**2023 Biennium Goals and Objectives**

**Department of Natural Resources and Conservation**

**Director’s Office (DO)**

**Goal: Director’s Office - provide central service and operational support to department divisions.**

Objective: Respond and adjust to the needs of the divisions providing consultation, planning, training, and services in support of division goals.

**Goal: Director’s Office - Continue to strengthen and improve internal controls**.

Objective: Educate department personnel on the importance of internal controls; review internal controls to ensure they continue achieve the objectives of the department; and test internal controls on a regular basis for effectiveness

**Goal: Human Resource Office – Continue to provide human resource support to department divisions and programs; ensure that human resource initiatives are aligned with the department’s overall goals and objectives; continue to support human resource staff development and competencies to achieve highest level of support.**

Objective: Continue updating human resource policies; provide professional development opportunities for human resource staff; educate department personnel about frequently used policies and human resource best practices such as recruitment and selection, FMLA and basics of supervision and management.

**Goal: Human Resource Office - continual process improvement of human resource systems; continually monitor and improve the efficiency and coordination between business partners including FSO and OIT**

Objective: Enhance efficiencies and coordination between shared business processes of human resource office, fiscal services office and office of information technology as they relate to employee onboarding, offboarding, performance management and pay setting.

**Goal: Financial Services Office - Ensure that the department's fiscal management practices are consistent with "Generally Accepted Accounting Principles" (GAAP).**

Objective: Implement accounting for new or modified programs, work with department divisions to improve communication of information required for accounting entries and minimize or eliminate findings and recommendations on financial audits.

**Goal: Financial Services Office - Ensure DNRC personnel are following state and department procurement and contracting rules, regulations and policies.**

Objective: Offer procurement and contracting training and instruction to DNRC personnel via power point classes, instruction manuals and communication.

**Goal: Financial Services Office – Improve efficiency and accuracy by automating the payment processing agency-wide.**

Objective: This would be accomplished by developing an online payment processing, approving, accruing & SABHR interfacing system and would additionally provide programmatic budgeting system.

**Goal: Information Technology Office - Upgrade technology and software in the agency as allowed by staff and budget.**

Objective: Provide high-quality IT support to staff through complete development of a mature Service Management framework; improve core service response rate and delivery; continually upgrade network infrastructure to support regional offices; improve integration of IT as a business solution provider to the department programs; improve information security practices throughout the agency. Facilitate and work to ensure the success of HB 10 funded projects relating to the Water Resources Division database and the completion of phases 1-4 of the TLMS upgrade

**Goal: Information Technology Office - Continue development of GIS services for DNRC and its constituents.**

Objective: Enhance enterprise geospatial data management services to increase the effectiveness of DNRC services provided to citizens; develop GIS mobile applications to meet field data collection needs; enhance program capability to use spatial data for future business decisions; continue support and development of current programs and newer endeavors such as Sage Grouse, Public Lands Access, and Good Neighbor Authority; continue training staff and integrating geospatial technologies to improve program workflows.

**Goal: Information Technology Office - Enhance effectiveness of DNRC operations through the use of web and mobile technologies.**

Objective: Update or develop web and mobile technologies that enable an anytime, anywhere workforce, improve data collection, processing, and dissemination, and enable greater accessibility of DNRC services to staff and the public.

**Goal: Records Management - Improve the efficiency of DNRC operational workflows related to data storage, access, and management of data and records.**

Objective: Work with OIT to migrate current electronic records to the DOA ECM solution and develop new records management processes as staff and budget allow. Develop greater awareness of all DNRC managers regarding records management laws and practical management techniques. Develop new workflows and appropriate training for staff to use ECM system(s).

Objective: Develop tools and processes to increase public access to DNRC records; work with OIT to improve and add to online availability of commonly requested public records; utilize technology such as the ECM solution to expedite public information requests.

**Goal: Public Information – Support and consult on Division and Department-wide needs for media and public relations management; manage and consult on Division and Department media platforms, delivery systems, external and internal content.**

Objective: Coordinate with Dept. OIT on Web content management; manage Dept.’s GovDelivery and Facebook platforms and content; leverage media relations to promote Department programs, services, and successes; coordinate with Dept. leadership and Governor’s Communications staff on high-profile messaging, events, issues.

**Goal: Legal - Enhance efficiencies of DNRC projects/programs by providing legal advice early in the process to facilitate success, enhance production of a high-quality service or product, and minimize legal challenges which could delay or prevent project implementation.**

Objective: Have legal staff available and ready to participate when requested.

**Goal: Legal – Assure that the Legal Unit has competent staff that can manage the dynamic and complex nature of the legal work, including litigation**.

Objective: Assure that all attorneys receive litigation assignments and work collaboratively as a team and with programs.

**Goal: Safety - Improve and ensure DNRC safety and emergency protocols, training, and risk management strategies to facilitate employee health, safety awareness, and use of best practices.**

Objective:Continue to promote employee safety awareness through trainings, self-assessments, and timely reporting of work-related injuries and early return to work practice to ensure best results for employees and the department. Work closely with entities such as Montana State Fund and Risk Management Tort Division to enable the department to obtain the best rates and discounts available to gain efficiencies and to keep current on best practices. Continue to work on emergency preparedness and continuity of operations planning.

**Oil & Gas Conservation Division (BOGC)**

**Goal: Conduct public hearings to promote conservation, prevent waste and protect correlative rights for oil and gas operations.**

Objective: Provide notice, publish docket, write orders, hold business meeting prior to hearing, and propose and adopt rules pursuant to Montana Administrative Procedures Act as required.

**Goal:**  **Issue drilling permits.**

Objective: Conduct Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) compliance review and prepare documentation for each requested permit; identify non-conforming permit requests that require approval by BOGC; review permitting processes to improve efficiency.

**Goal:**  **Monitor existing wells.**

Objective: Approve applications for well work that meet regulatory requirements and identify non-conforming applications that require either modification or approval by BOGC.

**Goal:**  **Operate orphan and pre-regulatory well identification and plugging program.**

Objective: Maintain catalog of orphaned and pre-regulatory wells and determine plugging and reclamation priority; develop and execute plugging and restoration projects.

**Goal:**  **Operate well bonding program.**

Objective: Maintain records on current plugging and restoration bonds, approve new bonds, submit forfeiture paperwork and monitor receipt of funds.

**Goal: Collect, catalog, and maintain oil and gas well information and production data, associated geological data, well logs, statistical information, and summary data for use by the public and the industry.**

Objective: Maintain database and well files, process new well data, process production reports, prepare the Montana Oil and Gas Annual Review, maintain a core chip catalog on wells, and maintain regional and field maps by adding new wells and updating status changes.

**Goal: Operate a field inspection program to ensure compliance with BOGC rules.**

Objective: Conduct inspections on drilling wells, producing wells, plugged and abandoned wells, and seismic exploration crews; respond to complaints and provide emergency response for spills, leaks, and other environmental problems; and provide recommendations for enforcement actions.

**Goal: Administer the Underground Injection Control Program delegated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for the protection of groundwater through regulation of waste disposal and enhanced recovery injection wells.**

Objective: Regulate the operations of existing injection wells; Issue new injection well permits; conduct well inspections and witness pressure tests; maintain and submit statistics and enforcement records per memorandum of understanding with the EPA.

**Conservation and Resource Development Division (CARDD)**

**Goal: Provide Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in the State.**

Objective: Improve water and wastewater resources through the loan program to construct and rehabilitate treatment systems, create jobs, and improve water quality. Assist Rural Water groups in gaining Federal authorization and funding.

**Goal: Improve Reclamation of Natural Resources.**

Objective: Fund reclamation projects where a natural resource, such as land or water, has been harmed. The Reclamation and Development Grant Program leverages financial resources to remediate environmental hazards, for example, plug abandoned oil and gas wells and reclaim mining sites. These projects create jobs and improve Montana's environment.

**Goal: Improve Protection and Development of Natural Resources.**

Objective: Fund projects where natural resources can be used more efficiently and sustainably. Develop renewable resources to create jobs and maintain their quality and quantity.

**Goal: Support Conservation District (CD) duties.**

Objective: Provide technical, financial, administrative, and educational assistance to the CD’s 77 employees and over 400 non-paid supervisors. Support local planning and conservation projects by providing financial and technical programs and services that meet local needs. Build capacity for conservation district’s participation in invasive species prevention activities including AIS inspection stations, forestry improvement projects, and pollinator habitat improvement projects.

**Goal: Improve Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation.**

Objective: Continue to improve implementation efficiency of Executive Order 12-2015 and the Sage Grouse Stewardship Act, delivering effective conservation and balancing conservation and development in collaboration with private landowners, state agencies, and federal agency partners. Provide Montana-specific expertise and information to advance Montana’s interests during policy development, litigation, and the upcoming range-wide Sage Grouse Conservation Assessment / ESA Status Review.

**Goal: Increase awareness and compliance with the Streambed and Land Preservation Act.**

Objective: Coordinate with other permitting agencies, improve education and outreach, update the 310 Database, revise administrative rules, and increase technical assistance to CDs.

**Goal: Provide technical and administrative support to the entities administratively attached to CARDD.**

Objective: Improve technical, financial and administrative resources to the administratively attached Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program, Montana Invasive Species Council, Flathead Basin Commission, Upper Columbia Conservation Commission, Rangeland Resources Committee and Montana Grass Conservation Commission for them to carry out their missions.

**Goal: Increase awareness and capacity and improve coordination and management of invasive species.**

Objective: Support the Montana Invasive Species Council in implementing the state’s Strategic Framework for Invasive Species and the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission to improve invasive species coordination, prevention, early detection and response efforts.

**Goal:     Increase awareness and public understanding that Montana’s rangelands are a renewable resource which provide clean water, pollinator habitat, carbon sequestration, and important consumer products and environmental values.**

Objective: Improve education and outreach activities, targeting new and broader audiences. Building and improving on current Rangeland Resources Program in accordance to the Statute and under the direction of the Rangeland Resources Committee.

**Water Resources Division (WRD)**

**Goal: Promote the wise use and conservation of Montana’s water resources.**

Objective:Water Rights/New Appropriations: Process all water right forms as efficiently as possible while ensuring that they comply with the criteria and processes established in statute and rule. Scan and maintain all water right records as required by the Montana Constitution. Continue work on water rights database upgrade.

Objective: Water Rights/Adjudication: Work on issuing summary reports of water right claims in all first decree basins to meet the current legislative requirement of having all initial decrees issued by June 30, 2024. Continue to provide post decree assistance to the Water Court across the state and continue limited examination work on approximately 90,000 claims in 43 basins pursuant to the Water Court’s re-examination order. Complete initial entry and examination of newly filed HB110 claims.

Objective: State Projects:  Manage and maintain state-owned water storage projects (23 dams including the Broadwater-Toston hydropower facility and 250 miles of canals) to maximize economic and water use benefits to agricultural producers and communities while ensuring these high hazard projects are maintained to current engineering standards and compliant with the State Dam Safety Act.

Objective: Water Operations: Efficiently and effectively carry out the statutory duties of the department for regulation of high hazard dams, construction requirements of water wells, licensing of water well contractors, designation of floodplains and floodways, and technical support of local governmental floodplain management programs

Objective: Water Management: Provide unbiased technical assistance, water resource planning support, and water resource educational information to water users and decision makers throughout the state. Implement recommendations in the 2015 State Water Plan. Provide technical and project planning support to the Compact Implementation Program.

Objective: Water Management: SB32 Implementation - Chair SB32 Stream Gage Oversight Work Group. The Work Group will engage with stakeholders in a review of the USGS stream gage network in Montana and develop recommendations to minimize the vulnerability of the network to disruptions in O&M funding. The Work Group will deliver a stream gage infrastructure work plan to the Water Policy Interim Committee in June 2022. The Work Group is a subcommittee of the Drought and Water Supply Advisory Committee.

Objective: Water Management: Montana Drought Management Plan – Initiate planning and securing contracted services to update the Montana Drought Management Plan.

Objective: Water Management: Expand drought planning, water management, and climate adaptation education, and outreach efforts across Montana.

Objective: Water Management: Work with water commissioners, and district courts on overcoming the difficulties of distributing water according to priority date in areas where natural and man-made process make distribution challenging

Objective: Compact Implementation Program: DNRC staff will continue to work on administering the implementation of reserved water compacts, both tribal and non-tribal, using available settlement funds for water measurement, irrigation project operational improvements and providing regular educational presentations to stakeholders. To date, eighteen reserved water right compacts have been negotiated and ratified by the Montana Legislature, including seven with Indian Tribes.  Non-tribal federal compacts have been achieved for federal land reserves such as National Parks, National Forest system lands and more.  As one example, the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)-Montana Compact is the result of more than a decade of negotiations to resolve the Tribes' claims to water rights within the State.  The Compact will make available new sources of water for commercial and irrigation use, end the water administration void on the Flathead Reservation, allow for economic development under conditions of legal certainty on- and off-Reservation, and facilitate the completion of the statewide general stream adjudication. Ratified by the Montana Legislature in 2015, the compact is still awaiting federal approval, which will be a very significant step forward for Montana’s statewide stream adjudication. It quantifies the Tribes’ water rights for all time, provides protections for the State and its water users on and off the reservation, makes water available for future development, and provides certainty for all parties.

**Trust Lands Management Division (TLMD)**

**Goal: Manage the State of Montana's trust land resources to produce revenue for the trust beneficiaries while considering environmental factors and protecting the future income-generating capacity of the land.**

Objective: Technology - Complete the development and deployment of the new Trust Lands Management System.

Objective: Technology - Continue to develop and deploy mobile technology applications for field data collection especially in Ag and Grazing, Real Estate programs.

Objective: Technology - Design new tools to allow e-business options and efficiencies for customers to access information and pay bills for all Bureaus.

Objective: Technology - Develop a public facing web-based map (GIS interactive) depicting open and restricted access roads and travel routes crossing state trust lands.

Objective: Technology – Implement online oil and gas lease sales.

Objective: Land Management – Develop efficiencies in process for renewable energy leasing. Pursue and capture new trust land renewable energy leases from renewable energy producers seeking opportunities in Montana.

Objective: Land Management - Identify and facilitate significant land consolidation of checkerboarded trust land ownership for increased revenue potential, access, and resource management efficiency. This goal will be accomplished with existing land exchange and land banking programs and building collaborative projects with federal, state, private, and conservation entities.

Objective: Land Management - Significantly increase legal access to isolated trust lands state-wide through initiation of cost share, reciprocal access agreements, land exchange, land acquisitions, and MT Plan projects.

Objective: Land Management – Staff and implement 2020 Forest Management Sustainable Yield annual target of 60.0 MMBF.

Objective: Land Management - Initiate and secure 10-12 new commercial real estate leases on targeted trust lands state-wide, in the path of growth for increased revenue generation for trustees.

Objective: Policy and Legal - Draft Statute, Rule, and Policy change recommendations for legislative and land board approval to facilitate efficient and updated program management.

Objective: Policy and Legal - Successfully resolve litigation challenging the state’s right to assess commercial leasing fees paid for hydro-electric dams on state navigable waterways. The department is unable to distribute lease income to the Common School Trust currently at $21 million. The 2019 payment to escrow was $4.9 million.

**Forestry Division (FD)**

**Goal: Implement key goals and objectives of the DNRC Fire Program Strategic Plan, making progress toward the desired outcome of achieving a well-rounded fire protection program incorporating, as critical components, safe and effective fire response; training, professional development and organizational learning; community preparedness and fire adaptation, homeowner risk reduction and fire prevention; as well as prescribed fire and hazardous fuels reduction.**

Objective:Immediately reinforce State/County Coop (County Coop) fire protection as part of an ongoing and sustained effort to modernize the State/County Cooperative Fire Protection arrangement. Complete a County Coop sub-strategy.

Objective:Coordinate the activities of the Fire Protection program with those of the Forestry Assistance and Good Neighbor Authority programs as well as with the Trust Lands Management Division to achieve mutually beneficial goals; focusing on internal cohesion that organizes DNRC work around the tenets of the National Cohesive Fire Management Strategy.

Objective:Develop performance metrics, used to periodically measure program effectiveness against benchmarks and identify specific performance and/or service gaps.

Objective:Design and develop equipment and training for local government firefighters that incorporates technologies to support the effectiveness of a smaller and older volunteer workforce.

Objective:Maintain program effectiveness necessary to carry out mission of protecting lives, property, and natural resources from wildfire; including controlling 95% of fires at initial attack.

**Goal: Contribute to achieving Division and Department initiatives including, but not limited to, the Montana Forest Action Plan.**

Objective: Deploy data from the statewide fire risk assessment and wildland-urban interface (WUI) map/data layer projects – make statewide data sets available and accessible to local, state, and federal government partnersas well as DNRC practitioners.

Objective: Support the Forestry Division’s Implementation Advisory Committee for the Montana Forest Action Plan.

**Goal: Maintain stable, adequate purchasing power in the Fire Protection Program preparedness budget and a stable fire suppression account that enables our ability to sustain program delivery.**

Objective: Develop an approach to fund the fire protection preparedness budget sustainably and comprehensively with, as needed, a reformed wildland fire protection fee (assessment) that acknowledges the true nature of the DNRC Fire Protection Program.

**Goal: Recruit, prepare, develop and retain the workforce necessary to achieve the goals and objectives of Fire Program Strategic Plan.**

Objective: Complete workforce analysis and plan for workforce configuration at unit, land office, and bureau levels; with eye toward enabling capacity necessary to align the workforce with the strategic vision for the program.

Objective: Develop a recruitment and retention strategy aligned with improved HR policies supporting the workforce development objectives of the Fire Program Strategic Plan.

**Goal: Develop a complete aviation sub-strategy that includes a plan for transitioning from our current aircraft to our next generation aircraft over time; and begin the process of preparing the Legislature for the necessary future capital expenditures to make that transition.**

Objective: Identify next generation rotor wing aircraft and supporting infrastructure to replace MT-205 and identify next generation fixed wing aircraft to replace current fixed wing aircraft.

**Goal: Understand and define our wildland fire information technology (WFIT) business needs and identify how to meet those business needs in a timely and cost-effective manner. Enable adequate data capture, storage, and analysis systems that inform financial, strategic and programmatic decision making.**

Objective: Acquire software system(s) that comprehensively address multiple incident business and fire finance functions of an essential/critical nature.

Objective: Enable adequate data capture, storage, and analysis systems that inform financial, strategic and programmatic decision making.

Objective: Complete redevelopment of the Fire Protection Assessment (FPA) system/application.

Objective: Routinely collect, use, share, and archive data to enable informed management decisions including, but not limited to, objectively evaluating the adequacy, allocation, or configuration of our fire response resources in relation to both the current and future operating environment.

**Goal: Enable necessary change/modernization/improvement by implementing a legislative strategy aligned with both DNRC Fire Program Strategic Plan and the identified financial and legislative needs of the DNRC Fire Protection Program.**

Objective: Develop EPP requests that, if successful, will affect change necessary to achieve both strategic intent and other identified needs.

Objective: Strategically conduct appropriate marketing/outreach efforts with key legislators, legislative staff, and key stakeholders and partner personnel as appropriate. Develop stakeholder support in advance of legislative assembly.

**Goal: Good Neighbor Authority (GNA)** - **Partnered with federal land management agencies, to accelerate forest restoration and management, increase forest resiliency, improve forest health, reduce fuels and wildfire threats to communities, improve wildlife and fisheries habitats, and provide a consistent volume of commercial timber.**

Objective: Build on existing agreements and relationships with the USFS and BLM to accomplish mutually beneficial restoration objectives utilizing the Good Neighbor Authority**.**

Objective: Use state procurement procedures and contracting processes to increase efficiency in project planning and implementation on federal lands.

Objective: Integrate and leverage state staff and resources in a cooperative effort with our federal partners to reduce project timelines and increase the amount of restoration work accomplished on federal lands.

Objective: Using funds generated through the GNA program, supplement the federal workforce with state capacity to accomplish priority restoration projects.

Objective: Promote the use of GNA with all federal agencies and relevant partners to build a self-sustaining program, with a workforce that can address the state’s wildfire risk and forest health issues.

**Goal:** **Implement the *Montana Forest Action Plan* and ensure efficient, effective, and collaborative cross-boundary management within *Priority Areas for Focused Attention*.**

Objective: By 2021 identify ways to better leverage existing authorities, funding, and capacity to increase the pace and scale of cross-boundary projects.

**Goal: Implement key goals and objectives from the Forestry Assistance Strategic Plan to advance the implementation of the Montana Forest Action Plan to address wildfire risk and forest health issues.**

Objective: Effectively and efficiently administer federal grants for state and private forestry programs.

Objective: Utilize focused approaches to target and engage communities and landowners with the services offered by the Forestry Assistance Programs.

Objective: Coordinate with the Fire Protection Bureau, Good Neighbor Authority Bureau, Trust Land Management Division and other partners to create fire adapted communities and resilient landscapes.

Objective: Administer grant funding to reduce the risk of wildfire around communities and individual homes.

Objective: Administer the slash hazard reduction law through management of 1800+ hazard reduction agreements. Update Hazard Reduction Agreement software to maintain data base, accounting functionality and improve client usability

Objective: Monitor Forestry Best Management Practices (BMPs) through Service Foresters.

Objective: Recognize Arbor Day and administer the Tree City USA program; maintain average of 40 certified Tree City USA communities; promote urban and community forestry projects through grant funding as available.

Objective: Manage and maintain statewide public tree inventory database to capture status and condition of Montana urban forests.

Objective: Work with Service Foresters for effective delivery of the Stewardship and Urban and Community Forestry Programs across the state.

Objective: Produce and sell 1 million seedlings for conservation plantings. Develop a business plan that identifies a marketing strategy for expansion and growth of the Nursery.

Objective: Assist private landowners and other non-federal land managers in managing forest insects and disease on forested lands in Montana by educating landowners about the proper identification of forest pests and appropriate integrated pest management options.

Objective: Promote resilient management actions that will make forests less susceptible to insects and disease.

**Goal: Sustain and enhance opportunities for Montana’s integrated forest products infrastructure.**

Objective: Host events and Buy Montana Wood Website highlighting the benefits of using Montana wood products and mass timber.

Objective: Promote sustainable and active management of private and tribal forest lands and provide both technical and financial assistance.

Objective: Assist forest industry and school districts with implementation of biomass utilization projects. Explore avenues for expanding/promoting biomass utilization (hospitals, subdivisions, city/county buildings).

**Goal: Increase scope and scale of active forest management on federal lands in Montana.**

Objective: Provide policy and legal support that increases scope and scale of active forest management on federal lands.

Objective: Provide technical and financial assistance to counties enabling county commissioners and their collaborative groups to effectively engage with the Forest Service.