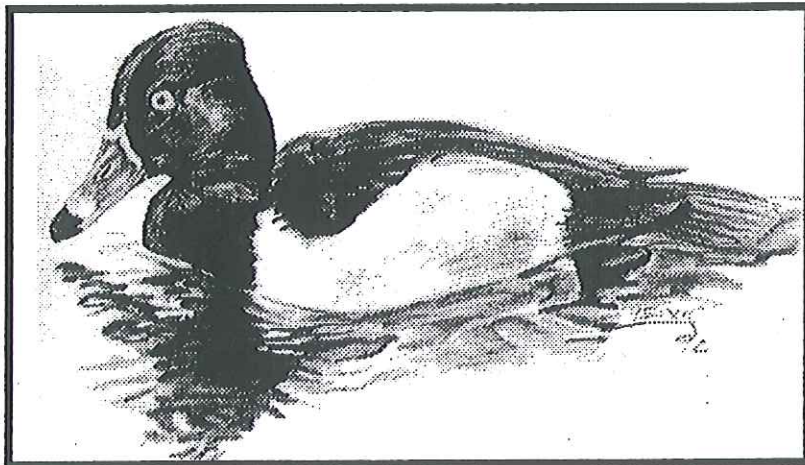


WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN



By The Wildlife Management Public
Education Advisory Council

Presented to the Director of the Colorado Division of Wildlife
December 1, 1998

12/9/98

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Colorado House Bill 98-1409 created a wildlife management public education advisory council in the Colorado Division of Wildlife in the Department of Natural Resources. The Act required the Director, Colorado Division of Wildlife, to appoint nine individuals to the Council and directed the Council to design a media-based public information program to educate the public about wildlife management and wildlife-related recreational opportunities, particularly hunting and fishing.

The necessity for such a public information program has been separately verified in a study contracted by CDOW, Public Affairs Section, with Russell, Karsh and Hagan Public Relations, *Communications Audit, August 1998*.

The Council met on numerous occasions in the Division of Wildlife offices in Denver, Colorado, to develop the media-based plan. Through the Division of Wildlife, the Council requested inputs to the plan from any and all organizations, plus individuals, in order to develop a plan that is effective and does not duplicate current education programs. Throughout the process, the Division of Wildlife staff provided expertise and clerical and technical assistance.

The Council defined a scope for the plan: "To educate the non-hunting, non-fishing Colorado public regarding the benefits of hunting and fishing."

The Council developed three goals with objectives for the plan. The goals are:

- a. Communicate specific benefits of hunting and fishing to wildlife management.
- b. Define communications and advocacy programs.
- c. Develop funding programs to implement and continue the Wildlife Management Public Education Plan.

The Council established nine conclusion statements to assist with providing a focus for the media-based education program. The most significant conclusion is that the message needs to be directed primarily at the public that is neither anti nor pro hunting and fishing.

The plan includes six recommendations by the Council. Most of the recommendations regard funding, but the primary recommendation is to develop, through contract, a pilot program before proceeding with a statewide education effort.

An appendix to the plan defines current education programs and funding to prevent duplication.

Acknowledgments

The Council thanks the Director, Division of Wildlife, John Mumma, for providing space and staff for the Council to do its tasks; Larry DeClaire, Division of Wildlife Legal Services Coordinator, for defining the Council's limitations and roles under HB98-1409; and Jeff Butler, Division of Wildlife, for his organizational assistance. Additionally, the Council would like to thank and acknowledge the assistance of CDOW's Dale Lashnits, John Smeltzer, Bob Hernbrode and Steve Norris. Finally, the Council thanks all the individuals and organizations that provided input for development of the plan; especially, Charles Russell and Tom Schilling, Intermountain RKH, for their input and insights.

The Council also recognizes each appointed member:

1. Peter Atkins, Del Norte
2. Bill Baird, Fruita
3. Del Befus, Denver
4. Jerry Bergeman, Florissant
5. Bob Caskey, Grand Junction
6. Bob Radocy, Boulder (chairman)
7. Dr Allan Reishus, Craig
8. Jeff Shroll, Gypsum
9. Jean Tool, Littleton

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PUBLIC EDUCATION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The Wildlife Management Public Education Plan was prepared under the authority of Colorado House Bill 98-1409. The Wildlife Management Public Education Advisory Council prepared this plan for presentation to the Director, Division of Wildlife, by December 1, 1998.

a. Wildlife Management Public Education Advisory Council Membership

The Council consists of the following nine Colorado residents appointed by the Director, Division of Wildlife: Two sportspersons who purchase big game licenses on a regular basis, one of whom is from the Western Slope; two sportspersons who purchase fishing licenses on regular basis, one of whom is from the Western Slope; one person who represents rural local counties which economies have substantial income from hunting and fishing; one person who represents rural municipalities which have substantial income from hunting and fishing; one person representing agricultural producers; one person with substantial background in media and marketing operations; and, one person representing the Division of Wildlife.

b. Use of Information

The Council considered public input in constructing the final plan. The plan will be widely available to the general public through the CDOW.

c. Use of Plan

This plan is meant to be used by decision makers to develop and fund programs that educate the general public regarding the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management and the tools used to manage wildlife. In addition, this plan provides the basis for requesting appropriations from the General Assembly, the preparation of grant applications, the solicitation of funds from businesses, groups and individuals and the development of other methods for raising funds for its implementation.

c. Procedures for Updating

This plan is a living document that should be reviewed annually and updated as necessary.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to design a comprehensive media-based public information program to educate the general public about the benefits of wildlife, wildlife management, and wildlife-related recreational opportunities in Colorado, specifically hunting and fishing.

3. SCOPE

To educate the non-hunting, non-fishing Colorado public regarding the benefits of hunting and fishing.

4. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The following specific goals and objectives were developed for the Wildlife Management Public Education Plan.

a. Goal: Communicate specific benefits of hunting and fishing to wildlife management.

(1) Objective

Demonstrate the benefits of wildlife management.

- (a) Wildlife management has provided for the re-establishment of Colorado's native species including desert bighorn sheep, shiras moose, mountain goat, peregrine falcon, and cutthroat trout.
- (b) Wildlife management preserves fisheries and the quality and quantity of water.
- (c) Wildlife management is responsible for identification and protection of species which are deemed "of special concern, threatened or endangered."
- (d) Wildlife management is the arbitrator between private land interests and resources and public interests and resources.
- (e) Wildlife management strives for a balance that benefits public, private and wildlife interests.

(2) Objective

Demonstrate how hunting and fishing benefits wildlife and wildlife management.

- (a) The hunting and fishing license fee system is the primary method of financing wildlife management and protecting the habitat and open space in which the wildlife lives.

(b) Hunting and fishing are necessary tools in wildlife management for maintaining healthy and diverse populations of wildlife.

(c) Hunting and fishing instill within individuals a personal accountability for Colorado's natural resources.

(3) Objective

Define the recreational benefits of hunting and fishing.

(a) Positively impacts quality of life by providing young and old the opportunity to enjoy the Colorado outdoors in all seasons.

(b) Allows for wildlife viewing, observation, study and appreciation.

(c) Retains for future generations the historic relationships of wildlife to mankind and the heritage of hunting and fishing.

(d) Encourages the exploration of some of the most scenic areas in Colorado.

(e) Provides healthy physical exercise.

(4) Objective

Demonstrate economic benefits of hunting and fishing to Colorado's public.

(a) Licenses revenues, not general tax dollars, support almost all the costs of the Division of Wildlife and wildlife management in Colorado.

(b) Revenues from hunting and fishing equal revenues from Colorado's skiing industry.

(c) Provides employment in many facets of Colorado's economy, especially in rural communities.

(d) Supplements the income of the agricultural community.

(e) Provides food for many Colorado residents and visitors.

(5) Objective

Demonstrate how hunting and fishing provide an environmental balance.

(a) Hunting and fishing revenue provides additional funding for environmental protection and habitat acquisition.

- (b) Hunting and fishing revenue pays for the protection and reintroduction of native species.
- (c) Hunting in particular is a method of controlling herd sizes in order to hold them in balance with private and public land use.
- (d) Hunting prevents overgrazing and thus helps to sustain healthy animals in balance with available habitat.

b. Goal: Define Communications and Advocacy Programs

(1) Objective

Through a consultant or consultants develop a comprehensive media-based education program to reach specific audiences in the general public.

(2) Objective

Develop cooperative communications programs with outdoor-related businesses to advocate the benefits that hunting and fishing provide to wildlife management.

(3) Objective

Prepare program materials to communicate the Council message to members of service clubs and membership organizations.

(4) Objective

Develop a program for hunters and anglers to help them communicate to others how their sports benefit wildlife management.

c. Goal: Develop funding programs to implement and continue Wildlife Management Public Education Plan.

(1) Objective

Create permanent financing from the general fund to finance the Public Education Program..

(2) Objective

Create voluntary contribution programs.

- (a) Grant Program. Seek grant funding from state and national associations, businesses, manufacturers, institutions, etc.

(b) Constituent Program. Use license fee applications and Division of Wildlife license bulletins, brochures, etc. to encourage and collect donations and contributions from hunting, fishing and other license purchasers.

(c) Advertising, endorsement, raffle, auction and endowment programs.

(3) Objective

Create a permanent fee-based financing program.

(a) Surcharge per license or per year. Model after "RED" stamp concept or Search and Rescue.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- a. Recognizing that there are individuals who will never accept hunting and fishing as a means of wildlife management, the media-based message should be directed primarily at the public that is neither anti nor pro hunting and fishing.
- b. Full-fledged education programs should not be started until a pilot program has been completed and the results analyzed.
- c. Until the Council can establish other revenue streams, the General Assembly will be requested to fund the pilot program.
- d. There should be annual appropriations to support the continuation of the Council from the General Assembly.
- e. A Wildlife Management Education Program Trust Fund should be established.
- f. Businesses, manufacturers, hunters and anglers are great sources to assist with funding and publicizing the education program.
- g. Innovative methods to raise funds may require legislative approval.
- h. Grants and donations may be an important source of funding for the public education program.
- i. The Council will support the Colorado Division of Wildlife with its efforts to remove the Agency from the umbrella of TABOR.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

a. Pilot Program

(1) Contract with a professional public relations firm to conduct a demonstration pilot Wildlife Management Public Education Program.

(a) Goal of the pilot is to assess how a media-based program can best be presented using the scope, goals and objectives of this plan.

(b) Components of the contract would be: Identify audience. Develop message. Identify best method of communicating with target audience. Conduct a baseline study. Deliver message. Measure effect of the message. Submit report.

b. Initiate grant-seeking program.

c. Initiate Organizational Stakeholder Support Program.

d. Establish Wildlife Management Public Education Program Trust Fund.

e. Work with upcoming legislature to get funding for pilot program and annual appropriations for the Wildlife Management Public Education Program.

f. Support removing CDOW from TABOR umbrella.