole or in part) WS' Program delivery to protect their resources or human health & safety from wildlife damage. Building, strengthening, and advancing cooperative and partner relationships is the primary method WS uses to build public trust and deliver public service.

Wildlife Services works with:

- Other Federal, State, and local governments
- Tribal nations
- Agricultural commodity organizations
- Agricultural producers
- Non-governmental organizations and associations
- Industry groups
- Scientific and professional societies
- Conservation organizations
- Universities and other research entities
- Foreign institutions, universities, governments, and private entities
- Animal and public health laboratories
- Animal and environmental interest groups
- Private businesses
- Homeowners and neighborhood associations
- Private individuals



WS biologist conducting workshop on feral swine

The National Wildlife Services Advisory Committee (NWSAC) was initiated in 1986. It advises the Secretary of Agriculture on policies, Program issues, and research related to the WS mission. It serves as a public forum, enabling those affected by WS to have a voice in its policies. The Committee is comprised of individuals from agricultural, environmental, conservation, academic, animal welfare, and related interest groups.



NWSAC meeting and field trip to the WS Program in WA



WS workshop to landowners on the IWDM approach to managing conflicts with predators

Engagement Response Themes

“We should reach out to and work with non-traditional partners. We likely have more in common with these groups than we thought we did and should use this opportunity to partner where we can on issues.”

--WS employee during engagement session

During development of the WS Strategic Plan, we conducted numerous listening sessions and discussions with WS employees and Stakeholders. Common themes emerged and they are described here.

- **Commit to furthering employee development.**

Key topics include: Ensure grade equity for like responsibilities; acknowledge and reward quality work; support employee training; trust employees and empower decision-making.

- **Provide service delivery that emphasizes both historic and emerging Program areas.**

Key topics include: Strengthen commitment to livestock and agriculture protection, rabies management, airport wildlife hazard management, and migratory bird damage management programs; focus on stakeholders, methods development, and research; prioritize current invasive species control targeting feral swine and brown tree snakes, and expand programs to include additional invasive species management; prioritize the control and surveillance of wildlife diseases and emergency response capabilities.

- **In concert with partners, develop and implement a comprehensive and consistent programmatic outreach and education strategy.**

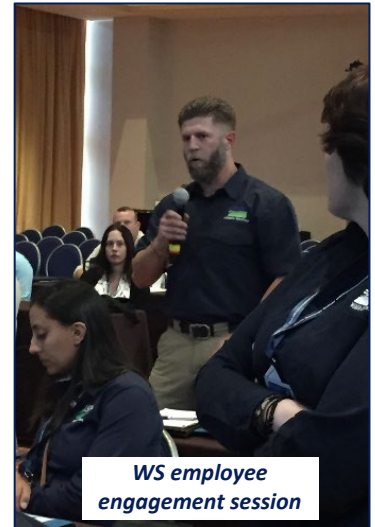
Key topics include: Promote successful cooperative programs involving research, management, and emergency response; increase the use of social media to more effectively tell WS’ story; better communicate programmatic priorities to targeted audiences; work closely with strategic partners to enhance communication.

- **Optimize financial, infrastructure, and personnel management systems.**

Key topics include: Identify impediments and work to implement changes more rapidly; critically review new administrative proposals relative to their impacts on service delivery and staff workloads; provide the Agency and Department more frequent programmatic updates and projections regarding impacts associated with Agency and Departmental requirements; provide specialized training to administrative personnel.

- **Continually improve the WS work environment to enhance communication and collaboration.**

Key topics include: Maintain and enhance communication at all levels; improve supervisory skills; provide appropriate quality equipment; recruit employees with diverse backgrounds; acknowledge field level input and perspectives; support staff development.



Linkage to APHIS and USDA Strategic Plans

The USDA Strategic Plan for Fiscal Years (FY) 2018-2022, identifies seven strategic goals, four of which have strong linkages to the WS mission. Additionally, the APHIS Strategic Plan for FY 2019-2023, identifies three goals, two of which have important linkages to the WS mission (matrix below).

USDA, APHIS, and WS Strategic Goal Matrix			
USDA Strategic Goals FY 2018-2022 (linkage to WS mission)			
<p align="center">USDA Vision: Do right and feed everyone</p> <p>USDA Mission: Provide leadership on agriculture, food, natural resources, rural infrastructure, nutrition, and related issues through fact-based, data-driven, and customer-focused decisions</p>			
<p>Strategic Goal 1. Ensure USDA Programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, with integrity and a focus on customer service.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.2. Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment. Objective 1.4. Improve stewardship of resources and utilize data-driven analyses to maximize the return on investment. 	<p>Strategic Goal 2. Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.3. Protect agricultural health by preventing and mitigating the spread of agricultural pests and diseases. 	<p>Strategic Goal 5. Strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 5.1. Enhance conservation planning with science-based tools and information. Objective 5.2. Promote productive working lands. Objective 5.3. Enhance productive agricultural landscapes. 	<p>Strategic Goal 7. Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 7.1. Prevent foodborne illness and protect public health.
↓			
APHIS Strategic Goals FY 2019-2023 (linkage to WS mission)			
<p align="center">APHIS Mission: To safeguard the health, welfare, and value of American agriculture and natural resources</p>			
<p>Goal 1. Deliver efficient, effective, and responsive programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.2. Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment, and provide a safe workplace. Objective 1.4. Maximize the return on taxpayer investment through stewardship of resources and focused program evaluations. Objective 1.5. Leverage workforce differences to better serve the Agency's customers. 		<p>Goal 2. Safeguard American Agriculture.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.1. Prevent damaging plant and animal pests and diseases from entering and spreading in the United States to promote plant and animal health. Objective 2.2. Manage plant and animal pests and diseases once established in the United States to promote plant and animal health. Objective 2.4. Manage conflicts caused by wildlife, detect and control wildlife diseases, and protect agricultural and natural resources. 	
↓			
<p align="center">WS Vision: To improve the coexistence of people and wildlife</p> <p>WS Mission: To provide Federal leadership in managing conflicts with wildlife</p>			
Wildlife Services Strategic Priorities FY 2020-2024			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revitalize and increase the profile of the integrated wildlife damage management approach. Improve and increase WS' capabilities related to wildlife disease and emergency response. Improve harmonization of WS' research and operational functions. Develop and implement an effective communication initiative. Improve WS positions' grade consistency. Leverage high-impact technology. 			

Wildlife Services Strategic Goals FY 2020-2024			
Delivering Public Service		Building Public Trust	
Strategic Goal 1. Providing Wildlife Services.	Strategic Goal 2. Developing Methods.	Strategic Goal 3. Valuing and Investing in People.	Strategic Goal 4. Enhancing Information and Communication.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Objective 1.1. Deliver effective livestock protection programs through integrated wildlife damage management. •Objective 1.2 Protect human health and safety and resources by managing migratory bird conflicts via the integrated wildlife damage management process. •Objective 1.3. Expand and solidify WS' role and accomplishments in landscape-scale invasive species control. •Objective 1.4. Document WS' strategic approach to WS mission delivery in the international arena. •Objective 1.5. Optimize National Environmental Policy Act documents and processes that support operational program delivery. •Objective 1.6. Redefine WS' Aviation Training and Operations Center as a "Center of Excellence." •Objective 1.7. Enhance WS relationships with government and private sector stakeholders, cooperators, and scientific community. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Objective 2.1. Develop methods for integration into wildlife damage management programs implemented by WS operational programs and external stakeholders. •Objective 2.2. Increase use of new/improved developed methods. •Objective 2.3. Develop economic and sociological metrics to prioritize and evaluate research and management programs. •Objective 2.4. Deliver research results that inform WS decision-making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Objective 3.1. Increase internal collaboration with APHIS business services units. •Objective 3.2. Enhance connectedness among WS Program units and employees. •Objective 3.3. Support WS employees to maximize their contribution to mission delivery. •Objective 3.4. Ensure WS employees have access to developmental assignments and training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Objective 4.1. Enhance public understanding and support for the WS mission and wildlife damage management field through timely, consistent, and accurate communication. •Objective 4.2. Develop and implement strategic messaging to increase public and stakeholder awareness of WS success stories. •Objective 4.3. Provide efficient and effective internal and external communication to improve existing collaborations and establish new partnerships.

Strategic Priorities and Goals

The WS Program has developed six top strategic priorities for the next five years that were formed from engagement feedback and through WS Management Team strategic planning sessions. These six strategic priorities serve as a framework for continuing to improve and expand the WS Program as a whole. Each of the six strategic priorities incorporate the important components of outreach, employee development, administrative excellence, and cooperation. The six WS strategic priorities are cross-unit, program-wide national efforts that will receive significant attention and development during the next five years. They compliment WS' traditional four strategic goals of providing wildlife services, developing methods, valuing and investing in people, and enhancing information and communication.

WS Top 6 Strategic Priorities FY 2020-2024

- Revitalize and increase the profile of the integrated wildlife damage management approach.
- Improve and increase WS' capabilities related to wildlife disease and emergency response.
- Improve harmonization of WS' research and operational functions.
- Develop and implement an effective communication initiative.
- Improve WS positions' grade consistency.
- Leverage high-impact technology.

Revitalize and increase the profile of the integrated wildlife damage management approach.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Foster and enhance collaboration between WS' operational and research units to expand use of a wide variety of methods.
- Commit to strategic integration of research and operational activities for program monitoring and assessments of effectiveness of adaptive management strategies and activities.
- Improve internal communications on the value of the IWDM approach.
- Expand outreach and develop or update educational materials on the importance of IWDM and the use of a variety of methods to resolve damage and conflicts.
- Establish and strengthen connections with potential new/nontraditional stakeholders to diversify program delivery and build support for the WS mission.



Improve and increase WS' capabilities related to wildlife disease and emergency response.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Develop a comprehensive wildlife disease and emergency response function that emphasizes and integrates national biosecurity and agro-security.
- Assess the current wildlife disease and emergency response program and overall approach to examine strengths, areas needing change/improvement, and opportunities to optimize service in this area.
- Enhance partnerships within APHIS on avian health, wildlife disease issues, and emergency response operations. Reach for agency-wide agreement on WS' core mission related to wildlife disease.



- Continue to optimize WS' contributions to the North American Rabies Management Plan through evaluation and use of effective and efficient oral rabies vaccine baits, towards preventing the reintroduction of canine rabies, and stopping the further spread of raccoon rabies to achieve eventual elimination.
- Collaborate with Federal and State agencies, Tribes, and other partners to establish a national early detection and rapid emergency response framework.
- Increase the number of WS staff trained and credentialed in emergency response operations.
- Expand existing partnerships and develop new opportunities to assist other agencies, stakeholders, and the public in addressing emerging wildlife diseases.



WS employee conducting surveillance for raccoon rabies

Improve harmonization of WS' research and operational functions.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Develop processes to incorporate research results and operational program data into decision-making, regulatory compliance, and outreach.
- Utilize program scientific expertise within NWRC and other WS Program units in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process by increased communication and support on high profile and impactful topics.
- Enhance and recognize/reward WS employees in all program units who share information, collaborate across program units, conduct joint meetings, co-author papers and presentations, and cross-train and conduct temporary duty assignments in other units.
- Create opportunities to better integrate research and operations employees into each others' work.

Develop and implement an effective communication initiative.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Develop and implement a 3-year communication and outreach plan for WS that supports national, state, station, program, and project needs.
- Identify gaps, strategies, and messaging for diverse audiences, including legislative and executive branches, stakeholders, cooperators, the public, and WS employees.
- Provide recommendations to improve and update existing tools and develop new communication materials and strategies.
- Deliver updated media and risk communication training to WS employees.
- Continuously share positive WS stories with targeted key audiences using traditional and social media tools.
- Deliver timely and effective internal communication from WS leadership to employees.



WS employees communicating operating procedures

Improve WS positions’ grade consistency so that positions, grades, roles, responsibilities, and complexities are known and applied in a more standardized manner.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Review WS units’ grade structures for improved consistency across WS.
- Increase use of standard position descriptions and ensure that position complexity determinations include consideration of the work’s depth as well as its geographic breadth.
- Review other Federal natural resource agencies’ grade structures and requirements to gather information relative to the WS grade evaluation process.
- Review grade level criteria for consistency with the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) requirements.
- Develop and internally post grade-specific descriptions of the roles, responsibilities, and characteristics for WS’ most frequently-used job series/grades.
- Involve State Directors, Project and National Program Leaders, and their staffs to ensure local, state, regional, and national perspectives are considered and contributions are enabled.
- Communicate with all WS employees and evaluate/incorporate their feedback throughout the process.

Leverage high-impact technology.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Deliver a state of the art Operations and Reporting System (OARS) using cloud-based, geospatial, mobile technologies to support field work and provide robust reporting and analytics.
- Implement, review, and finalize Geographic Information System (GIS) projects (i.e., involving invasive species, wildlife disease, and human safety) to improve workflow, increase efficiency in the field, and improve data quality.
- Assess and optimize WS Program use of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS).



WS biologist flying UAS over crop to survey for damage

STRATEGIC GOALS

The WS Program has four strategic goals that are the cornerstone of the WS management philosophy and program delivery:

- **Providing Wildlife Services** - *Delivering high quality service to customers and stakeholders.*
- **Developing Methods** - *Developing effective methods for preventing or reducing wildlife damage.*
- **Valuing and Investing in People** - *Valuing and investing in our employees, stakeholders, partners, and customers.*
- **Enhancing Information and Communication** - *Informing and communicating regularly and transparently, both internally and externally with our customers, stakeholders, and the general public.*

The objectives and focus/action areas under these four strategic goals were developed from extensive feedback received during employee and stakeholder engagement and listening sessions. Wildlife Services will continually review progress, prioritize efforts, and set additional goals in line with our mission, the growing need for wildlife damage management, and the availability of resources. Through providing exceptional service, valuing and investing in

employees, improving methods, and sharing information, WS will increase transparency and improve public support for our mission delivery and help us strike a balance between the needs of people and the needs of wildlife.

Strategic Goal 1: Providing Wildlife Services

Directly Supporting the WS Priority of Delivering Public Service

Providing Wildlife Services is the core function of WS and it is the Program’s foundational strategic goal. The other three strategic goals support the delivery of wildlife services to ensure that it is science-based, integrated, understood by stakeholders and the public, and conducted by capable and valued personnel. Wildlife Services’ priority of Delivering Public Service is achieved through this foundational strategic goal. All WS employees and Program units contribute to the Providing Wildlife Services strategic goal, including managers and field biologists, scientific researchers, and administrative staff. In all cases, WS provides wildlife services through partnership and collaboration. Wildlife Services’ strategic goals, objectives, and focus/action areas described herein are achieved through, and intended to strengthen, cooperative relationships, especially those at the State level with departments of wildlife and agriculture, and agricultural and other sector organizations.

“I would like to see WS continuing to deliver science-based wildlife damage management expertise to the American people. It’s the most important thing our program does, in my opinion.”
 --WS employee

Objective 1.1: Deliver effective livestock protection programs through integrated wildlife damage management.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Utilize the WS Decision Model to select and apply the most appropriate IWDM approach in resolving site-specific livestock predation conflicts.
- Conduct cooperative predator management workshops that support an integrated wildlife damage management approach that demonstrates a wide range of techniques to mitigate livestock losses.
- Maintain and refine a wide variety of wildlife damage management tools for use in integrated and adaptive management programs.
- Expand WS connections with livestock groups, including the American Sheep Industry, National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, Public Lands Council, and new/nontraditional partners.



Guard dog with sheep

Objective 1.2 Protect human health and safety and resources by managing migratory bird conflicts via the integrated wildlife damage management process.

Focus/Action Areas:

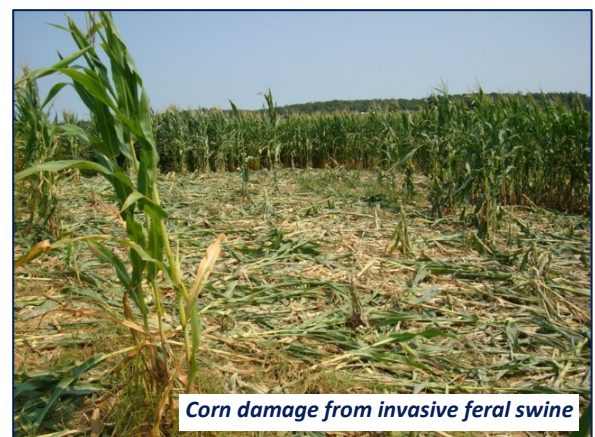
- Prioritize relationships with the USFWS and the Flyway Councils: Continue WS' participation in Flyway, Regional and Headquarters meetings and circulate meeting highlights, draft documents, and other important items to appropriate WS employee groups.
- Conduct bi-annual meetings between WS and USFWS Headquarters and Regional personnel at the North American and AFWA annual meetings.
- Participate in USFWS processes, including: formal comments on proposed regulatory changes, structured decision-making, conflict species management planning, regulations review, etc. and base WS' input on field-level feedback and engagement from WS employees.
- Coordinate closely with USFWS, State agencies, and Farm Bureau to address expanding vulture conflicts via traditional approaches and techniques and new, innovative sub-permittee processes.
- Collaborate with USFWS through Federal and State committees to update NEPA documents concerning double-crested cormorants to allow use of the integrated damage management approach to achieve improved aquaculture resource protection.
- Participate in bi-annual regional meetings with respective USFWS Division of Migratory Birds staff to support common goals, address emerging issues, and ensure national, State, and local initiatives are addressed.
- Represent APHIS on the USFWS-led Council for the Conservation of Migratory Birds.
- Continue to support Airport Wildlife Hazards Program growth through updated internal guidance and enhanced communications about Program activities and successes.



Objective 1.3: Expand and solidify WS' role and accomplishments in landscape-scale invasive species control.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Engage partners within existing structures, such as AFWA, NASDA, State wildlife and agricultural agencies, and others, to identify invasive species issues, solutions, and partnerships to best address threats.
- Expand applicable invasive species management programs nationwide through closer collaboration with cooperators and Federal partners.
- Improve feral swine damage assessments and expand use of damage data in program impact determinations
- Develop predictive models to quantify post-invasive species control impacts to targeted agricultural commodities.
- Expand and refine invasive species control models/estimates associated with WS' use of avicides.



Objective 1.4: Document WS’ strategic approach to WS mission delivery in the international arena.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Coordinate international requests from the headquarters level.
- Develop a concise written document that describes WS’ mission delivery outside the United States.
- Annually summarize WS’ international work and distribute the report within WS and the Agency.

Objective 1.5: Optimize National Environmental Policy Act documents and processes that support operational program delivery.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Conduct a WS NEPA Program review to examine: 1) the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) decision process; 2) NWRC assistance and contribution to NEPA; 3) best management of NEPA workforce; 4) environmental compliance training needs; 5) consistency and improved quality of NEPA writing; 6) risk assessment strategy to inform NEPA; 7) NEPA records management improvements; and 8) appropriate lifespan of Environmental Assessments (EAs).
- Implement improvements of the WS NEPA Program and process pursuant to findings and decision making following the NEPA Program review.
- Consult and coordinate with State agencies and appropriate Federal agencies early on and throughout the entire WS NEPA process through participation, comment, and review to ensure consistency with State and Federal plans.

Objective 1.6: Redefine WS’ Aviation Training and Operations Center as a “Center of Excellence.”

Focus/Action Areas:

- Finalize and implement the new WS Aircraft Safety Manual.
- Establish and implement an Aviation Resource Management Survey (ARMS) program to collaboratively monitor related programs and ensure adherence to established safety standards.
- Develop and implement a standardized/electronic safety training certification and tracking system in collaborations with the WS National Training Academy.
- Implement pertinent recommendations from APHIS Policy and Program Development (PPD) reviews and internal and external aviation safety and training audits.
- Develop and implement a cost-effective plan for modernizing and standardizing the WS aircraft fleets.



Objective 1.7: Enhance WS relationships with government and private sector stakeholders, cooperators, and scientific community.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Further develop and refine the WS partnership with AFWA, improve WS’ participation in AFWA meetings (i.e., WS gives updates at every Committee meeting on which it participates, invite WS host-state staff to attend and participate in Committee meetings with WS leaders, increase the number of formal presentations given), and complete the risk assessments under review by AFWA.

- Continue to enhance the strategic partnership with TWS and increase internal communication with WS employees about this strong partnership.
- Provide WS employees an annual TWS-WS partnership report, including an annual list of WS membership, certification, and committee roles in TWS developed by WS OSS Communications Staff.
- Identify additional groups (i.e., USFWS – Species Conflict Framework working groups, National Invasive Species Council, National Environmental Coalition on Invasive Species, Wildlife Disease Association, Coalition of Natural Resource Societies, scientific societies) where strategic partnerships would be beneficial, similar to our relationship with TWS and AFWA, to further enhance stakeholder relations.

Strategic Goal 2: Developing Methods

Directly Supporting the WS Priority of Delivering Public Service

The Developing Methods strategic goal ensures that WS employees and other wildlife damage management practitioners have access to tools and approaches to better understand and solve wildlife damage problems. The tools and techniques developed by WS’ NWRC include animal capture and other devices, vaccines, repellents, pesticides, and formulations. The NWRC also develops risk and economic assessments, and management recommendations that are used by managers to refine and improve wildlife damage management programs. The NWRC contributes substantially to the scientific foundation of WS’ public service mission delivery. Wildlife Services’ Pocatello Supply Depot (PSD) also contributes to the Developing Methods strategic goal, through the manufacturing and distribution of wildlife damage management products.

“I’d like to see the integration of WS operations and NWRC research in a meaningful way, with common goals identified. We should lead other Federal agencies and be a role model in this approach.”
 --WS employee

Objective 2.1: Develop methods for integration into wildlife damage management programs implemented by WS operational programs and external stakeholders.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Continue to prioritize development of methods for operational use of the full range of integrated wildlife damage management methods.
- Expand product development partnerships and short-term funding opportunities with other domestic and foreign government agencies, universities, non-government entities, and private businesses.
- Expand the development of genetic-based tools as alternatives or replacements for current chemistries used in toxicants and therapeutics.



- Continue product development programs aimed at developing new chemical and behavioral-based tools for managing feral swine and predators.
- Develop a Quality Assurance/Quality Control method for production of sylvatic plague vaccine bait at the PSD.

Objective 2.2: Increase use of new/improved developed methods.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Advance cross-training and networking between NWRC and WS operational units to increase the understanding of operational needs and the development and adoption of new tools and techniques for use by the operational program.
- Support continued expansion of intellectual property and product development partnerships with both U.S. and foreign government agencies, universities, and non-government entities to facilitate product development and technology adoption.
- Expand NWRC and WS operational units' patent and licensing portfolios to facilitate public sector adoption of WS technologies and subsequent availability of new tools and techniques for wildlife damage management.
- Recognize and reward cross-unit collaboration pertaining to method development, use and assessment.



WS scientist conducting gene sequencing in NWRC lab

Objective 2.3: Develop economic and sociological metrics to prioritize and evaluate research and management programs.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Develop econometric return-on-investment tools for evaluating WS Program activities and NWRC research and product development activities.
- Support the utilization of econometric sociological methods when establishing new research programs.
- Implement pertinent recommendations and approaches described in the APHIS Economic Assessment.

Objective 2.4: Deliver research results that inform WS decision-making.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Develop robust quantitative models for conducting cost/benefit analyses and risk assessments of WS Operational and NWRC product development activities.
- Develop environmental risk assessment models to inform regulatory decisions regarding genetically modified organisms containing a gene drive.



WS automated aerial bait delivery system on helicopter

Strategic Goal 3: Valuing and Investing in People

Directly Supporting the WS Priority of Building Public Trust

Valuing and Investing in People directly impacts the WS priority of Building Public Trust. Our success in achieving the strategic goal of Providing Wildlife Services depends on mission-focused accomplishment by a WS workforce that is effective and valued. Wildlife Services' responsibility is to create and maintain a productive work environment and to recognize that employee value is the central driver of program accomplishment.

"It will be important for WS to continue focusing on improvement of strategies for valuing and investing in people. It would be good to evaluate and develop mechanisms to improve retention and incentivize interest in leadership positions."

--WS employee

Objective 3.1: Increase internal collaboration with APHIS business services units.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Advance partnership with APHIS Marketing and Regulatory Program Business Services (MRPBS), especially regarding fleet, hiring, purchasing, employee relations, agreements, and information technology.
- Organize topic-specific work teams within WS to work with our agency partners.
- Report progress regularly to WS employee groups, as appropriate.

Objective 3.2: Enhance connectedness among WS Program units and employees.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Improve connectedness between WS Headquarters and OSS and the field by temporary duty/detail exchange of employees.
- Communicate administrative issues and outcomes (improvements, changes, solutions, results, actions taken) to WS employees to improve connectedness to leadership.
- Improve connectedness between WS Regions and the field through increased visits by Regional staff to operational field programs.
- Ensure Regional Managers are frequently communicating with one another and with NWRC Directors to increase collaboration and consistency across WS.
- Increase and encourage cross-training among WS field employees to enhance communication, learning, and innovation.



Objective 3.3: Support WS employees to maximize their contribution to mission delivery.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Work with APHIS MRPBS' Information Technology Division (ITD) to improve employees' connectivity, awareness, and communication by ensuring all employees have access to email and online training.
- Continue to enhance diversity in hiring by implementing new approaches to recruit and retain talent.
- Increase use of the exit interview process to identify retention issues. Periodically summarize exit interview feedback and provide the summary to WS employees.
- Continue to acknowledge commitment to a workplace free of harassment, discrimination, bullying, and retaliation and prioritize addressing issues in a timely manner. Utilize the WS Deputy Administrator 1-800 message line, emails to all WS employees, and through presentations by leadership and during town hall meetings to remind staff of the importance of this issue.
- Maximize safety for field staff through adequate training, proper equipment, and support from direct supervisors through local annual review of training and equipment.
- Increase awareness and participation in the APHIS Occupational Medical Monitoring Program, specifically for those who are required to participate in a Hearing Conservation and/or Respiratory Protection Program, or recommended rabies vaccination.
- Analyze data from the APHIS Online First Reports to identify accident trends, in order to address needs or enhancements in awareness, training, protective equipment, or oversight to help reduce accidents and/or injuries among WS employees.
- Increase National Training Academy liaison and Mississippi State University staff participation in WS interactions (i.e., meetings, events, field visits).



Objective 3.4: Ensure WS employees have access to developmental assignments and training.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Increase WS participation in Department and Agency development programs, and improve supervisor support for these.
- Increase training and cross-training opportunities (through temporary duty, detail assignments, temporary job-swapping, etc.) to develop well-rounded employees with broader perspectives and increased abilities to resolve challenges.
- Increase field staff membership on WS and APHIS Committees and ad hoc working groups.
- Improve transparency of Committee and assignment opportunities and selections.

Strategic Goal 4: Enhancing Information and Communication

Directly Supporting the WS Priority of Building Public Trust

The strategic goal of Enhancing Information and Communication builds public trust by increasing employee and public support for the WS vision and mission and by improving understanding of WS Programs and activities. WS will continue to enhance its efforts to inform, educate, and communicate with our employees, cooperators, stakeholders, partners, and the general public.

“WS should not stop the great work we do, we need to change the way we tell our story.”

--WS employee

Objective 4.1: Enhance public understanding and support for the WS mission and wildlife damage management field through timely, consistent, and accurate communication.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Continue to work with TWS and other partners to develop and encourage WS’ focused, science-based articles on wildlife damage management in partner publications and online platforms.
- Incorporate the WS vision, mission, core values, goals, and strategic direction into standard messaging to employees and other communication strategies.
- In collaboration with other Federal agencies, States, Tribes, and the private sector, develop outreach materials targeting traditional and new/social media (including press releases) to increase public awareness of cooperative research and management projects conducted by WS.
- Modernize and utilize the Program Data Reports to develop and communicate key messages in support of the WS mission.



Objective 4.2: Develop and implement strategic messaging to increase public and stakeholder awareness of WS success stories.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Enhance collaborative efforts between APHIS Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA) and WS OSS Communications Specialist to promote and increase the number of positive stories about WS in traditional and new/social media outlets.
- Utilize the WS OSS Communications Specialist to develop of standardized high-level key messages for employee use during interviews, public outreach, and education efforts; provide State and project-specific information-sharing tools.

- Develop a digital library housed on WS SharePoint site of current talking points and key messages focused on WS' success stories that showcase the diversity of WS' research and management.

Objective 4.3: Provide efficient and effective internal and external communication to improve existing collaborations and establish new partnerships.

Focus/Action Areas:

- Create messaging that promotes WS support of USDA and APHIS mission.
- Improve WS employee access to relevant and timely information by developing an internal digital library for briefing papers, talking points, mini-memos, and the WS monthly report to the APHIS Administrator.
- Coordinate strategic communication on wildlife damage management with State agency partners to align key messaging and leverage state-based expertise and existing resources.
- Utilize the seven OneUSDA Climate Hubs to proactively assist in outreach efforts targeting farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, and others on the challenges of climate change and invasive species and provide technical assistance on managing increased human-wildlife conflicts.
- Explore additional mechanisms and venues to evaluate how research is being used and adapted into science, management, and policy within WS and among external stakeholders.



WS outreach to the public on mission activities

Conclusion

This Strategic Plan describes WS' public service mission delivery strategy for FY 2020-2024. Two overarching themes, Building Public Trust and Delivering Public Service, were identified during months of strategic planning engagement sessions. These themes, which also link back to Department and Agency strategic plans, are supported by WS' six top strategic priorities and four strategic goals of Providing Wildlife Services, Developing Methods, Valuing and Investing in People, and Enhancing Information and Communication. These goals are the cornerstone of WS' management philosophy and Program delivery to the public. This Plan will serve WS for the next five years and guide employees to achieve mission results focused on Building Public Trust and Delivering Public Service. The Plan will allow leadership to continually review progress, prioritize efforts, set additional goals, and allocate resources.



WS employees managing wildlife hazards at an airport



WS employee dusting for plague around a prairie dog colony

Executive Summary

Strategic Plan Overview

Purpose:

The Plan (FY 2020-2024) encourages WS employees to achieve mission results focused on building public trust and delivering public service.

WS Vision:

To improve the coexistence of people and wildlife

WS Mission:

To provide Federal leadership in managing conflicts with wildlife

WS Core Values: WS Code of Ethics

- Ethical and Professional
- Honest
- Accountable
- Respectful
- Safe and Responsible
- Dedicated with a Strong Work Ethic
- Highly Effective
- Innovative
- Continually Learning

WS Guiding Principles: Our Foundation

- **Safety** – Safety of employees and the public is our top priority
- **Valued Employees** – Our most valued asset
- **Ethics** – Employee commitment to core values is cornerstone
- **Public Service Conservation** – The Public Trust Doctrine and North American Model of Wildlife Conservation ensure wildlife is conserved and conflicts are managed
- **Administration** – Programs are run according to accepted business principles, Federal and State regulations, and policies
- **Partnership** – Partnerships are formed and maintained to ensure priorities are aligned with the values and goals of stakeholders and the American public

The Strategic Planning Process

WS Leadership initiated a highly participatory process in August 2018, to draft a comprehensive five-year strategic plan.

- Planning process was documented on SharePoint for all WS employees to review and contribute.
- A six month process of engagement and feedback with employees, partners, and stakeholders was used.
- Hundreds of comments and suggestions from employees and stakeholders built the Plan.

What We Heard

- Commit to furthering employee development.
- Provide service delivery that emphasizes both historic and emerging Program areas.
- In concert with partners, develop and implement a comprehensive and consistent programmatic outreach and education strategy.
- Optimize financial, infrastructure, and personnel management systems.
- Continually improve the WS work environment to enhance communication and collaboration.



Linkage to APHIS and USDA Strategic Plans

USDA Strategic Goals FY 2018-2022 (4 of 7 goals are of primary concern to WS)

Strategic Goal 1. Ensure USDA Programs are delivered efficiently, effectively, with integrity and a focus on customer service.	Strategic Goal 2. Maximize the ability of American agricultural producers to prosper by feeding and clothing the world.	Strategic Goal 5. Strengthen the stewardship of private lands through technology and research.	Strategic Goal 7. Provide all Americans access to a safe, nutritious, and secure food supply.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.2. Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment. Objective 1.4. Improve stewardship of resources and utilize data-driven analyses to maximize the return on investment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.3. Protect agricultural health by preventing and mitigating the spread of agricultural pests and diseases. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 5.1. Enhance conservation planning with science-based tools and information. Objective 5.2. Promote productive working lands. Objective 5.3. Enhance productive agricultural landscapes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 7.1. Prevent foodborne illness and protect public health.



APHIS Strategic Goals FY 2019-2023 (2 of 3 goals are of primary concern to WS)

Goal 1. Deliver efficient, effective, and responsive programs.	Goal 2. Safeguard American Agriculture.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 1.2. Maintain a high performing workforce through employee engagement and empowerment, and provide a safe workplace. Objective 1.4. Maximize the return on taxpayer investment through stewardship of resources and focused program evaluations. Objective 1.5. Leverage workforce differences to better serve the Agency's customers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective 2.1. Prevent damaging plant and animal pests and diseases from entering and spreading in the United States to promote plant and animal health. Objective 2.2. Manage plant and animal pests and diseases once established in the United States to promote plant and animal health. Objective 2.4. Manage conflicts caused by wildlife, detect and control wildlife diseases, and protect agricultural and natural resources.



WS Top Strategic Priorities FY 2020-2024

Serve as framework for continuing to improve and expand the WS Program.

- Revitalize and increase the profile of the integrated wildlife damage management approach.
- Improve and increase WS' capabilities related to wildlife disease and emergency response.
- Improve harmonization of WS' research and operational functions.
- Develop and implement an effective communication initiative.
- Improve WS positions' grade consistency.
- Leverage high-impact technology.

WS Strategic Goals FY 2020-2024

Delivering Public Service

1. Providing Wildlife Services

Objectives:

- Deliver effective livestock protection programs through integrated wildlife damage management.
- Protect human health and safety and resources by managing migratory bird conflicts via the integrated wildlife damage management process.
- Expand and solidify WS' role and accomplishments in landscape-scale invasive species control.
- Document WS' strategic approach to WS mission delivery in the international arena.
- Optimize National Environmental Policy Act documents and processes that support operational program delivery.
- Redefine WS' Aviation Training and Operations Center as a "Center of Excellence."
- Enhance WS relationships with government and private sector stakeholders, cooperators, and scientific community.

2. Developing Methods

Objectives:

- Develop methods for integration into wildlife damage management programs implemented by WS operational programs and external stakeholders.
- Increase use of new/improved developed methods.
- Develop economic and sociological metrics to prioritize and evaluate research and management programs.
- Deliver research results that inform WS decision-making.

Building Public Trust

3. Valuing and Investing in People

Objectives:

- Increase internal collaboration with APHIS business services units.
- Enhance connectedness among WS Program units and employees.
- Support WS employees to maximize their contribution to mission delivery.
- Ensure WS employees have access to developmental assignments and training.

4. Enhancing Information and Communication

Objectives:

- Enhance public understanding and support for the WS mission and wildlife damage management field through timely, consistent, and accurate communication.
- Develop and implement strategic messaging to increase public and stakeholder awareness of WS success stories.
- Provide efficient and effective internal and external communication to improve existing collaborations and establish new partnerships.

This Plan provides a public service mission delivery strategy for the next five years. Two overarching themes, Building Public Trust and Delivering Public Service, were identified during months of strategic planning engagement sessions. These themes, which also link back to Department and Agency strategic plans, are supported by WS’ six top strategic priorities and four strategic goals of Providing Wildlife Services, Developing Methods, Valuing and Investing in People, and Enhancing Information and Communication. These goals are the cornerstone of WS’ management philosophy and Program delivery to the public.



Strategic Plan Timeline

Timeframe/Due by:	Activity	Players
August 1, 2018	Determine Planning Process by Speaking to Individuals Draft Proposal and Timeline, Deliver to WS MT	WS Policy & Science Advisor WS MT Members WS Program Coordinators APHIS-PPD
August 1, 2018	Information Gathering and Review of Related Documents	WS Policy & Science Advisor
August 1, 2018	Formulate Survey/List of Questions for Internal and External Engagement	WS Policy & Science Advisor WS MT Review
August 20, 2018	Create Strategic Planning Employee Engagement SharePoint Site for all WS employee access to strategic planning documents and feedback surveys	WS Policy & Science Advisor APHIS-MRPBS-ITD
August 6, 2018 – February 8, 2019	Conduct Engagement and Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal (WS Employees) – 6+ sessions External (Stakeholders) – 4+ sessions 	WS Policy & Science Advisor WS MT Members WS Employees Stakeholders, Partners, Cooperators
February 8, 2019	Compile and Analyze Feedback House summary documents on SharePoint Site	WS Policy & Science Advisor Use by WS MT Members Use by Strategic Plan Writing Group
February 22, 2019	Identify Mission, Vision, and Strategic Priorities during scoping meetings	WS MT Members
February 28, 2019	Form an Ad Hoc WS Strategic Plan Writing Group to draft plan	WS MT Members determine group
May 10, 2019	Draft WS Strategic Plan and Incorporate Engagement Feedback	Strategic Plan Writing Group
June 14, 2019	Review Draft Strategic Plan	APHIS Administrator WS MT Members
July 19, 2019	Revise Draft based on comments	Strategic Plan Writing Group
August 9, 2019	Review of 2 nd Draft	APHIS Administrator WS MT Members WS employees
August 23, 2019	Revise Draft and Finalize Plan	Strategic Plan Writing Group WS MT Members
August 30, 2019	Announce WS Strategic Plan in Stakeholder Announcement and to All WS Employees	PPD Assistance OSS Prepares, DA Signs and Sends Out
August 30, 2019	Implement Strategic Plan and Monitoring	WS MT Members

Strategic Planning Engagement Process

The Strategic Planning Engagement Process involved both internal WS employees and external stakeholders and partners from August 2018 – February 2019. Specific questions were asked to move the line of thinking and feedback in a forward-looking direction and are listed directly below. The tables on the following page describe the various engagement sessions and participants involved. All engagement sessions, surveys, phone calls, and emailed responses were summarized and posted on the Strategic Planning SharePoint Site for all WS employees to review at: <https://usdagcc.sharepoint.com/sites/aphis-ws/StrategicPlanDevelopment/SitePages/Home.aspx>.

Internal Engagement – WS Employees

1. Where do you want to see WS in 5 years? –characterize WS’ position or accomplishments that would represent success, either broadly or around a specific strategic priority (delivering wildlife services, developing methods, information and communication, valuing and investing in people)
2. What opportunities do you see/recommend for WS to become more fully integrated into the Agency and Department, while maintaining WS program value and identity? Provide any suggestions you may have for how to achieve success.
3. What new/emerging/increasing wildlife damage management issue or resource protection work areas do you see for WS – and how should we best position ourselves to be proactive and prepared for the challenge?
4. What new/additional and current collaborative relationships with stakeholder and public groups should WS prioritize and develop to optimize WS public service? Provide suggestions on how to do so.
5. Do you have other ideas for Wildlife Services’ future and our Strategic Plan?

External Engagement – Stakeholders, Partners, Cooperators

1. What are your organization’s priorities for the next 5 years or so?
2. How can WS best partner with you to achieve our missions and enhance mutually beneficial collaboration?
3. What should WS focus on in the next 5 years to provide outstanding public service in the wildlife damage management arena?
4. Do you have suggestions for us as we plan strategically for WS’ future?

Engagement Feedback Sessions

Internal Engagement			
Date	Group	Event	# WS Personnel
August 21, 2018	WS participants at Birdstrike Committee USA Conference	Town Hall Meeting during Birdstrike Committee USA Conference in Baltimore, MD	~ 60
August 23, 2018	WS OSS	Town Hall Meeting in Riverdale, MD	~ 20
August 27, 2018	WS Eastern Region Feedback Committee	Emails and calls from the field compiled by Committee	~ 10
September 26, 2018	WS Western Regional Office staff	Town Hall Meeting in Fort Collins, CO	~ 10
October 1, 2018	WS National Rabies Management Program staff	Town Hall Meeting in Concord, NH	~ 10
October 9, 2018	WS participants at TWS Annual Conference	Town Hall Meeting during TWS Conference in Cleveland, OH	~ 30
October 16, 2018	WS OSS/National Programs Feedback Committee	Emails and calls from the field compiled by the Committee	~ 5
February 5, 2019	WS NWRC and Field Stations staff	Town Hall Meeting in Fort Collins, CO	~ 40
February 8, 2019	WS individuals	SharePoint Site Survey, calls, emails compiled	~ 15

External Engagement			
Date	Group	Event	# Participants (including WS)
October 31, 2018	TWS – Leadership	Meeting at WS HQ	~ 10
November 7, 2018	American Sheep Industry – Leadership	Meeting in Logan, UT during WS MT quarterly session	~ 15
December 6, 2018	AFWA – Leadership	Meeting at WS HQ	~ 10
January 31, 2019	AFWA – 24 State Directors	Doodle Poll Survey during month of January 2019 through AFWA HQ	24

WS Organizational Chart

