

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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Review of the  
**Maine Department of  
Inland Fisheries and Wildlife**

Division of Wildlife,  
Division of Information and Education,  
Bureau of Warden Service, and  
Bureau of Administrative Services

**Final Report:**  
Findings & Recommendations

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Conducted by:

The Management Assistance Team  
International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### Executive Summary

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Foreword .....                     | 1 |
| Background .....                   | 2 |
| Findings and Recommendations ..... | 3 |

|                   |    |
|-------------------|----|
| Methodology ..... | 15 |
|-------------------|----|

### Findings

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Chapter: Department Overall .....                    | 21 |
| Chapter: Division of Wildlife .....                  | 41 |
| Chapter: Division of Information and Education ..... | 53 |
| Chapter: Bureau of Warden Service .....              | 65 |
| Chapter: Bureau of Administrative Services .....     | 87 |

|                               |    |
|-------------------------------|----|
| MAT Contact Information ..... | 97 |
|-------------------------------|----|

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Foreword**

The following final report summarizes the process, findings, and recommendations of an independent, comprehensive review of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife (MDIFW). The intent of the review was to conduct an assessment of the Division of Wildlife, the Division of Information and Education, the Bureau of the Warden Service, and the Bureau of Administrative Services, providing recommendations for improvement. Initiated at the request of the Maine state Legislature (# 803038), with support from the MDIFW Commissioner's Office, the review was begun by the Management Assistance Team (MAT) in October 2003 and completed in May 2004.

MAT is an organization development and training consultancy exclusively for state fish and wildlife agencies nationwide. MAT is funded by a Multi-State Conservation Grant to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, thus there is no additional cost for MAT staff time, travel, or per diem. MAT was selected to conduct the review through a state request for proposals process.

The scope of the review included legislative mandates and associated responsibilities, budget process and allocations, organizational structure and staffing, resource capabilities, program planning, implementation and management, administrative policies, public outreach, public involvement in decision-making, and public accountability. The review was a comprehensive critique of present programs, their strong points, shortcomings, and needs.

Recommendations were requested at two levels: 1) Within existing constraints of funding and staffing levels, and 2) With additional resources in a prioritized fashion. With the ultimate goal of improving the Department's effectiveness, the review focused on identifying the leverage areas for improvement rather than to identify and enumerate strengths and weaknesses.

A review team of nine professionals conducted eleven focus groups, more than 100 interviews and an all-employee telephone survey, producing a wealth of data for analysis. As a result, 57 recommendations for improvement are submitted for consideration. Important to keep in mind is that the recommendations are interconnected, each affecting the whole. The report herein may be most helpful if considered from a holistic perspective rather than addressing each recommendation individually and separately.

It was a strong desire to improve, held by many loyal MDIFW stakeholders both in and outside the agency, which enabled this review. And, unmistakably, it was the efforts of many individuals and a spirit of true collaboration that facilitated the completion of this review. The Management Assistance Team thanks all who had a part in this endeavor

and acknowledges the courage and candor exemplified by all and absolutely requisite for any organization to look seriously at itself and improve. Congratulations, MDIFW!

## **Background**

As one of the oldest state fish and wildlife agencies in the nation, the MDIFW has a proud history for well over a century of fish and game management. Today, Maine constituents are highly pro-hunting. According to a 2003 public survey by Responsive Management, legal hunting was approved by eighty-nine percent (89%) of Maine residents.<sup>1</sup> This figure contrasts with the rest of the country's average public approval rates of seventy-three percent (73%).<sup>2</sup>

Primary responsibilities and focus for the Department are derived from its statutory mandates found in Title 12, Part 13, Chapters 901-941. Guiding the MDIFW is the basic mandate "to preserve, protect, and enhance the inland fisheries and wildlife resources of the State; to encourage the wise use of these resources; to ensure coordinated planning for the future use and preservation of these resources; and to provide for effective management of these resources."<sup>3</sup>

The MDIFW operates within a natural resources landscape that is rich in both aquatic and wildlife resources. Maine's citizens place high value on having wildlife around them, and support it with their money.<sup>4</sup> A 2001 survey shows Maine's wildlife-related economic contribution is fifth in the nation in terms of the percentage of the state's gross state product.<sup>5</sup> More money comes into Maine's economy from wildlife-related recreation than any of the other recreation industries.<sup>6</sup> In 2001, out-of-state travelers contributed four billion dollars to Maine's economy. Twenty-one percent (21%) of those travelers took overnight trips associated with eco-tourism and spent money in Maine accordingly.<sup>7</sup>

The Department has 316.5 full time equivalent staff positions and a total budget of \$29,189,483 for fiscal year 2003. Funding for the Department comes from a variety of sources, for example, general state tax revenues, excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment, a portion of the existing tax on motorboat fuel, and hunting, fishing, and motorboat license fees. Hunters and anglers contribute the lion's share, a sixty-four percent (64%) contribution to the budget.

MDIFW employees are, to a person, dedicated and hard working, possessing the well-documented fish and wildlife cultural characteristic of working with a "missionary like zeal" for the resource. The MDIFW is commended for its apparent courage and commitment to self-improvement. Fundamental paradigms, as well as structural, cultural, and strategic aspects of the organization must be addressed if lasting improvements are to be achieved. Increased legislative directives, budgetary illusions, new executive leadership, and an apparent lack of a broad, diligent, organized advocacy to consistently champion the Department's needs — these are important

factors for establishing a dynamic context in which culture and infrastructure renewal must be seriously examined, and changed where needed.

## **Recommendations**

Information from the three data collection phases of the review was compared and analyzed for congruencies. Inferences drawn from the identified congruencies generated a comprehensive list of overarching issues and recommendations for improvement for the Department overall and each of the divisions and bureaus, excluding Fisheries since the Fisheries Management Program was comprehensively reviewed last year. These recommendations are organization development interventions that could leverage the MDIFW efforts aimed at increasing its overall effectiveness.

Discussion of the 57 recommendations in the Final Report is divided into five chapters: Department Overall, Division of Wildlife, Division of Information and Education, Bureau of Warden Services, and Bureau of Administrative Services. Data is presented electronically in an attached CD on the back cover of the Final Report.

Recommendation priorities were assigned relative to agency need. Those recommendations with "A" priority are the most critical to the agency. "A" level priorities are requisite to addressing other issues, and resolution is vital to agency function. "B" priorities are more critical to agency success than "C" priorities.

The following is a prioritized list of all the recommendations, some of which require additional funding and others that do not.

1. **Department Overall Recommendation # 1:** Have all employees develop prioritized work plans to mitigate mission creep.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
  
2. **Department Overall Recommendation # 2:** Have the Division/Bureau Directors work with the Commissioner's Office to establish strategies for seeking increased funding and staffing with the Legislature.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A

3. **Department Overall Recommendation # 3:** Develop a clear, succinct vision for the Department, including funding strategies and what types of work will be de-emphasized in the interim, and articulate regularly by top management including how the MDIFW will strategically get there.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
  
4. **Department Overall Recommendation # 4:** Work with constituent groups (SAM, Audubon, etc.) to establish a strong advocacy voice for the Department by utilizing techniques from other states such as a conservation congress or creating a foundation, etc.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
  
5. **Department Overall Recommendation # 5:** Create a new Bureau of Habitat responsible for land acquisition and all engineering as indicated in Suggested Organization Structure, Diagram 2, Chapter: Department Overall.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A
  
6. **Department Overall Recommendation # 6:** Restructure the agency to eliminate the Bureau of Resource Management and reclassify the Bureau Director position to Wildlife Bureau Director. The current Wildlife Division Director position should be reclassified as an Assistant Bureau Director position for the Bureau of Wildlife. The current Director of Fisheries Operations should be promoted to Director of the Bureau of Fisheries. The current Fisheries Program and Development Director should be promoted to Assistant Bureau Director of Fisheries. The Computer Services and Environmental Coordinator Positions reporting to the current Bureau of Resource Management should be aligned to report to the Bureau of Administrative Services and a new Bureau of Habitat respectively (See Suggested Organization Structure, Diagram 2, Chapter: Department Overall). Reclassify the Divisions of Information and Education, Fisheries, and Wildlife as Bureaus to reflect equal positions at this level within the organization.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A
  
7. **Department Overall Recommendation # 7:** Create a Department Land Acquisition Committee to evaluate and prioritize potential land purchases.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A



8. **Department Overall Recommendation # 8:** In the future, change the positions of Deputy Commissioner, Director of Bureau of Information and Education, and the Colonel of the Bureau of Warden Service from positions appointed by the Governor to positions hired according to regular Department procedures.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
  
9. **Department Overall Recommendation # 9:** Provide effective supervision training for all supervisors in the Department.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
  
10. **Department Overall Recommendation # 10:** Have I&E and Personnel Divisions work together to define their specific responsibilities and roles in managing internal communications pending resolution of their mutual staffing needs  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
  
11. **Department Overall Recommendation # 11:** Enhance intranet capabilities so that relevant news, policies, and communications are available to all employees more time efficiently, especially as the Department works towards increasing computer and internet access to remote employees.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* C
  
12. **Department Overall Recommendation # 12:** Review current selection process and establish guidelines and criteria for selection of new Advisory Council members.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
  
13. **Department Overall Recommendation # 13:** Have the divisions and bureaus budget to the project level with a standardized definition of what constitutes a "project."  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
  
14. **Department Overall Recommendation # 14:** Have division and bureau budget requests emphasize new project proposals prioritized against existing work. Any projects (existing or new) that cannot be funded are then used to build a

justification for budget increases by showing specifically what would be done with additional funding.

*Additional Funding Required:* No

*Priority Level:* A

15. **Department Overall Recommendation # 15:** Have the Bureau of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting implement expenditure tracking at the project code level with funding codes as part of the project code identification.

*Additional Funding Required:* No

*Priority Level:* A

16. **Wildlife Division Recommendation # 1:** Have the Wildlife Division Director work with the Commissioner's Office to establish strategies for seeking increased funding and staffing from the Legislature. One strategy suggested is to have facilitated meetings of Commissioner's Office and Bureau/Division Directors to brainstorm ideas and develop strategies to pursue different funding efforts.

*Additional Funding Required:* No

*Priority Level:* B

17. **Wildlife Division Recommendation # 2:** If additional resources can be gathered for the Division of Wildlife, consider the best approaches for filling staffing needs for the Management Section and the Resource Assessment Section as well as for the management of WMA lands such as timber harvest, boundary surveys, etc.

*Additional Funding Required:* Yes

*Priority Level:* C

18. **Wildlife Division Recommendation # 3:** Broaden the MDIFW veterinarian's duties so he is shared by both the Wildlife and the Fisheries Divisions.

*Additional Funding Required:* No

*Priority Level:* C

19. **Wildlife Division Recommendation # 4:** Have the Wildlife Division Director work with the Commissioner's Office and Division employees to establish priorities for work. During quarterly work planning, have the Wildlife Division Director work with staff to reconcile time required for projects with the amount of available staff time.

*Additional Funding Required:* No

*Priority Level:* A

20. **Information & Education Recommendation # 1:** From existing I&E staff, assign liaison/counterpart relationships between I&E and each of the following: Wildlife, Fisheries, and Licensing and Registration Divisions.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
21. **Information & Education Recommendation # 2:** Conduct an exhaustive internal review of I&E as a precursor to an I&E specific comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan would serve as a combination strategic/operations document detailing I&E priorities: activities, forecasted staffing needs, and budgets.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
22. **Information & Education Recommendation # 3:** Fill at least three new positions in I&E to meet needs: webmaster/graphic designer, an additional public relations writer/editor, and a public relations specialist dedicated to the Warden Service.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A
23. **Information & Education Recommendation # 4:** Strategically place I&E generalists in regional offices to work more closely with field personnel on communications and public outreach and to better serve the strategic needs to be laid out in the I&E Comprehensive Plan and Department-wide Communications Plan.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* B
24. **Information & Education Recommendation # 5:** Develop a Department-wide communications plan using participation from across the agency. The plan would identify the highest priority information, key messages, and delivery strategies. The entire plan must be shared with all agency employees to be most effective.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
25. **Information & Education Recommendation # 6:** Integrate a Department-wide marketing approach.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B

26. **Information & Education Recommendation # 7:** Consider using the Federal Aid apportionment available for aquatic education to enhance the aquatic education programs in I&E.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
27. **Warden Service Recommendation # 1:** Conduct a pay parity study and argue to bring the Warden Service to State Troopers pay level.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* C
28. **Warden Service Recommendation # 2:** Purchase computers with high-speed Internet access for each warden; develop in-vehicle wireless data capabilities; provide training for appropriate software; develop a law-enforcement specific component within the recommended Department intranet to enhance information flow and accountability.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* B
29. **Warden Service Recommendation # 3:** 1) Adjust the focus of warden training to go beyond meeting minimum requirements and 2) Refocus promotions/advancements according to initiative, training, performance, etc., rather than solely on rank and seniority.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
30. **Warden Service Recommendation # 4:** Fund an overtime budget from a new outside source to compensate wardens for ATV enforcement, thus avoiding mission creep; Use existing grant program for enhanced patrol by local agencies.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A
31. **Warden Service Recommendation # 5:** Obtain a \$400,000 funding package from the Legislature using general funds to pay for all Bureau of Warden Service overtime compensation (includes Search and Rescue and regular overtime).  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A

32. **Warden Service Recommendation # 6:** Conduct a communications study to determine conclusively that the \$300,000 paid to the state troopers provides a minimum of 90-95% radio coverage for the wardens.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
33. **Warden Service Recommendation # 7:** Establish computer-aided dispatch for wardens, comparable to that of the state troopers, for electronic, efficient data management, and retrieval of duty and time.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
34. **Warden Service Recommendation # 8:** Determine and write all work within the Warden Service into work plans, prioritize, and use this process for decision-making particularly when any new work is added.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
35. **Warden Service Recommendation # 9:** Have the Commissioner formally approve priorities and support wardens when they must say "no" to public requests that fall outside the set priorities.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
36. **Warden Service Recommendation # 10:** Continue with due diligence to promote the balance between "catch 'em and nail 'em" and proactive, customer service paradigms within the Advanced Warden Training and the Warden Service overall.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
37. **Warden Service Recommendation # 11:** Reevaluate what the Landowner Relations Position needs to accomplish, what the performance measures are, and what the relationship should be between the Landowner Relations Position and the Warden Service. Then, inform the rest of the Department what this position is designed to do, solicit feedback and needs from throughout the Department and external stakeholders, and keep them informed with regular progress reports; Reevaluate in one year.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C

38. **Warden Service Recommendation # 12:** Restore two, ideally three, lieutenant positions and reconfigure the geographical regional areas he/she would supervise to regain an effective span of control.  
*Additional Funding Required: Yes*  
*Priority Level: A*
39. **Warden Service Recommendation # 13:** Provide effective supervision training for all warden supervisors.  
*Additional Funding Required: No*  
*Priority Level: C*
40. **Warden Service Recommendation # 14:** Establish an internal affairs or investigation unit/position which would deal exclusively with investigation of all internal and external complaints.  
*Additional Funding Required: Yes*  
*Priority Level: A*
41. **Warden Service Recommendation # 15:** Evaluate workload and to what degree the current supervisor of the Covert Operations Unit is actually involved or needed in the operations.  
*Additional Funding Required: No*  
*Priority Level: C*
42. **Warden Service Recommendation # 16:** Tighten control and increase accountability concerning unity of command within the warden service; petition state human resources to change lieutenants to confidential employees.  
*Additional Funding Required: No*  
*Priority Level: A*
43. **Warden Service Recommendation # 17:** Have I&E provide wardens training in working with the media.  
*Additional Funding Required: No*  
*Priority Level: C*

44. **Warden Service Recommendation # 18:** Recommend staff reviews by first line of supervision for probable cause determination and have new Inspector General evaluate all staff reviews. Re-evaluate the investigation process and procedures with voluntary input from all wardens; redesign, if warranted, under the guidance of the new Inspector General following the requirements of the Maine State Employees Association Collective Bargaining Contract for Law Enforcement.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
45. **Warden Service Recommendation # 19:** Assess instructor performance within the Advanced Warden Training School using anonymous feedback from candidates in the school; provide "train-the-trainer" training for the school's instructors as needed; highlight examples of customer-service excellence in the training curriculum.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
46. **Warden Service Recommendation # 20:** Require all Field Training Officers to have appropriate preparatory training in order to become a Field Training Officer.  
*Additional Funding Required:* False  
*Priority Level:* B
47. **Warden Service Recommendation # 21:** Identify individuals from within the Warden Service who are qualified and capable of instructing in-service training for other wardens and solicit their help to make such training opportunities available.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
48. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 1:** Add one permanent, full-time Personnel Specialist position, with primary duties focused on improving internal communications, to serve as the Department-wide training coordinator and the Department's employee health and safety officer.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* C

49. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 2:** Conduct a conclusive study of salary comparables and, if warranted, upgrade the Department's Personnel Officer's status in grade and pay to a level commensurate with Personnel Officers in other Maine state government departments who have similar duties and responsibilities.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* C
50. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 3:** Open lines of communication with the Legislature and key constituencies to ensure that proposed changes to licensing are feasible, economical, and efficient. Communicate the costs in dollars and/or dropped service.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
51. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 4:** Maintain current staffing levels in Licensing and Registration, even following implementation of MOSES. Continue to contract data entry until backlogs are eliminated.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* B
52. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 5:** Upgrade all MDIFW computers to Windows XP or replace non-XP compatible computers to facilitate remote administration, increasing efficiency for IS staff. Minimally, all computers should run on operating systems supported by their manufacturer.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* B
53. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 6:** Provide computers or computer access to all MDIFW employees to include appropriate software and training. Sufficient funding must be allocated annually to pay for Internet connections and technical support for the additional computers.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* B
54. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 7:** Analyze and re-write the legacy software, particularly the lottery hunts.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A



55. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 8:** Develop with input from representative budget managers, a standardized, electronic spreadsheet for tracking monthly operational expenditures for use department-wide.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
56. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 9:** Implement central tracking for partner contributions and other non-tracked revenue sources.  
*Additional Funding Required:* No  
*Priority Level:* A
57. **Administrative Services Recommendation # 10:** Increase the Engineering and Realty's operating budget to a level that provides for a "minimum maintenance" funding level for MDIFW facilities, particularly dams; complete upgrades to those dams that are seriously deteriorated and could potentially threaten public safety and/or result in significant damage to downstream private properties or state infrastructure.  
*Additional Funding Required:* Yes  
*Priority Level:* A

<sup>1</sup> Duda, Mark D.,. *2003 Public Opinion on Fish and Wildlife Management Issues and the Reputation and Credibility of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in the Northeast United States*, p viii. Harrisonburg, VA: Responsive Management

<sup>2</sup> Duda, Mark D. 1990. *Factors Relating to Hunting and Fishing Participation in the United States*. Harrisonburg, VA: Responsive Management.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 702, Section 7011, State of Maine Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Laws.

<sup>4</sup> Duda, Mark. 2003. *ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> *Citizens Advisory Committee to Secure the Future of Maine's Wildlife and Fish*, January, 2001. 119<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Second Regular Session.

<sup>6</sup> *Passing the Buck: A Comparison of State Fish and Wildlife Agency Funding and the Economic Value of Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. Izaak Walton League of America. 1999.

<sup>7</sup> *Travel and Tourism in Maine, 2001 Visitor Study*. Maine Office of Tourism. Prepared by Longwoods International.

## **METHODOLOGY**

MAT's nine-member review team collected and analyzed data and developed 57 recommendations. A guiding objective held by investigators during the data collection phases of the review was to look for areas that could be leveraged rather than every possible area in need of improvement. The reviewers looked at where and how to improve the effectiveness of the MDIFW – areas of strength as well as areas warranting improvement focusing on the Division of Wildlife, Division of Information and Education, the Bureau of Warden Service, and the Bureau of Administrative Services as requested.

A four-tiered, phased approach was used. The tiers consisted of three phases for collecting data and one phase for developing recommendations as follows:

- Phase I: The Scoping Phase
- Phase II: Telephone Survey
- Phase III: Final Structured Interviews
- Phase IV: Recommendations

### **Data**

Data collected from the scoping phase was analyzed and also used to develop questions to ask employees in the subsequent all-employee telephone survey. Telephone survey responses were analyzed by Responsive Management and used by MAT in the development of additional questions to ask in the final structured interviews, providing an enrichment of understanding.

Z Scores for all telephone responses were also produced. The Z Score for a particular question indicates responses to other questions that are statistically most closely related. When trying to understand more about people who answered a particular way, it can be very informative to look at the questions with the highest Z Scores for that issue. It will tell you other issues that are important to that group of respondents.

The data summaries and analyses collected from the focus groups, interviews, telephone survey and the Z Scores are found electronically stored in a CD marked *DATA* attached to the back cover of the Final Report.

### **Confidentiality**

The confidentiality of those who shared their opinions and perspectives was held in utmost regard. All measures possible were taken to safeguard anonymity and confidentiality of contributors. All raw data from focus groups and face-to-face interviews was deleted and shredded. All group discussions were reported in aggregate form only.

## **Quality Control Team**

An internal Quality Control Team composed of five MDIFW employees, widely respected by their peers, served to receive and pass on concerns from others as well as to mitigate influences of the rumor-mill. They functioned as a conduit directly with MAT during the process of the review. These employees provided valuable process feedback.

## **Phase I: The Scoping Phase**

The Scoping Phase was the initial process for narrowing down all the possibilities of things the review could examine to those of greatest importance for leveraging improvement efforts – identifying what would give MDIFW “the biggest bang for the buck” when implementing change interventions.

The scoping phase consisted of a preliminary review of agency documents (organizational charts, legislative mandates, strategic plans, regulations, newspaper articles, and research surveys and reports by other investigators). Also included in the scoping were focus groups and one-on-one interviews.

## **Focus Groups**

The focus groups consisted of a series of eleven, approximately two-hour facilitated focus groups asking 15 – 20 participants per group the same open-ended questions.

Two focus groups were heterogeneously composed representing a stratified, randomly selected sample of all agency employees from each region and the headquarters office, including fisheries. The sample represented a vertical and horizontal cross-section of agency employees in terms of geographical location and management level and discipline. A third focus group was composed of administrative staff or supervisor/managers from all levels across the agency, excluding fisheries.

A fourth focus group was composed of stratified, randomly selected employees within the Wardens Service; the fifth focus group was composed of external constituents of the Wardens Service.

A sixth focus group was composed of a stratified, randomly selected group of employees within the Division of Wildlife; a seventh focus group was composed of external agency constituents of the Division of Wildlife.

Employees of the Information and Education Division made up the eighth focus group, and constituents of I&E, external to the agency, composed the ninth focus group.

The tenth focus group was composed of employees randomly selected from the Bureau of Administrative Services; the eleventh and final focus group was composed of constituents of Admin Services from outside the Department.

Each one of the focus groups was asked the same following set of trigger questions:

- ♦ What is the Department of MDIFW doing well?
- ♦ What is the Department not doing very well that could be an opportunity for improvement?

### **Focus Group Key Findings**

**Wildlife Division** top focus group issues were: the MOSES system not working, budget cuts from the Legislature, the cost accounting system, the budget process for the Department, a disconnect with the new administration, and a lack of clarity of direction.

**Information and Education Division** top issues were: MOSES needs to be fixed and still lacks data mining capability, internal communication issues including the need to consult with staff when regulations change, ATV issues and changing enforcement priorities versus the Department mission, funding, and un-funded mandates from the Legislature. The Wildlife Park, the Warden Service's customer-service approach, and youth educational programs were also listed as divisional strengths.

**Warden Service Bureau** top focus group issues were: non-funded mandates, the budget, and lack of direction/clarity; followed by the lack of advocacy for the Department with the Legislature and the need to improve internal and external communications.

**Administrative Services Bureau** top issues expressed during the focus groups were: MOSES not working, licensing staff working overtime and "maxed out," budget and staff inadequacies, storage and space needs, and related critical building maintenance needs.

Overall, five initial, common themes emerged when all of the responses during the focus groups were combined and qualitatively analyzed. These early themes from the data were common to all the focus groups except Administrative Services as follows:

1. Legislature micromanagement
2. Funding
3. Leadership and directional clarity
4. Accountability, including budget and accounting
5. Communications, both internal and external

### ***Unstructured Interviews***

The scoping interviews, in the fall of 2003, consisted of sixty-four face-to-face interviews using open-ended questions similar to those asked of the focus group participants. Scoping interviews asked, "What is working well within your bureau?", "What could be improved?," and "What are the obstacles to effectiveness?"

Collective interview responses were independently analyzed both by MAT and an outside contractor. The double analysis served as a check for bias, counteracting the potential of misinterpretation. MAT used a stratified, random process employing computer generated numbers by the website random.org to select employees to be interviewed. Others from the Department, by virtue of their management positions, as well as representatives of constituent groups, were also selected.

The qualitative analyses of these initial interviews identified reoccurring elements and produced six broad issue categories as follows:

- |                   |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Communication  | 4. Vision/Goals               |
| 2. Legislature    | 5. Management/Leadership      |
| 3. Funding/Salary | 6. Media and Public Relations |

(See Data: *Combined Summary of 61 Initial Interviews*, Rosalind Bahr, Lehi, Utah, in MAT Review Report, DATA, stored electronically in a CD attached to the back cover of this report).

### **Triangulation of Data in the Scoping Phase**

Information obtained from the review of documents, the analysis of the focus groups, and the initial interviews was compared and produced the following overarching areas of concern on which to concentrate the remainder of the review process:

1. Advocacy
2. Accountability
3. Program and Performance Efficiencies
4. Direction Clarity

### **Phase II: Telephone Survey**

Responsive Management conducted a telephone survey in February, 2003, for the Management Assistance Team. All employees were asked to rate the same set of ninety-six structured questions. One open-ended question was also asked inviting participants to add any comments they wished. (See Data: *Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Employees' Survey*, Responsive Management, in MAT Review Report, DATA, stored electronically in a CD attached to the back cover of this report).

- ♦ MAT Web Page – To facilitate employees, a web page was made available by MAT to the Department employees for electronically sending to MAT whatever they wanted to share, anonymously if so desired. MAT received approximately 15 individual transmissions of comments from this web page.

### **Phase III: Final Interviews**

In March, MAT interviewed by telephone all of the Advisory Council members and a sampling of other stakeholders and employees before returning to Maine in April to

interview 60 employees of the Department. Some individuals interviewed were chosen by virtue of their positions, while others were randomly selected. Interviews were conducted at the Augusta and Bangor Offices. The interview responses were sent to Dr. Gary Geroy, Ft. Collins, CO, who performed a qualitative analysis and data report (See Data: *Final Interviews – Data Analysis Report*, Dr. Gary Geroy, in MAT Review Report, DATA, stored electronically in a CD attached to the back cover of this report).

#### **Phase IV: Report on Findings and Recommendations**

At this point, the mountain of data, along with the various analyses and summaries, were translated into fifty-seven (57) recommendations for improvement. These recommendations are discussed in separate chapters, first in Department Overall, then separately by bureau or division, and presented in the following chapters of this report.





## **THE DEPARTMENT OVERALL**

The number one area of agreement within the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is the Department's unquestionably, exceptional workforce. Their outstanding experience, skills, and extreme dedication to both the natural resources of Maine and the Department are an irrefutable strength for the Department. The MAT Review report would mean little without this enormous strength as a backdrop when considering recommendations for improvement.

The telephone survey found eighty-seven percent (87%) of all employees were satisfied with their job and seventy-three percent (73%) responded they feel valued by the Department. These are very high ratings, especially considering their current overworked, under-funded work context. It speaks to the aforementioned well-documented "missionary like zeal<sup>1</sup>" characteristic of the workforce in state fish and wildlife agencies.

Employees were somewhat split regarding whether declining morale within the Department has affected their job performance (45% agreed and 54% disagreed). Budgetary cuts within any organization are potentially troublesome to effectiveness and efficiency, and exhausting to employees doing double-duty. A healthy budget alone will not fix low morale. Morale issues are solved by restoring trust and providing recognition to employees that they as individuals and their work contributions are valued. Among types of awards, telephone survey respondents reported that they favored special recognition the most. Second most preferred was a plaque, and cash awards were third.

According to the telephone survey, ninety percent (90%) of all employees agreed the Department's performance in managing and protecting fish and wildlife resources was excellent or good. Ninety-six percent (96%) reported from the telephone survey that the Department is professional when interacting with the public and seventy-eight percent (78%) responded that the Department presents a unified front when responding to the public, even when internal consensus did not exist. Sixty-two percent (62%) agreed when asked in a public survey that the Department effectively balances the interests of anglers, hunters, conservation groups, and the general public. When asked the same question, eighty-one percent (82%) of MDIFW employees agreed. These are very high ratings of overall Department performance!

The Management Assistance Team was tasked to assess two bureaus and two divisions of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. These are discussed in subsequent chapters of the report. Eight areas that relate to the overall Department are discussed in this chapter along with 15 recommendations for improvement. The issues are interconnected and overarching; improvement in these key areas would leverage improvement efforts throughout the Department.

### ***Key Issue: Expanding Mandates/Mission Creep***

A large majority of employees indicated they were aware of and understood the Department's direction (75%) and their bureau's direction (76%); however, some employees in the focus groups and interviews indicated concern that the Department or their bureau was at risk in losing its direction. Such a perception can become corrosive, eating away at the bureau or Department's cohesive strength and exacerbated by legislative directives independent of Department plans and budgets. Unexpected legislative requests can interfere with on-going projects, requiring redirection of personnel, time, and scarce Department dollars. Employees are impacted and confusion is created as to overall Department or bureau direction.

To keep "the boat on course," strong leadership is required. On the bureau level it means effective bureau or division directors; on the Departmental level strong leadership from the Commissioner's Office. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner are generally perceived as growing into their new positions. It will be important in the future for the Department's leadership to continue to speak with utmost clarity regarding the tradeoffs of adding new work with no new resources. Clarity is critical when agency plans are diverted. The cost consequences must be made perfectly clear in terms of what can no longer be provided by the Department or what the Department will need in terms of funding and personnel to enable implementation of legislative requests.

Prioritization of work, via annual work plans with budgets and hours required, is a key tool to enable the Department to communicate clearly with the Legislature or other external stakeholder groups. Without prioritized work planning, effective communication from the Department is jeopardized. The level of necessary clarity would not be possible. Such clarity is needed to effectively communicate what lower priority projects must go undone to free up the dollars and hours to take on new, unfunded assignments.

Two other reasons for instituting written work plans Department-wide are: 1) they provide a means to clarify Department expectations of employees and thus, illustrate the employee's value to the Department, and 2) work plans provide a mechanism for holding employees accountable for their work performance. Of those surveyed who agreed their work was planned and documented in written work plans, the characteristics most strongly associated with their responses were that "He/she was valued by the Department" (Z Score 5.21) and that "Employees at all levels throughout the Department are held accountable" (Z Score 3.78).

Somewhat less than a majority of all employees (40%) responded in the telephone survey that their work is planned and documented annually in some type of written work plan. In addition, there were important differences found among position types: biologists and I&E employees were the most likely to respond to having such annual work plans (See Chapter: Wildlife Division, Key Issue: Current Need for Prioritization).

**Department Overall Recommendation # 1:**

***Have all employees develop prioritized work plans to mitigate mission creep.***

***Key Issue: Funding***

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife is a virtual "Mother Lode" for the state, economically speaking. Total figures for participation in hunting and wildlife watching recreation in Maine combined are 942,000 participants with expenditures totaling \$508,345,000 in 2001<sup>2</sup>. By comparison, farms in Maine generate \$240,000,000 per year, agricultural services \$486,000,000, and furniture and fixtures manufacturing \$169,000,000<sup>3</sup>.

The Department's budget has been cut and ceilings on staffing enforced for over two decades. The Wildlife Division expenditures alone amount to approximately less than one percent of the wildlife watching and hunting revenue generated! While shortfalls in general funds are a reason for cutting state government, cutting an agency with such a high return rate on investment may need to be reconsidered by government leaders. The old saying, "You can't starve yourself into prosperity" applies. The Maine Legislature may wish to consider even more rigorous mechanisms to invest in one of Maine's most lucrative industry segments.

Potential additional funding sources will need to be identified and support generated from Maine citizens in order to achieve this goal. While leadership of this task should be taken by the Legislature and the Commissioner's Office, Bureau and Division Directors should provide much of the staff work and advice on this critical leadership effort. The best way for MDIFW to begin this effort is to use the collective synergy of the staff in one or more group meetings to develop ideas and strategies. MDIFW has several strong supportive groups of Maine citizens already, for example, the Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine (SAM) and the Audubon Society. Working closely with conservation and sportsmen's groups, the MDIFW can incorporate as many other groups as possible in order to build a coalition of support for the sorely needed Department funds and staff additions.

Employees and external stakeholders of the Department suggested a number of different strategies to increase funding. Some of these have been recommended in previous studies/reviews of the Department. Some have been tried unsuccessfully. The challenge remains and opportunities are there. Diligence, creativity, and the right timing will enable the development of new funding sources for the agency. Because something was tried in the past and did not succeed should not prevent continuing similar efforts.

Examples of suggested strategies are a bond referendum, user fees for milfoil control or paddlers use of MDIFW sites, partnerships with paddlers groups, etc. Some excellent

funding strategies for the Department were reported in a previous funding review for the Legislature in 2001.<sup>4</sup> These strategies are presented in the *Final Report of the Citizen's Advisory Committee to Secure the Future of Maine's Wildlife and Fish*, January 2001.

Other state fish and wildlife agencies across the country (Arkansas, Arizona, Virginia, Colorado, Illinois, and Missouri) have successfully obtained supplemental funding<sup>5</sup> and their success may provide clues for Maine's approaches.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 2:**

***Have the Division/Bureau Directors work with the Commissioner's Office to establish strategies for seeking increased funding and staffing with the Legislature.***

*Strategy: Have facilitated meetings of Commissioners and Division/Bureau Directors to brainstorm ideas and develop strategies to pursue different funding efforts.*

**Burnout**

A bill promising general funds for eighteen percent (18%) of the Department's budget was nixed. For many it felt like a promise taken back. Significant anxiety among the ranks resulted and reportedly affected the rest of the Department as well.

In effect, the MDIFW is trying to produce the same level of products and services with fewer resources and having to rely on the commitment of staff to accomplish it. While this is effective to a point, over an extended period of time the workload may become too burdensome, and several negative effects may occur due to staff burnout.

**Short-term Focus**

Short-term focus is another consequence of lack of staff and funding. Organizations typically exhibit this in a lack of staff time devoted to strategic thinking and planning efforts. When there are too few employees, there is not enough time to focus on the long-term planning and work necessary for tomorrow's success. Instead, the focus is only on short-term crisis management. This is a self-perpetuating cycle because lack of time for planning ahead creates tomorrow's problems and crises. One can never seem to get ahead of the curve, and a siege mentality often develops resulting in unwillingness to take on new tasks, take risks, change to new approaches, or explore new possibilities.

Such a pervasive and "hidden" work-cultural evolution can result from long-term lack of staff and funds and failure to cut products and services. Publics or legislative bodies often are not close enough to the agency employee population to be aware of this cultural degradation. When products and services are maintained, the assumption by governing bodies is often that things are working acceptably. However, the long-term

effects eventually become very evident in lost productivity, unwillingness to evolve with changing publics, etc.

While these pitfalls to chronic lack of staff and funding at the Department are not key issues at the moment, it is unrealistic to expect successful avoidance of these pitfalls indefinitely. The descent is gradual and occurs over a number of years, lulling Legislatures, administrators, and governing bodies into a false sense of security that "it won't happen to them." The situation is similar to the "boiled frog syndrome" — if the change in temperature of an open pot of water holding a frog is sufficiently slow, the frog will sit in the water until it is boiled, even when it could have jumped out. Action is urged now to address the MDIFW's lack of resources.

The well-documented "missionary-like zeal" of fish and wildlife employees ultimately contributes to fish and wildlife agencies, more than other types of state agencies, becoming susceptible to the pitfalls resulting from continued budget and staffing cuts. Fish and wildlife employees' commitment to their job and the state's natural resources inhibits their willingness to "just say no", refraining from doing all the work they consider important. When these employees continue to work on their own time and over an extended period of years, the effects can be very negative for the individual employees and for agency effectiveness. Because of their unique zealotry, Legislatures and governors may wish to consider state fish and wildlife agencies as special cases or "indicator agencies" of impacts of continued budget cuts.

Formal direction for prioritization of work for each bureau is needed from the executive leadership of the Department. The next step is to communicate what work will be discontinued without accompanying funding.

***Department Overall Recommendation # 3:***

***Develop a clear, succinct vision for the Department, including funding strategies and what types of work will be de-emphasized in the interim, and articulate regularly by top management including how the MDIFW will strategically get there.***

***Key Issue: Advocacy***

There is no perceived, consistent, external champion for the Department. A strong external advocacy group is warranted. This advocacy group should be a large, diverse body of people who would represent a cross-section of stakeholder interests, representing both consumptive and non-consumptive users, and who would actively work to help the Department. Such a body of people could broaden and leverage the positive help from such groups as the Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine and the Audubon Society. Some state fish and wildlife agencies across the country have established

foundations to do this. Others have established annual events to pull large diverse groups together for such common purposes as described here.

Individual conservation groups understandably may have specific issues with MDIFW regulations or operations. However, if those conservation groups spend more time nitpicking MDIFW operations than helping to address the overall lack of staffing and funding, then their actions could be likened to rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic. Overall, advocacy and solution to the lack of staffing and funding is the most critical issue that must be addressed first!

**Department Overall Recommendation # 4:**

***Work with constituent groups (SAM, Audubon, etc.) to establish a strong advocacy voice for the Department by utilizing techniques from other states such as a conservation congress or creating a foundation, etc.***

***Key Issue: Structure***

Personal interviews, telephone interviews, and focus groups consistently indicated that the current structural arrangement could be improved. In addition, under the current structure, the division and bureau directors do not have equal position of authority and line of reporting to the Deputy Commissioner (See Diagram 1 on the next page). A structural reorganization is recommended to better disperse the workload, increase efficiencies of decision-making, and increase effectiveness of operations.

**Suggested Organizational Structure**

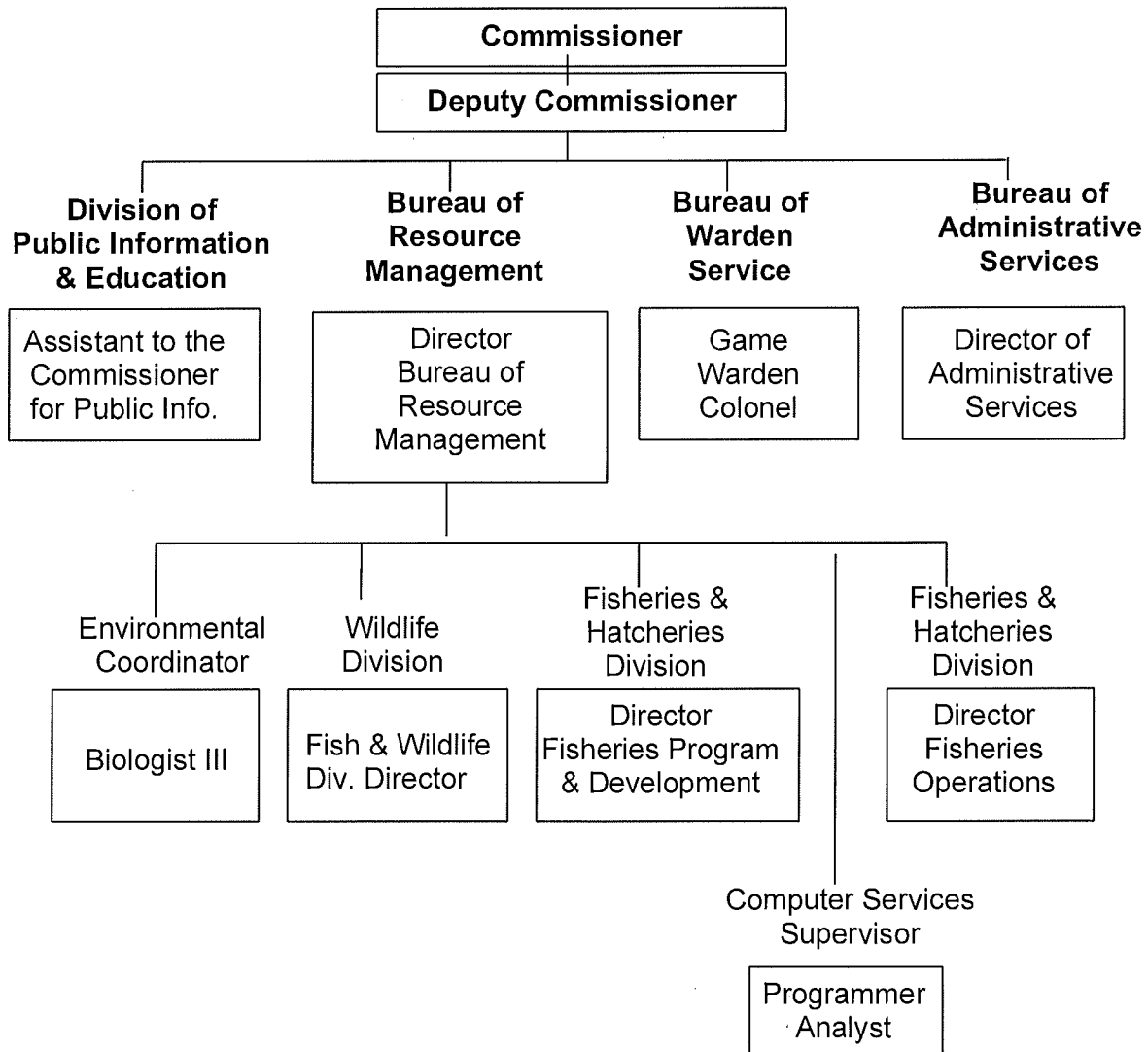
An improved agency structure to consider is one in which Wildlife, Fisheries, Warden Service, Information and Education, and Administrative Services all report directly to the Deputy Commissioner and are at the same organizational level. Having a Bureau of Resource Management layer of organization inserted between the wildlife and fisheries divisions prohibits equal access to the Deputy Commissioner and promotes less than equal organizational footing between the fish and wildlife divisions and the other bureaus/divisions.

To facilitate a restructure and enable it to work would require first changing the Deputy Commissioner position from appointed to permanent. The Deputy position is critical to the coordination function that will be required of the proposed restructure. It would require a legislative change<sup>6</sup> (See *Recommendation #8* in this section).

The current structure has the added disadvantage of burdening the existing Director of the Bureau of Resource Management with too many responsibilities that should be divided between the fisheries and wildlife divisions. The situation is untenable for the long-term and has created a vast work overload for that position. The Fisheries Division

currently has a relatively new position, Director of Program and Development, which could serve effectively as an Assistant Director of Fisheries. Wildlife needs to have a similar Assistant Director position so that there is sufficient staff to take on the workload assumed by the Division if the Bureau of Resource Management is eliminated.

**Diagram 1. Current Agency Organizational Structure**



Lands acquisition is a priority within the MDIFW, but cutbacks in staff have reduced the number of people to work in this area. Currently, the brunt of lands acquisition falls upon the Federal Aid Coordinator and takes away from his ability to devote more time to other Federal Aid administration and accounting issues. Moving the Federal Aid Coordinator to the Bureau of Administrative Services enhances the direct connection of the Deputy

Commissioner to the bureaus and divisions and facilitates the Deputy Commissioner's working in management coordination.

Lack of staff to handle real estate work for the Department makes stream access and wildlife habitat purchases slow and inefficient, directly impacting the Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions' accomplishments. This is particularly problematic when dealing with grants such as the North American Waterfowl Plan where it is difficult for the MDIFW to get a grant completed and closed in order to begin the next grant cycle. MDIFW runs the risk of losing these federal grants to another entity such as an NGO that would agree to administer them in a more timely fashion.



**Department Overall Recommendation # 5:**

**Create a new Bureau of Habitat responsible for lands acquisition and all engineering as indicated in Diagram 2. Suggested Agency Organization Structure.**

*Strategy: The Federal Aid coordinator would report to the Director of Administrative Services.*

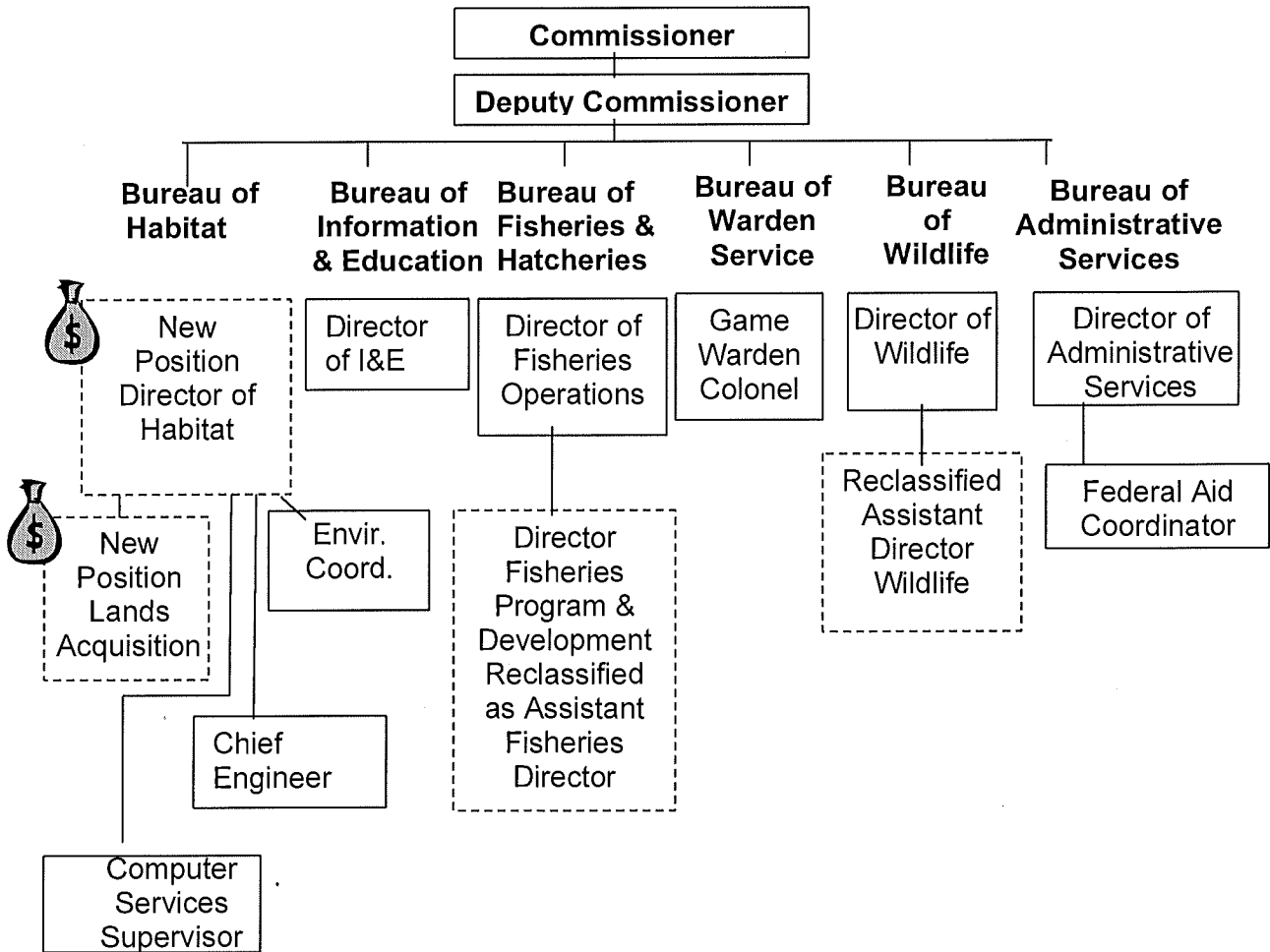


**Department Overall Recommendation # 6:**

**Restructure the agency to eliminate the Bureau of Resource Management and reclassify the Bureau Director position to Wildlife Bureau Director. The current Wildlife Division Director position should be promoted and reclassified to an Assistant Director position for the Bureau of Wildlife. The current Director of Fisheries Operations should be promoted to Director of the Bureau of Fisheries. The current Fisheries Program and Development Director should be promoted to Assistant Bureau Director of Fisheries. The Computer Services and Environmental Coordinator Positions reporting to the current Bureau of Resource Management should be aligned to report to a new Bureau of Habitat. The Federal Aid Coordinator would report to the current Bureau of Administrative Services (See Diagram 2. Suggested Agency Organization Structure). Reclassify the Divisions of Information and Education, Fisheries, and Wildlife as Bureaus to reflect equal positions at this level within the organization.**



**Diagram 2. Suggested Agency Organization Structure**



The recommended changes in organization structure will accomplish a better balance in workload for supervisory positions. In addition, it will flatten the organizational structure by eliminating the level between the Wildlife and Fisheries Divisions and the Deputy Commissioner. This new structure puts all current bureau and division directors on the same organizational level. It also allows the Deputy Commissioner more direct access to current division directors of fisheries and wildlife when dealing with fish or wildlife issues. It spreads out the responsibilities for these divisions between two bureau directors (Fisheries and Wildlife) instead of concentrating them in only one position as a Bureau of Resource Management.

The new Bureau of Habitat should have additional staff as soon as funding and staffing levels permit. The additional staff is needed for permitting and for lands purchases. Much of the fieldwork for permitting is done by the Division biologists and at least two or three additional staff will be needed in the Bureau of Habitat to assume this workload. In addition, another data management person (programmer/analyst) is recommended when funding is available so that one could work primarily on fisheries data management and one on wildlife data management. Once there is a data manager for fish and one for wildlife, then those positions could be moved into the respective bureaus.

The suggested structural changes will provide much needed assistance for lands acquisition particularly by creating a Bureau of Habitat and adding two new positions: 1) A Bureau Director, and 2) A position to handle lands acquisitions. The chief engineer would be placed in this bureau. In addition, the programmer analyst would report to this bureau since the analyst serves primarily fisheries and wildlife data management, license lotteries, etc. as well as managing Warden Service records. As part of the Bureau of Administrative Services, the Federal Aid Coordinator would coordinate with the lands acquisition position but assume more of a role in overseeing and managing federal aid monies and insuring projects meet Federal Aid requirements.

These changes in structure are based on function and logic of reporting not on personnel performance. Additional training may be needed for supervisors with new, added responsibilities. The suggested restructuring would include changes as follows:

- ♦ Eliminate the Bureau of Resource Management; its Director becomes Director of the Bureau of Wildlife.
- ♦ Reclassify and promote the current Wildlife Division Director position to Assistant Director of the Bureau of Wildlife.
- ♦ Reclassify and promote current Director of Fisheries Operations to Director of the Bureau of Fisheries.
- ♦ Reclassify and promote the current Director of Fisheries and Program Development to Assistant Director of the Bureau of Fisheries.
- ♦ Create a Bureau of Habitat. This bureau would be responsible for lands acquisition and all engineering efforts (dams, buildings, etc.). The Engineering and Realty section would report to this new bureau.
- ♦ The Federal Aid Coordinator would report to the Director of Administrative Services.
- ♦ Add two new positions: One as a Chief and the second as a lands acquisition position in the newly formed Bureau of Habitat.

- ♦ The Computer Services Supervisor position would report to the Bureau Habitat Director since computer services serves primarily the data management of both wildlife and fisheries.
- ♦ The Environmental Coordinator position would report to the Bureau of Habitat since this position handles environmental permitting, etc. for both the fisheries and wildlife divisions.

Optimal functioning of this suggested restructuring is dependent upon making all the recommended restructuring changes as a package. To make some and not others would not work. For example, the creation of a Fisheries Bureau and a Wildlife Bureau needs to be followed with having assistant bureau director positions in each bureau or the delegation of work suggested will not work. In addition, Department Overall Recommendation #8 (Deputy Commissioner position becomes a non-appointed position) is integral to continuity over various political administrations. This continuity has been addressed in the past by having the Bureau of Resource Management Director as a non-appointed position.

If this restructure is implemented, the Directors of Wildlife and Fisheries Bureaus will need to personally coordinate with each other more than in the past where the coordination role was fulfilled largely by the Bureau of Resource Management Director. If differences exist that cannot be resolved with this level of coordination, then the Deputy Commissioner will need to become involved to resolve coordination issues.

#### **Lands Acquisition Departmental Committee**

Currently, both the Fisheries and Wildlife Divisions have their own internal lands acquisition committees. These serve their divisions well, and the current Bureau of Resource Management Director makes the decisions as to which lands to push forward for purchase.

Lands acquisition decision-making could reflect more of a Department-wide perspective if elevated to a Department level with input from all Department bureaus/divisions and final approval by the Commissioner's Office. Creating a Department committee for lands acquisition is one way to make this more of a departmental process. Developing a way to better handle land acquisition decisions is particularly important if MDIFW implements Recommendation # 6 in this section for restructuring, i.e., eliminating the current Bureau of Resource Management.

#### ***Department Overall Recommendation # 7:***

***Create a Department Lands Acquisition Committee to evaluate and prioritize potential land purchases.***

*Strategy: This committee should be chaired by the new Bureau of Habitat Director and include representatives from all bureaus/divisions. The Habitat Bureau Director would*

*be responsible for coordination of all bureaus and divisions in land purchases. If coordination issues cannot be resolved, then the issues would be resolved by the Deputy Commissioner.*

### ***Key Issue: Leadership***

The Commissioner's Office has demonstrated to many employees that the new leadership is growing into their roles for the Department. Initial concerns over management styles and organizational cultural differences to which the staff was not accustomed have lessened with a growing recognition of the executive leadership's intent to support the agency and do the best job they can.

Personal visits from the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner with the Regional Offices have been appreciated by staff. Sit-down visits directly with work groups within the Department have done much to show employees the commitment to the Department from within the Commissioner's Office. In addition, the Commissioner's Office seems to be working satisfactorily with the Advisory Council.

When all employees were asked if they agreed that access to top management was good, sixty-five percent (65%) agreed and thirty-four percent (34%) disagreed. This could be reflective of several things: First, initial confusion surrounding the Commissioner's "open door policy", and, secondly, lack of established trust relationships between managers/directors and the Commissioner's Office. This can be explained in part by the fact that the Commissioner and Deputy have not been in office long enough to develop trust levels sufficiently.

It is interesting to note that past budget cuts and ensuing layoffs in MDIFW have undoubtedly contributed to a paradigm within the Department's work culture that all things political are by their nature bad. This paradigm needs to change if the Department is to successfully leverage the political context in which it must operate.

In states where there are a large number of governor appointed top leadership positions in the fish and wildlife agency, there are also consequential weaknesses and ineffectiveness due to short tenures, often of four years or less. Continuity is lost and focus becomes short-term, not transcending the current administration's term of office. Legislative action is required to change the way top leadership positions are filled. It is beyond the control of the MDIFW.

***Department Overall Recommendation # 8:***

***In the future, change the positions of Deputy Commissioner, Director of Information and Education, and the Director of the Bureau of Warden Service from positions appointed by the Governor to positions hired according to regular Department procedures.***

### **Supervision**

While sixty-six percent (66%) of all employees responding to the telephone survey reported that they were satisfied with the supervision they were receiving, almost one-third of the employees responded they were not satisfied (33%). The Z Scores of this unsatisfied latter group give statistical clues to other characteristics also strongly associated with those individuals. Knowing such characteristics can be extremely helpful in trying to understand supervision issues in the Department. The individuals not satisfied with the supervision they were receiving also tend to disagree that employees at all levels throughout the Department are held accountable for performing their job duties. They tend to agree that declining morale within the Department has affected their job performance. They tend to not feel that they receive information (excluding budget information) when they need it and do not receive the information they need to do their job effectively. They tend to not understand their job duties and the expectations of their supervisor with regard to those duties. They tend to disagree that their access to top management is good. They tend to be dissatisfied with their job overall and tend to not believe that trust is high.

***Department Overall Recommendation # 9:***

***Provide effective supervision training for all supervisors in the Department.***

Effective supervision training can serve as a refresher for those who are doing well and a valuable intervention for those who are not.

### ***Key Issue: Communication***

Communication issues are typically a symptom rather than a cause. However, it emerged in the data as an area of weakness to numbers of individuals in various areas of the Department. During interviews many responded that internal communications were less than desirable. Furthermore, the analysis of the final interviews revealed that those without access to computers and e-mail felt significantly limited in their access to Department information.

The I&E Division shares internal communications responsibilities with Administrative Services. However, the Bureau of Administrative Services handles the majority of the official internal communications. Because internal and external communications should be consistent and coordinated, I&E should logically be a key partner in coordinating the external with the internal communications.

Both Personnel and I&E Divisions lack the adequate staffing to effectively manage internal communications. Both Personnel and I&E are understaffed to the point that neither group can manage this issue alone or cooperatively. Recommendations and discussion for addressing staffing needs in Personnel and I&E Divisions are addressed in the Chapters of Bureau of Administrative Services and I&E Division, respectively.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 10:**

*Have I&E and Personnel Divisions work together to define their specific responsibilities and roles in managing internal communications pending resolution of their mutual staffing needs.*

**Enhanced Intranet**

The perceived lack of internal communications, especially for dispersed operations personnel, may underlie some morale issues as well as undermine agency cohesiveness. Interestingly, not all of the employees share this perception. According to the telephone survey, a majority of all employees (73%) indicated that they receive the information they need (excluding budget information), when they need it, to do their jobs effectively; however, twenty-eight percent (28%) of the employees disagreed. While the reasons are unclear, some employees may have supervisors who are more diligent than others at keeping their employees informed. And, some employees indicated that they like the freedom of fieldwork and that they would not wish to be tied to phone or e-mail, yet some of the same people may complain that they find out about major agency changes "in the newspaper." To improve overall agency effectiveness, MDIFW will need to address communication needs for the Department's workforce overall.

An enhanced employee intranet would help the Department increase access to important information and relevant news. If I&E involves a full-time webmaster (See Chapter: Information and Education, Recommendation # 3), the case for developing an employee intranet becomes stronger. Intranets are powerful tools to cultivate knowledge sharing among employees, ensuring that the latest news is readily available to all employees. The MDIFW needs to ensure that all employees have reliable computer access (See Chapter: Administrative Services, Recommendation # 6).

Currently, wardens in remote districts are unlikely to have computer access, and this poses the most significant limitation to this type of information sharing. Until those wardens have reliable internet access, the sergeants' role in facilitating Departmental communication will remain vital, and a potential Departmental weakness when and if the sergeant fails to communicate or is absent.



**Department Overall Recommendation # 11:**

*Enhance intranet capabilities so that relevant news, policies, and communications are available to all employees more time efficiently, especially as the Department works towards increasing computer and internet access to remote employees.*

The telephone survey found that slightly more employees agree (63%) that communication down the chain of command was often used compared to 58% of employees who agreed that communication up the chain of command was often used.

In addition, employees are somewhat split in their view of the ease and effectiveness of the flow of communication within the Department, whether up or down. Noteworthy is that this is a common area in need of improvement among state fish and wildlife agencies across the country. This may be comforting to a degree, but should not constrain the MDIFW from trying to improve in this area.

A majority of all MDIFW employees (61%) agree that the Department uses staff input in decision-making; however, a substantial percentage (38%) disagrees. The Department may want to look further at how to leverage the knowledge, ideas, and input of staff. Listening is a major key in effective communication.

#### **Department Management Team**

In the Fall of 2003, one MAT recommendation would have been that the Commissioner's Office develop a Management Team which would include the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, all of the Bureau Chiefs, Director of Fisheries, Director of Wildlife, and Director of Information and Education. They would meet regularly, provide input for decision-making, and then communicate downward to appropriate employees the information they learned. The Commissioner's Office is to be commended for already implementing such a team. This change appears to be well received.

#### ***Key Issue: The Advisory Council***

The MDIFW Advisory Council, while not a Board of Commissioners, serves the Department well, collecting information, opinions, and identifying needs as part of the regulatory process. Along with the Species Planning Groups, it provides a satisfactory public input process. However, the Advisory Council could be improved through strengthening its membership selection criteria and process as well as clarification of the Council's purpose and importance.

Members of the Advisory Council are currently not all clear on the selection process for new members. When a vacancy opens up, it may be more time efficient for the Commissioner to select individuals that he deems a good fit to be on the Council, but unfortunately, this can be viewed as "stacking the deck." The Advisory Council benefits from the synergy of different perspectives, creating lively discussion and debate. Therefore, an objective, clear selection process for its members is critical.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 12:**

***Review current selection process and establish guidelines and criteria for selection of new Advisory Council members.***

*Strategy: If legislatively establishing such guidelines and criteria is not possible or practical, then, at the least, have the Advisory Council and the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner work together to clearly define what the selection process is, publicize the process and criteria, and then adhere to it.*

**Key Issue: Accounting**

Financial accounting in its most basic form has two major components: 1) Budget preparation and 2) Expenditure tracking. Each will be discussed separately.

**Budget Preparation**

Currently, different divisions and bureaus budget at different levels of detail. For example some divisions prepare their budgets based on project level detail with projects defined as small units of work for which one person can be held accountable. Other divisions/bureaus may base their budgets on very large "projects" at a level where a project would encompass many small units of work with multiple people responsible. Other bureau/divisions base budgets on larger program level detail without any work or funding specified down to the project level of detail.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 13:**

***Have the divisions and bureaus budget to the project level with a standardized definition of what constitutes a "project."***

*Strategy: The project level budgeting used by the Wildlife Division is a good example for consideration.*

Currently, budgets are often prepared within bureaus/divisions by essentially repeating the previous year's budget, the justification being there is no new money. While much less work, this approach has significant drawbacks: It promotes focusing backward instead of looking ahead, and it is very shortsighted. It will never provide a sufficient rationale for obtaining new money and staffing.

A more effective way to submit budget requests is for the bureaus/divisions to include project level proposals for new work. These new work proposals are prioritized against existing work already described at the project level. It may be that some new proposals would rank higher than some of the existing work. Such new work proposals would be funded instead of the lower priority existing work. Work projects that remain unfunded



provide a project-specific basis to request more funds. This is a much more defensible base from which to request funds and staffing than a general undefined request for more positions and money.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 14:**

*Have division and bureau budget requests emphasize new project proposals prioritized against existing work. Any projects (existing or new) that cannot be funded are then used to build a justification for budget increases by showing specifically what would be done with additional funding.*

**Expenditure Tracking**

Approximately fifty percent (50%) of the budget managers in MDIFIW described expenditure tracking as difficult if not impossible. This view was prevalent among those who wished to track expenditures at a project level of detail and at the funding source level of detail. Dissatisfaction with expenditure tracking reports was strongly associated with biologists (Z Score of 2.93). Those satisfied with a much more general level of detail often felt that their needs were being met.

Three factors reportedly thwart attempts by budget managers in different bureaus/divisions to be more accountable in managing budgets: 1) The general level of expenditure tracking reports provided by Administrative Services, 2) The lag time in getting reports from Administrative Services, and 3) Report formats from Administrative Services that were confusing.

To track expenditures to desired levels, many MDIFW employees keep their own set of expenditure records. This ranges from a small project manager using a ledger notebook to track expenditures to division and bureau directors using electronic spreadsheets to track hundreds of thousands of dollars in expenditures. This is duplicative, and unnecessarily requires valuable employee time in an environment where staffing and funding are already in short supply. The Bureau of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting is encouraged to better meet employee expenditure tracking needs with timely and understandable reports of expenditures down to the project level, including funding source codes with project number identification.

**Department Overall Recommendation # 15:**

*Have the Bureau of Administrative Services' Division of Accounting implement expenditure tracking at the project code level with funding codes as part of the project code identification.*

Operational expenses are tracked in Accounting after MDIFW budget managers submit to them their invoices, receipts, etc. The Accounting Section should prepare standardized electronic spreadsheets for bureau/division budget managers, permitting those managers to submit their operational expenses monthly to Accounting and then track them (See Chapter: Administrative Services, Recommendation # 8).

<sup>1</sup> Kennedy, J. J. and J. A. Minicoll. 1982. Career evolution of young 400-series U.S. Forest Service professionals. Career Development Project Report 1. Logan, Utah: Utah State Univ. Dept. of Forest Resour.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, and U.S. Census Bureau. 2001 *National survey of fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation-Maine*.

<sup>3</sup> Bennett, Tom (President of the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies.) Keynote presentation at 2003 IAFWA Annual Meeting in Madison, Wisconsin.

<sup>4</sup> State of Maine, 119<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Second Regular Session, Joint Standing Committee on Fish and Wildlife required by Resolve 1999, chapter 86.

<sup>5</sup> Kolus, C., Zimmerman, D., Ebert, V. & Guynn, D. 1999. *Broadening the Constituencies of State Fish and Wildlife Agencies: Some Successful Strategies*. Management Assistance Team, 698 Conservation Way, Shepherdstown, WV 25443, 304-876-7988.

<sup>6</sup> Maine state statute 12 MSRA, Part 10, Chapter 702, subchapter 7013.



## **DIVISION OF WILDLIFE**

### **Overview**

In a state as large as the remaining New England states combined, Maine's habitats range from coastal, freshwater, and upland to riparian with 32,000 miles of streams and rivers. Coastal habitat of Maine is over 3,000 miles long with 4,613 islands between Kittery and Eastport.

*One-third of the state's area is comprised of freshwater wetlands, including hardwood floodplains, freshwater marshes, and dense assemblages of vernal pools. Maine is the most heavily forested state in the United States, but also contains some of the most significant grassland and agricultural lands in the Northeast.<sup>1</sup>*

The myriad of different habitats composing Maine's land base supports a correspondingly large variety of wildlife species including 226 species of breeding birds, 60 species of mammals, 17 reptile species, 18 species of amphibians, and over 1,500 species of invertebrates. Responsibility for their management is vested in the Division of Wildlife and its 46 employees.

The Wildlife Division recommends regulations for hunting and trapping, e.g. seasons, bag limits, methods of take, etc. The Division manages 50 - 60 Wildlife Management Areas around the state and works with private landowners and communities on habitat preservation and management.

Popular outdoor activities among Maine residents in 2003 were watching wildlife with sixty-eight percent (68%) of the population participating, freshwater fishing (36%), and hunting (19%).<sup>2</sup>

According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service "2001 National Survey of Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation," 164,000 people hunted in Maine in 2001 spending \$162,397,000.<sup>3</sup> Hunting trip and equipment expenditures by nonresidents in Maine equaled \$42,305,000 of the hunting expenditure total. In addition, 778,000 people participated in wildlife watching with total expenditures of \$345,948,000. Wildlife watching trip and equipment expenditures by nonresidents in Maine equaled \$105,914,000 of the total wildlife watching expenditures. Maine's wildlife-related economic contribution is fifth in the U.S. in terms of the percentage of the state's gross state product. Wildlife-related recreation brings more money (\$1.4 billion) into Maine's economy than do other recreation industries such as downhill skiing (\$250 million) or snowmobiling (\$225 million).<sup>4</sup> The Division budget expenditures for 2003 totaled approximately \$6,588,333 compared to \$6,491,686<sup>5</sup> in 2001. Wildlife Division annual expenditures amounted to less than one-half of one percent of the 114 billion dollars of wildlife-related recreation revenue brought into Maine's economy! (See Chapter: Department Overall, Key Issue: Funding).

The Wildlife Division is well respected and is particularly admired for their biological expertise and use of wildlife science. According to a state-wide survey conducted by Command Research of South Harpswell, ME, for the Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine, biologists have high credibility among Maine residents.<sup>6</sup> In another recent survey by Responsive Management<sup>7</sup>, findings showed high public support and approval of Department performance. The Wildlife Division does excellent biological data collection with the resources available to them. Leaders within the Division have done a good job of maintaining a statewide program and trying to meet public needs and expectations even though they have experienced increased work demands with concurrent dwindling budgets and flat or reduced staffing levels over most of the last twenty years.

As reported in the Department Overall chapter of this report, ninety percent (90%) of all MDIFW employees in the employee survey rated the job the Department does in managing and protecting fish and wildlife resources as excellent or good. In addition, the employee survey revealed that eighty-two percent (82%) of all the Department employees agreed that the Department effectively balances the interests of anglers, hunters, conservation groups, and the general public. The general consensus can be summed up by one interview participant's statement, "By and large things are going well." However, there is a pervasive frustration among the biologists (and to some degree their publics) that "we can't do all the things the public wants because we don't have the funding or staff to accomplish it."

A dedicated and hard working core of biologists characterizes the Wildlife Division. They are similar to other state fish and wildlife agency personnel across the nation in their commitment to their work and to protecting and managing the natural resources of their state. During personal interviews and in focus groups this strong commitment was evident in the wildlife biologists even in the face of job layoffs, reduced funding, and fewer personnel. Ninety-one percent (91%) of wildlife biologists reported a high level of satisfaction with their jobs in the employee telephone survey and interviews.

The assessment of the Wildlife Division and recommendations for its improvement are divided into seven key issues: Resources, Staffing and Structure, Current Need for Prioritizing, Planning and Budgeting, Accountability, Public and Division Perception of Program Performance, and Public Input. Overall, the Wildlife Division is doing a very good job given their budget constraints. However, this assessment would be of little assistance if all it said was "very good job." It would have failed to provide any suggestions for improvement. While the following discussion focuses on some areas for improvement, we caution the reader to remember that overall the Wildlife Division is being managed well.

### ***Key Issue: Resources***

Lack of funding and staffing is not new to state government or the MDIFW. Over two decades of budget cuts and staffing cutbacks have taken a toll on the Department. The MDIFW has worked hard to buffer its publics from reduced services and products.

MDIFW employees have continued trying to do all their work as in the past by working harder. This results in thousands of extra, unpaid hours worked by dedicated MDIFW employees each year. The workload has reached the point that many employees believe they cannot contribute more.

Stress levels and burnout are common results from this type of situation. The situation is exacerbated by the commitment that MDIFW employees have for the natural resources of Maine and their jobs of managing those resources. In effect, as mentioned earlier, the MDIFW is trying to produce the same level of products and services with less and having to rely on the commitment of staff to accomplish it.

***Wildlife Recommendation # 1:***

***The Wildlife Division Director should work with the Commissioner's Office to establish strategies for seeking increased funding and staffing from the Legislature. One strategy suggested is to have facilitated meetings of Commissioner's Office and Bureau/Division Directors to brainstorm ideas and develop strategies to pursue different funding efforts (See Chapter: Department Overall Recommendation # 2).***

While leadership of this task should be taken by the Commissioner's Office, the Bureau Directors should provide much of the staff work and advice on this critical leadership effort (See Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendation # 2).

The State of Maine prohibits its government employees from lobbying and engaging in certain political activities. However, supporters of MDIFW are encouraged to come to the aid of the agency and the natural resources they manage. These supporters could seek information from the MDIFW and possibly advice on the extent of the agency's needs, etc.

In addition, groups like the Advisory Council are closely associated with the MDIFW but are not state employees, thus not bound by laws forbidding lobbying, etc. Already begun are the near successes of gaining general fund support for the MDIFW in recent legislative sessions. SAM and Maine Audubon are encouraged to take a leadership position in this effort because of their political influence and record of interest. It is recommended that MDIFW continue to work with SAM, focusing more attention on the overall pressing need for staffing and funding.

### **Key Issue: Staffing and Structure**

Lack of staffing creates significant problems for the Wildlife Division. For example, timber management and timber harvest practices performed to meet wildlife goals on WMAs have the potential to generate income for the Division through timber sales while improving wildlife habitat. The Wildlife Division has recently added a staff person to manage this effort and we applaud their initiative in this recent move.

In addition, Wildlife Division has essentially the same number of employees since the 1980s, but the Division has had tremendous work demands added since the 1980s. The additional work includes:

- ♦ Nongame and endangered species program established (1985)
- ♦ Establishment of first turkey season (1985)
- ♦ Increased emphasis of species planning and development of management systems for all game and Endangered and Threatened (E&T) species (1986)
- ♦ Legislature established Essential Habitat provisions for E&T species (1988)
- ♦ MDIFW assumes responsibility for the zoological portion of the Natural Heritage Data Management System (1988)
- ♦ Comprehensive Planning and Land Use Regulation Act (Growth management) (1988)
- ♦ Natural Resource Protection Act (1988)
- ♦ Legislative clarification that MDIFW has responsibility for conservation of invertebrates (1989)
- ♦ Legislative mandate for MDIFW to address oil spill response and rehabilitation (1991)
- ♦ Significant vernal pools added to NRPA Significant Habitats (1996)
- ♦ Expanded E&T species list (1997)
- ♦ Expanded special concern species list (1998)
- ♦ Canada lynx listing by federal government (1998)

Better balancing of work with staff positions and reorganization of the Division is required (See Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendations # 5 and # 6).



#### **Wildlife Recommendation # 2:**

***If additional resources can be gathered for the Division of Wildlife, consider the best approaches for filling staffing needs for the Management Section and the Resource Assessment Section as well as for the management of WMA lands such as timber harvest, boundary surveys, etc.***

The veterinarian in the MDIFW has a vast array of training and skills applicable in both fisheries and wildlife. Currently, the veterinarian works solely on fisheries projects and fish health issues. The expertise in this position could also be used in dealing with



wildlife health issues, a growing concern in many parts of the U.S. as well as other work such as capture work, etc.

***Wildlife Recommendation # 3:***

***Broaden the MDIFW veterinarian's duties so that he works for both the Wildlife and the Fisheries Divisions.***

***Key Issue: Current Need for Prioritization***

Sixty-nine percent (69%) of wildlife biologists responded in the telephone survey that their work each year is planned and documented in written form. Biologists were more strongly associated with this response than any other category of employees (Z Score of 3.8). One influence may be the federal requirements that Federal Aid projects have written documentation. The Division leadership also does an excellent job of meeting with each region's wildlife staff and determining quarterly work plans, etc.

The number of hours necessary to accomplish the tasks for the quarter is not reconciled with the number of staff hours available. Personal interviews revealed that stronger direction and priority setting was a desire of many Wildlife Division employees to enable balancing of available staff hours with work plans.

This situation is exacerbated by two decades of flat or decreased funding and a continual loss of dollars and staffing positions. Prioritization of work is easier if there is adequate funding and if different levels of importance for work projects can be more easily established. However, after years of cutbacks, all that is left is "high priority" work. The Division and its publics are at the point of having to start cutting some of these programs and services; this means a series of prioritization efforts for work formerly considered too important to cut. The quote by Richard Koch is worth remembering, *"If everything is important, then nothing is important... some things need to be emphasized or it all ends up as noise."*<sup>8</sup>

The Wildlife Division faces two prioritization difficulties:

1. The Wildlife Division's publics may often separate the general budget cuts in state government from the specific reductions in services of the Wildlife Division. It is akin to publics being in favor of a perceived general benefit of "less government" but not accepting a specific cut in services, which affects them personally. The concept of less government seems good until the personal price of lost services becomes evident.

This situation often plays out in the workplace of fish and wildlife agencies across the country when decisions are made to cut some services due to a lack of resources. For example, staff may no longer be tasked to pick up dead

deer along highways or to answer calls to deal with nuisance animals (raccoons in attics, etc.). This may appear to be a positive step of prioritization and is implemented successfully until Senator "X," or Congressman "Y," or a close friend of the Governor, etc. calls and, for example, wants someone from the agency to pick up a dead deer on the road in front of their driveway. It is at this point that the commitments of field biologists and agency supervisors to prioritizing work are tested. The affected public typically wants the "cut" in services to come from "somewhere else" and not cut the service they need right now.

2. Due to their high level of commitment to the natural resources and their careers, wildlife biologists often find it difficult to psychologically and emotionally implement a lowering of priorities on work that is personally felt to be "important." In this sense, establishing lower priorities for work that has formally been considered "important" feels like selling out one's values. It's not that the work is any less important. It is a matter of not having the resources to be able to accomplish it.

The common response is to personally work long hours and weekends in attempts to do all the "important" work in spite of budget and staff cuts. This resistance to prioritization leads to general cries from the biological staff for someone in the supervisory chain of command to prioritize the work for them and tell them what not to do.

***Wildlife Recommendation # 4:***

***Have the Wildlife Division Director work with the Commissioner's Office and Division employees to establish priorities for work. During quarterly work planning, have the Wildlife Division Director work with staff to reconcile time required for projects with the amount of available staff time.***

**Process Suggestions for Accomplishing Recommendation # 4:**

The Division Director asks for any sideboards from the Commissioner's Office (specific program areas to be preserved, program areas for close scrutiny for deleting work, any criteria from the Commissioner's Office for making these decisions, etc.). With these "umbrella" sideboards, the Division Director then adds specific sideboards relating to priority setting (statewide guidance, planning and strategy priorities for the Division, species plan guidance, etc.) These priorities will need to be supported by both the Commissioner's Office and the Division leadership once they are finalized.

While sideboards and guidelines for determining priorities are set for employees by the Commissioner's Office and the Wildlife Division Director, specific work priorities would not be dictated to Wildlife Division employees. Once guidelines from the

Commissioner's Office and the Division Director are known to all wildlife employees, all wildlife biologists meet and develop suggestions for work that should be deleted due to lack of staff and funding. All biologist supervisors would then meet with Augusta staff to discuss their suggestions. Based on this input, decisions could then be made at the Division level as to finalization of priorities.

### ***Key Issue: Planning and Budgeting***

The Wildlife Division develops its annual budget request at the appropriate project level within the MDIFW by assimilating budget requests within each section of the Division. Supervisors prepare their budgets within each section and modify them from the previous year's budget. This process is well handled and has a number of strengths. However, two areas for improvement are: 1) Realistically allocating staff time required for each project (See Chapter: Wildlife, Recommendation # 4), and 2) Considering all new work to be done each budget cycle, including project proposals for this work, and then comparing it to ongoing work. Since budgets have been relatively flat for the last four or five bienniums, the tendency is to put in for the same things that were done in the previous year (See Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendation # 14).

### ***Key Issue: Accountability***

#### **Fiscal Accountability**

The Administrative Services Bureau closely monitors fiscal accountability. They oversee budget expenditures, earmarked accounts, and insure that budgets are balanced and earmarked monies are not used for other than intended purposes. If the above work plan and budget process is to be effective, there are Administrative Services improvements that must occur in the budget process that are beyond the authority of the Wildlife Division to address.

Budget management in the Wildlife Division is difficult due to three Administrative Services related problems: 1) Complicated budget procedures in Administrative Services, 2) The moving of monies between accounts that makes reports difficult if not impossible to understand, and 3) The fact that outstanding bills are difficult if not impossible for a division director to track. There are also reported long lag times for monthly financial reports and charges billed to divisions such as overhead, cell phone charges, and vehicle costs that are not known to the Wildlife Division Director as they occur and show up "unexpectedly" on Division ledger sheets. These issues are discussed in the chapters on the Administrative Services Bureau and the Department Overall.

#### **Program Accountability**

This review is not an accounting review, but a management and program review. Therefore, the focus here is on program accountability, which essentially means work efforts and their effectiveness in terms of accomplishments. Overall, the Wildlife Division

program accountability is to be commended due to the close work of the Division with the public Species Working Groups. The Advisory Council also provides some degree of program oversight and approval based on public input.

The Division is to be complimented on its effective use of public involvement in the Species Working Groups, which is widely recognized by all the divisions in MDIFW as an excellent example of involving publics. The public input enables the Wildlife Division to account back to the public for the direction set for each species addressed. In addition, the Wildlife Division produces an annual report for its publics entitled *"Research and Management Report."* This report details progress toward goals and objectives for each species plan.

In addition, highly commendable is the work of the Division Director with wildlife staff establishing quarterly goals and direction. It allows the Division Director to control employee efforts to achieve overall direction statewide as established with Species Working Groups and other public inputs. In addition, it provides an effective tool for the Wildlife Division Director to review work progress, budget tracking, etc. at the project level. This is an excellent process. Perhaps due to the effects of these efforts, seventy-seven percent (77%) of the wildlife biologists indicated strong agreement with the statement, "I am held accountable for accomplishing my work."

Direction setting with publics, developing work plans with staff, and tasks accomplished by staff (outputs) are part of the program accountability picture. The other component is the results of completing the work tasks, "outcomes," and the Division's accountability to their publics for these accomplishments.<sup>9</sup>

Federal Aid projects are required to have annual reports submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and a project completion report whenever a project ends. The Wildlife Division does an excellent job of reporting in this format.

An example of the excellent job by the Maine Division of Wildlife is reflected in the comments of John Organ, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Division of Federal Aid:

*"Maine's approach to wildlife management is highly regarded. They have by far the best planning process and have innovated an approach that develops management systems that chronicle how species will be managed. No other state has such an advanced approach."*<sup>10</sup>

### **Public and Division Perception of Program Performance**

The end results of the Wildlife Division's efforts are the core of program accountability. A comparison of responses between MDIFW wildlife biologists and Maine residents to telephone survey questions regarding agency performance is shown in Table 1. There is close agreement on "Enforcing Fish and Game Laws." Sixty-six percent (66%) of Maine residents ranked MDIFW performance as Excellent or Good compared to sixty-nine percent (69%) of MDIFW wildlife biologists.

Biologists' ratings of "Managing Wildlife Populations" were noticeably higher than Maine residents with one hundred percent (100%) of wildlife biologists ranking performance as Excellent or Good whereas only fifty-seven percent (57%) of Maine residents ranked performance as Excellent or Good. The other area where biologists ranked performance noticeably higher than Maine residents was "Restoring Native Fish and Wildlife Species to the State." Seventy-seven percent (77%) of biologists ranked performance as Excellent or Good compared to only forty-five percent (45%) of Maine residents. Biologists may have ranked these categories higher than Maine residents because biologists are closer to the work and more knowledgeable about the input of effort and accomplishments than residents. A possibility for biologists' higher ranking is a natural bias to assess accomplishments higher when the individual doing the rating is responsible for the performance outcomes.

**Table 1. Comparison of MDIFW Wildlife Biologists and Maine Residents Regarding Agency Performance.**

| <b>Percent who rated the Department's performance as <i>Excellent or Good</i>:</b>              |                            |                        |
|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Area of Accomplishment</b>   | <b>Wildlife Biologists</b> | <b>Maine Residents</b> |
| Providing hunting opportunities.....  | 86%                        | 66%                    |
| Enforcing fish and game laws.....   | 69%                        | 66%                    |
| Providing opportunities for the general public to view wildlife.....                            | 29%                        | 62%                    |
| Protecting and preserving wildlife habitat.....   | 77%                        | 61%                    |
| Protecting Endangered Species.....  | 80%                        | 58%                    |
| Managing Wildlife Populations.....  | 100%                       | 57%                    |
| Providing educational programs regarding fish and wildlife.....                                 | 29%                        | 46%                    |
| Restoring native fish and wildlife species to the state   | 77%                        | 45%                    |
| Wildlife Biologists n=35    Maine Residents n=405 <span style="float: right;">Duda, 2004</span> |                            |                        |

Two of the areas of performance were rated noticeably lower by biologists than Maine residents: "Providing opportunities for the general public to view wildlife," and "Providing educational programs regarding fish and wildlife." Possible explanations for each performance are discussed separately as follows:

"Provide opportunities for the general public to view wildlife" did not directly refer to activities such as habitat work, species protection, etc. Such activities result in producing wildlife viewing opportunities. Maine residents may have been considering the end products of the Department's efforts to make wildlife available to view. They may have considered the number and variety of species that they had seen recently, not focusing on specific MDIFW activities such as construction of viewing facilities and purchase of lands specifically to provide viewing opportunities. Biologists, on the other hand, may have considered the amount of Department activities for game habitat work versus nongame habitat work. They may have rated the benefits provided lower

because their knowledge of the amount of funding for game versus nongame. The majority of Division funding is provided from hunting license sales. Thus, the majority of work currently focuses on game species.

While the Department conducts some significant nongame work, the lack of general funds, or a mechanism to generate funding from nonconsumptive users, prevents much of the work biologists desire to conduct in this area. License buyers normally expect a majority of their dollars to be spent on managing species for which they buy licenses. Frustration of biologists in not being able to do more in the nongame area may be partially responsible for the biologists' lower rating of their Department in this area of performance (29% of biologists ranked performance as Excellent or Good compared to 62% of Maine residents).

The performance area "Providing educational programs regarding fish and wildlife" was also rated considerably lower by wildlife biologists than by Maine residents. Educational efforts are one of the most visible activities that the MDIFW does for Maine residents. This high visibility may be partially responsible for residents rating performance in this area higher than biologists (29% of biologists ranked performance as Excellent or Good compared to 46% of residents).

### ***Key Issue: Public Input***

The MDIFW has a good mechanism for public process in regulation setting through their Advisory Council and Species Planning Meetings. Citizen groups assist the Wildlife Division in developing goals and objectives for specific species, ultimately resulting in the Division's species plans. The Division completes assessments on the status of individual species and provides these assessments to appropriate citizen planning groups. This ensures they have the most current biological data available when assisting the Division in setting goals and objectives. To prevent the regulation setting process from becoming a tool for manipulation by anti-hunting or other special interest groups, adherence to process guidelines is critical.

<sup>1</sup> Matula, Jr. G.J. (Editor) 2003. Wildlife Division Research and Management Report. Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries and Wildl., Augusta, ME.

<sup>2</sup> Duda, M. D., DeMichele, P.E, Zuraski, C., Jones, M., Yoder, J.E., W. Testerman, A. Lanier, S. J. Bissell, P. Wang, and J. B. Herrick. 2003. Public opinion on fish and wildlife management issues and the reputation and credibility of fish and wildlife agencies in the northeast United States. Responsive Management. Harrisonburg, VA.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, and U.S. Census Bureau. 2001. 2001 National survey of fishing, hunting, and wildlife-associated recreation

<sup>4</sup> Citizens Advisory Committee to Secure the Future of Maine's Wildlife and Fish. 2001. Final report to the state of Maine 119<sup>th</sup> Legislature Second Regular Session. Office of Policy and Legal Analysis. Augusta, ME.

<sup>5</sup> MDIFW financial reports fy 2001 and fy 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Command Research. 2003. Survey of Maine Residents. South Harpswell, ME.

<sup>7</sup> Duda, Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Koch, R. 1998. The 80/20 principle. Doubleday NY, NY.

<sup>9</sup> Osborne, D. and T. Gaebler. 1992. Reinventing government. Addison-Wesley pub. NY, NY.

<sup>10</sup> Organ, J. F. 2004. Managing moose, bear and deer. Maine Dept. Inland Fisheries and Wildl.



## **DIVISION OF INFORMATION AND EDUCATION**

### **Overview**

The Information and Education (I&E) Division staff at MDIFW is a talented and dedicated workgroup. They are well trained and generally high functioning. Seventy-one percent (71%) of 405 individuals of Maine's public, interviewed in the fall of 2003, rated providing Maine fish and wildlife educational programs as "very important" for the Department.<sup>1</sup>

According to the employee interviews, there is a general recognition that the I&E Division is severely under-resourced relative to their mission, and many interviewed from the Warden Service, Wildlife Division and Fisheries Division wanted more service from I&E. The review participants from the media and other agency outsiders showed that I&E had continuously improved its performance over a five-year period.

Immediately prior to the beginning of the MAT review, I&E changed leadership through political appointment and this leadership change was a significant factor MAT considered during the review of the I&E Division. Strong staff loyalty to the outgoing I&E Director probably exacerbated the staff's adjustment process. Furthermore, many in the agency questioned the value of maintaining the policy of politically appointing the I&E Director. The turnover process is inefficient because of time and cultural realignment in the short-term (See Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendation # 8).

The following discussion presented in this chapter will address six key issues facing the Division of Information and Education. Seven recommendations are presented for consideration as follows:

### ***Key Issue: I&E Departmental Role***

The entire Department is at a crossroads in how it balances wildlife and fisheries management with Maine's changing demographics and culture, especially in southern Maine. In the employee telephone survey, only six percent (6%) of all employees felt that public relations and/or education were the highest priority for MDIFW. The plurality of all employees (37%) felt that managing fish and wildlife resources was the highest priority for MDIFW. I&E can play a much bigger role in more effectively managing wildlife and fisheries in Maine through information and outreach efforts designed to meet the needs of twenty-first century Mainers. MDIFW needs to place greater emphasis on information and outreach efforts in order to meet the agency mission long into the future.

### **Employee Perceptions**

The I&E Division is viewed by many employees as outside the agency mainstream. This is a typical perception found within many state fish and wildlife agencies. The telephone

survey found that eighty-three percent (83%) of all employees in the Department saw the primary role of I&E as support services to the Department. Many employees interviewed from the Wildlife and Fisheries Divisions and the Warden Service felt that I&E should “serve the other divisions.” This is another common attitude within state fish and wildlife agencies. I&E is often perceived as professionally unequal to the agency resource bureaus. I&E would require additional staff and funding to functionally meet the demands from across the agency.

In contrast, public relations programs can best achieve excellence when they are integral to the agency’s core leadership, participating in strategic-decision making.<sup>2</sup> In organizations that treat their public relations and outreach programs as a core organization function, those programs thrive.

I&E lacks a clearly articulated mission and priorities that are well understood outside of I&E. While doing their best to be responsive to demands from within the Department, I&E does not have a planning process to prioritize their workload and effectively manage agency-wide information needs. To complicate the matter, employees across the agency have diverse (and sometimes divergent) perceptions and expectations of I&E. However, the interviews and telephone surveys indicated that I&E employees knew their jobs and what was expected of them by their immediate supervisors.

I&E plays a critical role in the Department’s success, equal to that of any other Departmental entity. The Department’s ability to most effectively interact with its customers is limited by the employee misperceptions of I&E as an internal service provider. A more successful I&E program will further mature with broader internal recognition that I&E functions are equal to resource management, law enforcement, and licensing (administration) functions of the Department. This perceptual shift may better enable the Department to leverage conservation success through customers who are more aware and participative. This is in part why I&E should be elevated to the bureau level (See Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendation # 6)

### **Defining the Role of I&E**

A consistent message from the interviews was that employees hoped I&E could provide additional services to other parts of the agency. The Warden Service, in particular, has significant public relations needs that I&E is unable to meet primarily due to insufficient staffing. I&E recognizes the additional needs for their services and is frustrated that they simply cannot meet the requests for I&E services from across the agency.

To maximize I&E effectiveness for the agency, I&E and the other bureaus and divisions need to work cooperatively to prioritize outreach efforts, better ensuring that MDIFW products and services best serve the agency mission and customer needs.

The thematic analysis of employee interviews revealed that understaffing in I&E was one of the overall Departmental weaknesses, and many employees reiterated that I&E did not have sufficient staff to serve the public relations and information and outreach demands from the public.

I&E is in a "Catch-22," whereby the resource bureaus want more media coverage and communications from I&E, yet there are common complaints that requests from I&E for information felt like an unjustifiable burden. For example, some biologists complained that the weekly reports they were asked to provide to I&E for the media were an unnecessary burden, yet the media reported in the focus groups that the biologists' reports were highly valued and that the information was routinely published, sometimes verbatim.

A greater effort to communicate priorities and provide sufficient information to the I&E staff will facilitate the Departmental ability to work with the public and media. Furthermore, the idea expressed by some that I&E can and should do all of the public relations efforts without contribution by biologists and wardens is probably symptomatic of the attitude that I&E "serves" the rest of the agency. The Department cannot expect success from I&E unless biologists and wardens are willing to contribute to MDIFW public relations and outreach efforts.

Incorporating outreach functions in every employee's work plan is one way to improve overall Departmental communications. I&E should play a coordination role by providing tools to help the biologists and wardens fulfill their I&E responsibilities including coordination of key messages, maintaining Departmental media relationships, and providing access to information tools such as websites, posters, and fact-sheets, etc.

*Wildlife Partners* is an excellent example of I&E cooperation with other parts of the agency. This mobile outreach unit is widely viewed both in and outside the Department as an important outreach tool. It was developed through cooperation between the Warden Service and I&E, and it helps wardens more effectively deliver their outreach messages.

### **Coordination with Other Divisions**

Because of the general misconceptions within the agency over the I&E role, capabilities, and priorities, it is important to create improved linkages between I&E and other Departmental entities. Liaison/counterpart relationships between Wildlife, Fisheries, and Licensing and Registration Divisions would help facilitate improved cooperation and understanding on the most important public relations issues.

A suggested model would be for I&E to designate liaisons - from existing staff - for wildlife, fisheries, and licensing and registration. The I&E liaisons would work cooperatively with a designated counterpart from each of those divisions. The liaisons would not be responsible for providing comprehensive I&E services to the partner division. Instead, the liaison/counterpart relationship would open a conduit so that the cooperative needs of both entities could be more appropriately addressed on a priority basis. Liaisons and their counterparts would also participate in each other's staff meetings.

The Warden Service Public Relations Specialist would serve as the I&E liaison while also providing public relations services to the Warden Service.

***I&E Recommendation # 1:***

***From existing I&E staff, assign liaison/counterpart relationships between I&E and each of the following: Wildlife, Fisheries, and Licensing and Registration Divisions.***

***Key Issue: I&E Comprehensive Plan***

The I&E Division lacks a cohesive plan outlining overall priorities and relationships to the rest of MDIFW. I&E should conduct an exhaustive internal review to assess its effectiveness and priorities. Because I&E has limited funding and personnel relative to the needs of the agency, they need to make every effort to ensure that they are getting the highest return on their effort. A successful I&E plan would be created with major participation from across the entire agency.

The comprehensive planning process would prioritize activities, forecast staffing needs, look at desired outcomes, and link budgets to the priorities. This is a critical process to ensure that I&E staff and funds are targeting the most critical needs of the agency and its customers.

Additionally, all I&E staff should develop annual work plans for projects based on the priorities of the comprehensive plan. The result will be a tool that permits I&E to better match time and budgets to the priorities of the comprehensive plan and MDIFW overall needs.

***I&E Recommendation # 2:***

***Conduct an exhaustive internal review of I&E as a precursor to an I&E specific comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan would serve as a combination strategic/operations document detailing I&E priorities: activities, forecasted staffing needs, and budgets.***

***Key Issue: Staffing***

The I&E Division is significantly understaffed to meet the demands of the public and the agency. I&E personnel appear competent but understaffed to serve the diverse and dispersed outreach demands of the Department. Several key positions are missing from the I&E staff such as webmaster, graphic designer, writer/editor, Warden Services

Public Relations specialist, and regional I&E generalists. In other similar sized fish and wildlife agencies, these positions play critical roles in meeting the information demands from the public. This is especially true as outreach efforts are increasingly leveraged to help achieve conservation goals.

### **Webmaster**

Currently, the MDIFW website is managed part-time, and the webmaster responsibilities fall largely to an individual who has many other primary responsibilities and lacks broad webmaster experience and in-depth training. While it is fairly easy to post a simple website, it is very difficult, and requires significant experience, to develop an information architecture and user interface adequate for an organization such as MDIFW. While there is recognition that the MDIFW website has improved over time, the website falls short of meeting the in-depth information needs demanded by MDIFW customers. To meet these needs, I&E requires a website specialist with sufficient background in design, copywriting, and knowledge management.

### **Graphic Designer**

Additional resources are also required to produce informational materials that can be used by non-I&E employees to assist them in fulfilling their outreach responsibilities. This would require a single staff member, highly trained and skilled in graphic design. Some organizations are able to fill the graphic designer and webmaster roles with a single person. This may work well for MDIFW in the short-term because several I&E staff members already have experience using professional level desktop publishing software. In the long-term, two separate FTEs are probably required to fill the combined webmaster/graphics needs of the MDIFW.

### **Writer/Editor**

At least one additional full-time writer/editor position is needed. Currently there is one dedicated media specialist for the entire agency, but he cannot manage all the public relations writing needs of the agency. One employee from another division commented, "We need two or three [public relations specialists/writers]." Many employees interviewed felt that the Department spokesman works very hard but his workload far exceeded any individual's production capacity. An additional full-time writer would better enable I&E to produce needed informational materials for print and electronic media as well as provide a more consistent voice through contributions to media outlets. Furthermore, it would provide an additional person trained and capable of acting as a Departmental spokesperson to share evening and weekend duties.

### **Warden Service**

Rather than a liaison, a dedicated public relations position is recommended for the Warden Service. The interviews revealed a widely held perception of need for additional and dedicated public relations support for the Warden Service. In many ways, the wardens are the most visible and recognizable employees of MDIFW, and they have a valuable story to tell about the importance of wildlife and fisheries management to Mainers. The wardens commonly lead high profile public safety efforts, and they are

often the first and only MDIFW employees available to the news media when dealing with search and rescue operations or other high-profile law enforcement issues.

Public relations for law enforcement requires understanding of legal issues and special training to ensure that information provided to the public regarding investigations does not jeopardize prosecution. Narrative in the Warden Service section of this report recommends a relations position within I&E dedicated to the public relations and outreach needs of the Warden Service (See Chapter: Warden Service, Key Issues, Communication Position).



***I&E Recommendation # 3:***

***Fill three new positions required in I&E to meet needs: webmaster/graphic designer, an additional public relations writer/editor, and a public relations specialist dedicated to the Warden Service.***

The listed recommended positions serve basic, core functions in any fish and wildlife I&E division. However, the I&E planning process may reveal other important skill sets and staffing needs.

**Regional I&E Generalists**

Ideally, I&E generalists strategically placed in regional offices, based on a prioritization of need, can work more closely with field personnel on communications and public outreach. The I&E generalists would be capable of delivering a large subset of I&E services (e.g. media relations, education coordination, etc) to the communities served by that regional offices. Many other state fish and wildlife agencies place I&E personnel in regional offices to work closely with field staff. This need was voiced in many interviews. It would add significant capability for the Department to meet its growing information and outreach demands.

There is less immediate need to fill the I&E generalist positions than the specialists, but it is less clear how to fund the positions. Currently, every other division in the Department is understaffed, so in the short-term it is not feasible to expect the FTEs to come from other divisions. However, developing field level I&E capabilities within the I&E division will be a long-term asset.



***I&E Recommendation # 4:***

***Strategically place I&E generalists in regional offices to work more closely with field personnel on communications and public outreach and to better serve the strategic needs to be laid out in the I&E Comprehensive Plan and Department-wide Communications Plan.***

***Key Issue: Department Communications Plan***

An overall Departmental communications plan will detail primary messages and strategies to deliver those messages. The communications plan is distinct from the I&E comprehensive plan in that the communications plan serves the entire agency – not only I&E priorities. As stated previously, public relations should not be strictly the domain of I&E. Every Department employee needs basic tools to be able to deliver consistent, accurate information to the public. The plan should be created with participation from all levels of the agency and include the Divisions of Wildlife and Fisheries, Bureau of Administrative Services, and the Bureau of Warden Service. The plan should be widely distributed to all agency employees. The communications plan should also include indirect input from constituencies outside the agency to ensure that the plan is best designed to serve the agency's customers.

***I&E Recommendation # 5:***

***Develop a Department-wide communications plan using participation from across the agency. The plan would identify the highest priority information, key messages, and delivery strategies. The entire plan must be shared with all agency employees to be most effective.***

***Key Issue: Marketing***

The Department's marketing efforts reside entirely in I&E. Many state fish and wildlife agencies are beginning to view marketing as an important tool, vital to their long-term success. The MDIFW marketing efforts include working actively with the tourism industry to develop products that attract out-of-state hunters and anglers. They promote Maine's exceptional wildlife and fishing recreational opportunities at expositions across New England, and they are successfully pursuing cooperative marketing efforts with Maine's flagship retailers, L.L. Bean and Kittery Trading Post, as well as with the Maine Tourism Department.

The MDIFW marketing efforts generate positive cash flow while adding the benefits of enhanced brand recognition and increased wildlife and fishing related recreation. For

example, the marketing effort includes a branding campaign that is increasing the visibility of the MDIFW logo through clothing sales while simultaneously generating net income of approximately \$40 thousand per year for the Department.

Simply put, a “marketing approach” tailors products, pricing, promotion, and placement to customer needs.<sup>3</sup> While the MDIFW marketing efforts are self-funding and successfully increasing MDIFW public recognition, the entire agency could be improved by adopting a marketing approach in the way it does business. Approximately one-third of the state fish and wildlife agencies across the country are actively engaged in either learning how or already using a marketing approach, and the number is increasing.

State fish and wildlife agencies in several states have already committed to developing agency-wide marketing approaches in an effort to make sure that all programs deliver the highest value to their customers. In these states, the agency leadership recognized that marketing was not an isolated function served by a single individual. Rather, all employees play an appropriate role in making sure their programs deliver the best marketing mix and highest value to the customers, perhaps coordinated through a marketing specialist or marketing team. Interestingly, marketing in many agencies is a tool to achieve revenue goals and conservation success.<sup>4</sup>

Marketing is often misperceived in fish and wildlife agencies as commercialization, promotion, or sales. Any of these may play a part in whether to adopt a marketing approach or not, but ensuring that the agency is tied to customer needs, price sensitivity, access, and awareness are all vital to a state fish and wildlife agency’s long-term survival. For success, the marketing efforts cannot exist in a vacuum, but need to be infused into all Department programs as an overall approach to doing business.

Often, fish and wildlife agency employees resist the idea that marketing is an important part of fish and wildlife management.<sup>5</sup> However, the benefits of the marketing approach include a toolset to help fish and wildlife managers understand their customers. Another benefit is that the customers better understand the agency’s products, programs, and services.

***I&E Recommendation # 6:***

***Integrate a Department-wide marketing approach.***

Full implementation of Maine Online Sportsmen’s Electronic System (MOSES) will help MDIFW implement a broader marketing approach. It is vital that I&E have access to MOSES data, and that I&E and Administrative Services work closely together to ensure that the marketing efforts and licensing needs are appropriately coordinated. Moses is discussed in more detail in the Administrative Services Chapter of this report.



### ***Key Issue: Education Programs***

Education Programs are generally well implemented within the limits of funding and staffing, and I&E's focus on youth programs is largely seen as a Departmental strength. The employee telephone survey showed that ninety-nine percent (99%) of all the Department employees felt that providing educational programs was important to MDIFW, and sixty-three percent (63%) of all the employees reported that the Department's performance in providing educational programs was good or excellent.

Compared to Department Employees, the public views the performance of MDIFW educational efforts higher relative to other MDIFW programs.<sup>6</sup> This disparity could be attributed to employee misunderstandings of the capabilities and actual successful performance of the educational program delivery. This also may be another indication of how I&E programs are viewed internally as out of the Department mainstream.

There was a clear internal division in the perception of education programs as well. According to Z Scores from the employee telephone survey, those who felt that the Department is doing an excellent job of providing fish and wildlife educational programs were the most likely to agree that the Department communicates adequately with the public on fish and wildlife issues (Z Score 6<sup>\*\*\*</sup>). Alternately, those who felt education programs were poor were also among the most likely to disagree that the Department communicates adequately with the public on fish and wildlife issues (Z Score 5.3<sup>\*\*\*</sup>).

MDIFW employees and focus groups of external constituents expressed high regard for the safety education and classroom educational programs provided by the Department.

#### **Maine Wildlife Park**

Input from internal and external I&E constituents pointed to the Maine Wildlife Park in Gray, Maine, as the shining star among all I&E programs. The park is largely self-funded and is very well managed. The Wildlife Park reaches a large number of Mainers of all ages. The Maine Wildlife Park stands out as a provider of exceptional services to Mainers.

#### **Aquatic Education**

Currently, the education program receives no Federal Aid funding for aquatic education. Through Dingle-Johnson (DJ) funding, up to ten percent of Maine's DJ allocation may be used for aquatic education programs. Some portion of the available DJ funds for aquatic education is used by the Department of Marine Resources. However, some remaining allocation may be available to MDIFW. All available DJ funds are used within Fisheries, but the Department should consider investing the available apportionment to education programs administered by I&E. This may require re-prioritizing some DJ funding in fisheries management, but the agency is missing an opportunity to enhance aquatic education programs, an important long-term need.

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<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Signifies a highly significant Z Score

A DJ investment in aquatic education is a hedge against the risk that today's school-aged children will not value Maine's aquatic resources later in life. Because people are more likely to treasure what they know, aquatic education is an important part of ensuring the Department's ability to conserve freshwater fisheries in the coming generations.

***I&E Recommendation # 7:***

*Consider using the Federal Aid apportionment available for aquatic education to enhance the aquatic education programs in I&E.*

<sup>1</sup> Duda, Mark. 2003. Public Opinion on Fish and Wildlife Management in the Northeast United States, Page 53 of the report on Maine.

<sup>2</sup> Dozier, D. M., L. A. Grunig, and J. E. Grunig. 1995. *Manager's Guide to Excellence in Public Relations and Communication Management*. Lawrence Erlbaum

<sup>3</sup> Duda, Mark et al. 1998. Wildlife and the American Mind: Public Opinion on and Attitudes Toward Fish and Wildlife Management. Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration.

<sup>4</sup> MAT observation and experience. MAT conducted a series of consultations and workshops in February 2004 on agency-wide marketing approaches.

<sup>5</sup> MAT observation and experience. MAT has worked with more than 45 state fish and wildlife agencies on management, marketing, and leadership issues.

<sup>6</sup> A comparison between Questions #141-151 from the *Public Opinion on Fish and Wildlife Management Issues and the Reputation and Credibility of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in the Northeast United States, Maine, Fall 2003, Responsive Management* with Questions #74-82 from the *Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Employees' Survey*, conducted for the Management Assistance Team as part of the 2004 Comprehensive Review of Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife.



## **BUREAU OF WARDEN SERVICE**

### **Overview**

One hundred twenty-two game wardens watch over the people and wildlife in Maine's great outdoors, protecting the resource, preventing accidents, and much, much more. The wardens have remained highly dedicated to their work in spite of budget constraints and increased pressure to be everywhere, all the time, and criticism when they cannot be. While change continues to color the landscape for the Warden Service, one thing remains for the wardens as it has been for well over 100 years now – an immense pride in what they do.

And the game wardens in Maine do a good deal more than “catching the bad guys” or intervening the pesky raccoon in the garage. They are also highly regarded by the general public. In a 2003 public survey in Maine, seventy-six percent (76%) responded that the game warden was the individual most credible as a source of information on fish and wildlife and outdoor recreation.<sup>1</sup>

Today, Maine game wardens appropriately spend most of their time on fish and wildlife enforcement and a lesser amount of time collectively performing other related functions – recreational vehicle enforcement, nuisance injured wildlife, assisting other agencies, and search and rescue. The following statement from one participant of the focus groups aptly describes warden prowess in this area: “If you are lost, this state is where you want to be. You will be found.” Rating the Department's performance in different categories of work, all employees who responded to the telephone survey rated search and rescue work the highest with fifty-three percent (53%) rating it as excellent!

Expanded access into forested areas once protected by inaccessibility and the increased use of much improved recreational vehicles provides additional opportunities for sports men and women. Increased boat access sites also contribute to this “user sprawl.” The Warden Service, already stretched thin, is challenged with providing services adequate to meet the increased demands from the outdoor recreation enthusiasts' expansion into more of Maine's land and water resources.

During the MAT review, one individual described as follows what the review found to be a common perception of the current scenario of central concern for the wardens:

*“The amount of work demanded has increased while resources to meet demands has diminished; more tasks to do today than previously, yet no net increase in personnel so more overtime required, but without compensation.”*

Since Fall 2003 when the MAT review began, the issue of consolidation of multiple retirement packages has been resolved as well as pay grade increases for the wardens.

Morale has reportedly improved somewhat, probably as a consequence to these resolutions.

Despite continuing Departmental budget cuts, other laudable improvements have been accomplished within the Bureau, particularly within the last five years under retiring Colonel Tim Peabody. And, in the time that lapsed between MAT's initial interviews with wardens in the Fall 2003 and the final interviews in the Spring 2004, it was apparent that there have been a number of other improvement initiatives already underway within the Warden Service. The Bureau of Warden Service is commended for their resolve to seek solutions and to continue to improve.

To increase the effectiveness of this critically important and significantly larger arm of the Department a number of key issues are identified, offering opportunities for improvement within the Warden Service. These key issues are discussed with twenty-one recommendations in the following six categories in this chapter: Resources, Leadership, Personnel/Structure, Internal-External Public Relations, Accountability, and Professional Development.

## **Resources**

### ***Key Issue: Funding***

Top of the mind to most MDIFW employees and external stakeholders is funding. This is understandable. For many, funding cutbacks translate to a prevailing uncertainty about job security, career advancement, and ability to get the job done well.

#### **Pay Parity with State Troopers**

The Maine State Police and the MDIFW Warden Service have equal law enforcement powers and unique roles, and when disaster and emergency calls come in, both must equally respond. There is no reasonable justification for unequal pay between these two state law enforcement organizations. In spite of recent successes at achieving equal pay, there remains a significant overall salary disparity between the two organizations according to the Department's Personnel Division.

Both the state troopers and the wardens have been evaluated by the state human resources department which concluded both wardens and troopers should work at a #20 pay grade. However, because of an arbitrator's ruling the troopers are now at a #21 pay grade, creating a continuation of the historical pay disparity between the troopers and the wardens. Whether it is at pay grade # 20 or # 21, the pay needs to be the same. The Department has plans to pursue obtaining parity.

But, in spite of funding cutbacks, the Bureau of Warden Service has done remarkably well providing the equipment, vehicles, and other related tools necessary for the wardens to perform their duties. The radios are not made anymore, and the radio technicians at the State Police must recycle used parts to keep the radios functioning.

This is part of a major statewide communication issue rather than specific only to the wardens. Overall, however, most wardens reported that they have what they need to do their job. Wardens are not required to purchase guns with their own money.

A lack of funding and decreased personnel has severely impacted some other areas within the Bureau. The following recommendations are submitted with regard to funding:



**Warden Service Recommendation # 1:**

**Conduct a pay parity study and argue to bring the Warden Service to State Troopers pay level.**

While arguing for funding, the Warden Service should pursue receiving a formal recognition by the Legislature that the wardens have a major part in the broad enforcement community in Maine outside of their primary duties. It should be noted that the Warden Service is already working in these non-traditional areas as they encounter crime during their traditional resource patrols. A formal "okay", therefore, is not an expansion or diversion of resources, but the acknowledgement that non-resources cases are encountered incidental to the wardens' primary patrol. If such a public, official acknowledgement clarifying direction is not forthcoming, it is recommended that the Legislature and Department restrict the Warden Service duties to the core mission of fish and wildlife protection.

The MAT review found that wardens in general were not against filling this expanded role. Identified was the need of definitive clarification for the expectations of the wardens, and the processes and personnel to accomplish them. Without the necessary personnel to perform the expanded duties of the wardens, the Department needs to be concerned realistically about the wardens' long-term capacity. In the short term, the wardens for the most part are meeting the challenge well.

### ***Key Issue: Lack of Computers and Computer Training***

The Warden Service lacks adequate equipment and training to take advantage of computer and information technology useful in managing a large, dispersed law enforcement presence. While some wardens have expressed a resistance to modernizing information technology, others are strong advocates of this change.

Advantages of computerization for the Warden Service are:

1. Improved span of control capabilities by more efficient communications.
2. Improved complaint tracking and follow-up.

3. Improved communications throughout the Warden Service at all levels and with other bureaus.
4. Enhanced individual and program accountability as a result of improved, more efficient time and activity accounting.
5. Improved analytical capabilities for making programmatic decisions and changes.
6. More efficient use of time – For example, some wardens will not have to drive many miles to use a computer for reporting purposes. When they have their own computer, they can generate their reports from home/car and use the time saved for other duties (See Chapter: Warden Service, Recommendation # 7).
7. Through the use of computers, wardens would be able to complete arrest reports and booking sheets, electronically at the scene. They could complete other paperwork during down periods during their tour of duty and transmit the documents to their offices electronically. This would increase the accuracy of the data and decrease down time using US Postal Service.
8. Many wardens work in rural, isolated areas and may work several counties. Most wardens carry several different maps in order to find out where they are going. These maps are extremely difficult to manage especially during an emergency call. Using a laptop unit in the vehicle, with mapping software and integrated with the officer's Global Positioning System (GPS), the warden could respond to calls for service quicker by being able to locate the address in route. Also, with the proper software, the dispatch center can locate and map the units in the field. This allows for better response time and greater warden safety if an officer is hurt or killed.
9. Wardens communicate with the dispatch system using the state radio system and/or telephones. When a warden stops a suspicious vehicle or vessel, the warden radios the dispatch center for registration, wants/warrants check, and/or license check. Using a laptop, with the mobile software deployed and running, an officer can run routine checks without having to contact the dispatch system. This reduces the amount of traffic on the radio system and allows for timely return of information to officers (See Chapter: Warden Service, Recommendation # 7). Efficiencies in patrol and dispatch and increased warden safety will result with implementation of a mobile computer system.





**Warden Service Recommendation # 2:**

*Purchase computers with high-speed Internet access for each warden; develop in-vehicle wireless data capabilities; provide training for appropriate software; develop a law-enforcement specific component within the recommended Department intranet to enhance information flow and accountability.*

**Key Issue: Human Resource Capital**

The FranklinCovey Company, internationally recognized as a world-class leader in organization development training, uses the classic fable of the "Goose and the Golden Egg" to illustrate the relationship between production and production capability. It may also illustrate one of the current dilemmas facing the Bureau of Warden Service. The goose can be used as a metaphor for the employees/wardens (production capability), and the golden eggs a metaphor for the work of the wardens (production). As the story teaches, if the "goose" is not cared for, the "eggs" will cease. There is a need for organization development interventions to improve the care of the warden force.

For example, wardens need career development beyond the basic level of warden training. Discontinue minimum training requirements; Train to a standard higher than the minimum. Career pathing is recommended, i.e., promotions based upon initiative, accomplished training, and demonstrated performance rather than advancement based solely on rank and seniority.

Note: There are numbers of wardens at various levels within the Warden Service who possess the skills, knowledge, and willingness to serve as instructors for any number of on-going career development/in-service trainings. These wardens should be sought out and utilized. It is further suggested that there be a concentrated effort to avoid selections for such instructors based on perceived or real "memberships" in favored warden cliques.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 3:**

*1) Adjust the focus of warden training to go beyond meeting minimum requirements and 2) Refocus promotions/advancements according to initiative, training, performance, etc., rather than solely on rank and seniority.*

### **Key Issue: ATV Overtime Funding**

Currently, the Warden Service is overburdened with meeting the state's need for ATV law enforcement. The Warden Service needs money to pay for overtime for ATV enforcement by the wardens. Period. The Legislature has enacted emergency legislation, which establishes an ATV Enforcement Grant-in-Aid program for any law enforcement agency in the state to apply for reimbursement for their ATV enforcement. Gas tax monies will go to this dedicated fund, which will be effective immediately.

While a grant may be a step in the right direction, it leaves open the potential for local sheriff's offices, for example, to see such grant money as "easy pickins", viewing it as another source of funding without having to put much real effort into actual ATV enforcement. The bottom line is that grant money for ATV enforcement may or may not be adequate. It is apparent that the current level of ATV enforcement requires, at the minimum, additional funding from the state to the Warden Services, and then grant money as well to augment the program. Grant monies should go to these other agencies. But an overtime pool needs to be established, with new funding from outside the Department, for wardens that they can track. Paying for their overtime is an incentive. It would also help keep wardens focused on their core mission.



#### **Warden Service Recommendation # 4:**

***Fund an overtime budget from a new outside source to compensate wardens for ATV enforcement, thus avoiding mission creep; Use existing grant program for enhanced patrol by local agencies.***

### **Key Issue: Overtime Compensation**

The amount of dollars budgeted for overtime is mandated by the MSEA and is both inadequate and all-inclusive (calls for service, SAR, etc.) not just enforcement. Legislative authorization is needed for the Warden Service to budget overtime in the same manner as the state police.

In FY/04 the "well ran dry" and there was not enough to pay the wardens' for overtime enforcement. The union contract is based on a formula which mandates that only a certain amount of dollars can be paid for overtime. This cap on overtime money has created a giant snowball of warden time used for comp time. When a warden responds to a call from the public and the call comes in after they have worked their twelve-hour work duty, then the warden is paid in compensation time.

Paying for overtime has been found to be more cost effective than adding additional wardens. First, the overtime work can be directed to high profile areas and "hot spots." Secondly, although the warden is compensated at a higher rate of pay, the state is not

paying for new equipment and benefits for additional wardens — the additional wardens being the only other way to accomplish sufficient coverage and customer service.

When monies become available, fund overtime for wardens and set up a reporting system to track overtime use for overtime money for core resource enforcement only. It will prevent any diversion issues regarding federal dollars to the agency. This needs to be made very clear to everyone. Such monies for specific purposes need to be compartmentalized in the Warden Service budget. Such an overtime system is consistent with the State Troopers, thereby establishing needed parity.



**Warden Service Recommendation # 5:**

**Obtain a \$400,000 funding package from the Legislature using general funds to pay for all Bureau of Warden Service overtime compensation (includes Search and Rescue and regular overtime).**

**Key Issue: Centralized Dispatch**

The Department cannot afford to deliver statewide dispatch for the wardens, particularly when compared to the amount of money currently paid to the state troopers (\$300,000 per year) for dispatch. It would cost the Department significantly more than \$300,000/year to house their own. Money would also be needed to invest in the training for the MDIFW dispatchers. Centralizing dispatch is impractical.

While it may be too expensive to go to a centralized dispatch, a communications study could be very helpful to confirm that the state troopers' radio system accomplishes at least to a ninety to ninety-five percent (90 - 95%) coverage level for the wardens. This coverage level would take care of the current inadequacies of coverage in the northern part of the state using this system. The wardens need guaranteed communications coverage — no less than what the state troopers have. For the current \$300,000 paid to the state troopers for sharing communications with them, the wardens need to have equal capability for electronic, efficient data management and retrieval of duty and time hours, i.e., computer-aided dispatch.

Wardens report that the state troopers' dispatch is often noisy, unclear, and difficult to hear. A cooperative effort between the MDIFW and the state troopers may be helpful in identifying ways to improve the delivery and methodology for their mutual benefit.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 6:**

***Conduct a communications study to determine conclusively that the \$300,000 paid to the state troopers provides a minimum of 90-95% radio coverage for the wardens.***

**Warden Service Recommendation # 7:**

***Establish computer-aided dispatch for wardens, comparable to that of the state troopers, for electronic, efficient data management, and retrieval of duty and time.***

## **Leadership**

### ***Key Issue: Clarity of Direction***

A common thread in the early interviews and focus groups was a perception of a lack of clarity of direction. However, the telephone survey responses indicated that the majority of wardens (66%) are aware and understand the direction of the Warden Service. This apparent contradiction in the data can be explained by the impact on many wardens resulting from legislative additions to warden duties without the necessary associated funding and staffing. Perceptions of weak clarity of direction can also arise when there is inconsistent and/or insufficient communication from leadership at various levels.

Further, wardens need "official" directives from the Department when work is to be deleted. Additional work from the Legislature is certainly appropriate, but without the associated funding and without direction from the Legislature for prioritization of warden work, the impact is compounded. A dilemma forms. Wardens are unable to continue to do their previous work in addition to added new work. Without prioritization, confusion results in what to reduce or discontinue doing in order to accomplish new work assignments. In warden interviews and focus groups, this confusion translated into comments such as "lack of direction" or "lack of clarity." This becomes very apparent with calls for service from the public and the wardens' desire to do all things for all people without the resources or contrary to a directive from headquarters. Managing public expectation and getting support is all part of the clarification process.

Wardens are clear on their mission. The problem resides in their being directed to do more than the funding and staffing will permit. Thus, there is a need to have what must be dropped formalized and to have these changes explained to the public.

### **Work Plans**

Clearly establish Warden Service work priorities and funding through written annual work plans, i.e., a process for deciding what work will be done and in what amounts. Such plans would state the amount of funding and the amount of staff hours for each project. The total number of staff hours written in projects has to be reconciled with the number of staff hours available. Once work plans are completed then they should be prioritized according to criteria jointly developed among Warden Service and the Commissioner's Office.

When new warden duties/services are proposed, they should take the form of an additional work plan that is incorporated into the prioritization of existing work plans. When hours and dollars required for accomplishing the total list of work plans are exceeded, then lower prioritized work plans can be targeted for reduction or deletion. The process provides a logical way for the Warden Service to define consequences. It also (1) Aids accountability within the chain of command, and (2) Provides a mechanism for reporting to external stakeholders.

***Warden Service Recommendation # 8:***

***Determine and write all work within the Warden Service into work plans, prioritize, and use this process for decision-making particularly when any new work is added.***

### **Facilitate "Just Say No"**

When services must be discontinued, there must be a corresponding alignment in the formal and informal directives and messages to the wardens in the field. It is disruptive and breeds confusion when wardens receive mixed messages regarding the kinds of work to discontinue. For example, a nuisance wildlife call comes in and the warden does not respond to the call because he has been told "You're not going to do this, we don't have the money." Then later, when the "public" calls up and complains, the warden is told "Do this now and I don't want anymore of these calls." Consistency of messages to wardens and the public is very important.

***Warden Service Recommendation # 9:***

***Have the Commissioner formally approve priorities and support wardens when they must say "no" to public requests that fall outside the set priorities.***

### ***Key Issue: Balancing the Customer Service Paradigm***

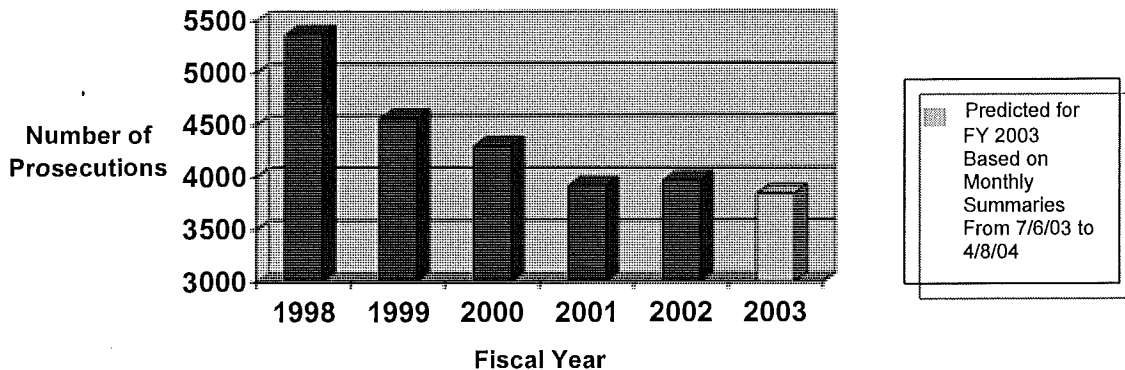
The term “paradigm” used here refers to the mental “lenses” through which wardens view their work. Overall, the Warden Service appears to be continuing to evolve from a paradigm of “the bad guys are out there and we’re gonna bust em” to a paradigm which is more customer-service and proactive. Paradigm shift is always an uncomfortable and messy transition process. It takes years. The Warden Service is to be commended for the progress it has made thus far.

The telephone survey revealed broad agreement across the Department in general with ninety-one percent (91%) agreement among wardens that the Warden Service has become more customer service-oriented than it was in the past, and not at the expense of their core mission of fish and wildlife law enforcement. The old “cuff ‘em and stuff ‘em” approach has evolved out of necessity. There are more non-traditional users using the woods and waters of Maine. Hikers, birders, and people just looking for wild places to go need more community-oriented policing approach (first educate and inform, then cite). A second group of non-traditional users has emerged — criminals. Wardens cannot relax completely how they approach the public. Wardens must maintain their professional standards, keep sharp and sometimes use hard-core law enforcement protocols for their own safety and the safety of other recreational users. More than ever wardens are exposed to the criminal, non-traditional element that can injure and/or kill an officer. Today’s Maine game warden is trained to identify and handle this evolving reality.

With new policies, systems, and an emphasis on balancing the warden paradigm to include a more customer-service orientation, there was an initial drop of approximately 1000 prosecutions per year. This decrease was most likely a predictable reflection of the successful implementation of new policies, leadership, and focus within the Warden Service at that time. In concept, moving to a more customer-service, proactive warden approach would produce better behaviors from outdoor recreators and thus fewer citations. It is apparent that there has been good effort put out by the wardens to, as one person aptly described it, “write the right summons rather than the right number of summons.” By looking at the numbers of prosecutions, it is apparent that efforts to balance the game warden paradigms are working at MDIFW.

The number of prosecutions leveled off in 2001, with a current average of approximately 320 per month. Based upon this monthly number of prosecutions for FY 2003, the final numbers for this fiscal year are projected to be similar with the last several years as well. Illustration 1 shows the prosecution numbers for the last five years:

Illustration 1. Number of Prosecutions from 1998-2003



It is important for the Warden Service not to succumb to the “tyranny of the or” when it comes to the two different warden paradigms. Both have merit. Both are needed. The key is to diligently promote the balance.

It is important for the Warden Service to continue what they have begun with regard to balancing their paradigms. The wardens now have a complaint tracking system that allows supervisors to address job performance issues related to wardens interacting with the public in both enforcement and non-enforcement situations. They are holding fast to excellence when hard-core law enforcement is warranted. Suggested is to improve the wardens’ reward system to better align with the objective of balancing the warden paradigm.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 10:**

*Continue with due diligence to promote the balance between “catch ‘em and nail ‘em” and proactive, customer service paradigms within the Advanced Warden Training and the Warden Service overall.*

## Personnel/Structure

### **Key Issue: Landowner Relations Position**

There are two sub-issues within the Landowner Relations Program. First, there is lack of understanding among many agency staff outside the Warden Service as to what exactly this position does. Secondly, there is an issue of the right personnel fit for the job.

There is wide agreement that the program is an important one. Particularly when there are large, posted tracts of land in Maine, it is valuable to have an identified, single agency contact to coordinate the related emerging issues. Some suggest that this position might be better served filled by someone from the Division of Information and Education rather than a warden. A good argument can be made, however, for a uniformed presence filling this position.

The key to the Landowner Relations Program success is having the right person fill the coordinator position. Putting a good warden in this position so he can be a sergeant, instead of filling the position with the right person, warden or not, can lead to program ineffectiveness. The Landowner Relations Position would work well as a direct arm of the Commissioner, more high profile, using a broad range of skills and experience as well as sound comprehension of laws and regulations and law enforcement protocols.

The new, 21 member Landowners and Sportsmen Relations Advisory Board has the potential of providing much needed energy and direction for this program. Once the member names are appointed by the Governor, this group can begin working with the program.

Recently, the Warden Service has wisely emphasized more of a team approach to landowner relations. This approach seems to have merit. Using field wardens as part of the team, landowner relations can evolve to be less reactionary, and more proactive, seeking opportunities to enhance outdoor recreation.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 11:**

***Reevaluate what this position needs to accomplish, what the performance measures are, and what the relationship should be between the Landowner Relations Position and the Warden Service. Then, inform the rest of the Department what this position is designed to do, solicit feedback and needs from throughout the Department and external stakeholders, and keep them informed with regular progress reports; Reevaluate in one year.***

### ***Key Issue: Span of Control***

With the recent downsizing in the Warden Service, the span of control, or the number of direct reports for the lieutenants, has doubled. A consequential number of inefficiencies have resulted. Lieutenants are functioning more like captains, sergeants are functioning more like lieutenants, resulting in a problematic lack of consistent messaging.

Efficient and effective supervision is the key to many of the recommendations in this review. Span of control affects the ability of a supervisor to maintain communication up and down the chain of command. Such communication is critical to establishing



direction, purpose, agency mission, policies and procedures. Internal expectations are met with job knowledge, adequate supervision and direction. The affect of good supervision is improved morale, confidence, and positive public interaction and perception.

In order to regain an effective span of control, restoring two lieutenant positions (at the absolute minimum) is necessary. Currently, lieutenants don't have the contact directly with subordinates that may be needed to make the best decisions, and the ability to effectively supervise is negatively impacted. Sergeants have an increased geographic responsibility, are making more decisions on their own, and not always with the lieutenant as a sounding board. This tends to make everyone more isolated within his/her own environment and affects the entire operation. The big picture is lost.



**Warden Service Recommendation # 12:**

***Restore two, ideally three, lieutenant positions and reconfigure the geographical regional areas he/she would supervise to regain an effective span of control.***

***Key Issue: Supervision Training***

The need for providing supervision training was voiced repeatedly in the focus groups and interviews. This is a common need in fish and wildlife agencies in both the professional staff as well as in law enforcement. Individuals typically attain supervisory positions based on their technical achievements, but often later find they lack the supervisory skills and competency to manage/supervise others effectively. Increasing supervision effectiveness within the Warden Service would likely also increase accountability and morale. It is also a factor in unity of command issues and performance accountability (Note: The Management Assistance Team provides workshops for law enforcement in state fish and wildlife agencies at no charge.)

In addition to supervision training, it is suggested that there be a probationary period with evaluations for all new supervisors.

**Warden Service Recommendation #13:**

***Provide effective supervision training for all warden supervisors.***

### ***Key Issue: Internal Investigator***

The need for improved investigation policies, procedures, and personnel had wide agreement in both the focus groups and interviews.

Most police organizations do their own internal investigations. A trend in law enforcement is to have an Inspector General for the agency perform this function while housed under the Commissioner's Office. Whether an Inspector General or an Office of Internal Affairs, investigatory accountability should lie within such an office. In the future, if there were a significant further decrease in complaints and if the manpower were available, this office could increase efficiencies in all bureaus by doing staff reviews and audits (financial and/or operational audits).

An Internal Affairs Office under the Commissioner's Office would deal exclusively with conducting investigations of complaints, both internal and external. It works well to insulate the Colonel and the Commissioner and Deputy from the investigation and any ensuing criticism from outside the agency. An internal investigator will bring the process closer to, "beyond reproach." Some employees are suspicious of outsiders who "don't know how we operate." It is suggested that this position be a sworn officer whose powers are maintained through the Warden Service and who answers directly to the Commissioner. This creates an additional promotional opportunity within the Warden Service and is an excellent training opportunity as well.



#### ***Warden Service Recommendation # 14:***

***Establish an internal affairs or investigation unit/position which would deal exclusively with investigation of all internal and external complaints.***

### ***Key Issue: Covert Operations***

Strong agreement was found throughout the Warden Service that the Covert Operations Unit is doing an outstanding job! Their effective operation has shut down numerous criminal activities, bringing in thousands of dollars from fines. However, they report to a sergeant who is not physically located for effective supervision. It is possible that this sergeant position could be of greater value to the Warden Service if it was used as a much needed field sergeant. Such a change could have the covert investigators reporting directly to the major or colonel. More information is needed to be able to recommend this with certainty.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 15:**

**Evaluate workload and to what degree the current supervisor of the Covert Operations Unit is actually involved or needed in the operations.**

**Key Issue: Unity of Command**

In order to improve unity of command, all of the wardens need to promote decisions made by their supervisors, regardless of personal opinions. The sergeant level is a critical link. After downsizing, and with so much comp time accruing, along with a widened geographical area of responsibility, the sergeant's are more administrative. A widened span of control at the lieutenant level requires a corresponding tightening of efficiencies. Emphasis and support for policy issues coming down the chain of command, without personal spin, are essential from lieutenants and sergeants. Many wardens reported they felt the Colonel and Major's attendance at quarterly sectional meetings was effective at improving and tightening unity of command.

Making supervisors accountable for the command message is critical. The Colonel cannot possibly go to every warden meeting. Supervisors' meetings need to be used to discuss issues and make decisions. It is the sergeant and the lieutenant who are responsible for getting the message to the wardens. Any disagreement should be resolved in these meetings. The resulting message should be uniform and accurate. Supervisors must be accountable if this does not happen.

The telephone survey found wardens were split fairly evenly in their perceptions of how effective and easy communication flowed both up and down the chain of command. Communication down the chain of command was slightly more effective for wardens (60%) than communication up the chain of command (53%). Lack of communication upward through chain of command is often symptomatic of lack of span of control or intentional sabotage.

**Warden Service Recommendation #16:**

**Tighten control and increase accountability concerning unity of command within the Warden Service; petition state human resources to change lieutenants to confidential employees.**

## **Internal/External Public Relations**

### ***Key Issue: Communication diligence***

In both the focus groups and the interviews, improving internal and public communications within the Warden Service was an issue. This is a balancing act when it comes to the Legislature. It is not suggested that the Warden Service set its own agenda apart from the Department. Important is that the Warden Service increase diligence in communicating its function, dilemmas, funding, and staffing requirements to meet the demands placed on them.

A continuous, concerted effort is needed to keep the Legislature informed. There is a different demographic in the woods today for the wardens than there was twenty years ago. The wardens' outdoor work environment is no longer a stereotypical scene of the past featuring the occasional hermit or oddball encounter. Working in the outdoors today, along with traditional hunters, wardens frequently encounter a diversity of recreational users such as urbanites on snowmobiles, cross-country skiers in neon parkas, and heavy-duty, networked criminals.

It is important for the Warden Service to communicate effectively with the Legislature, conscientiously, about the changing realities and increasing demands/needs. Internal/external public relations also includes passing media information about the Warden Service out to all wardens particularly in remote areas, relaying internal issues for all warden input, creating a greater sense of esprit d'corps while overcoming immense geography. Ensuring the consistency of any warden service messages that go out to the public is a critical part of building the wardens' "brand identity," i.e., they are highly dedicated, highly competent natural resource law enforcement professionals.

### ***Key Issue: Improving Warden Image***

Northern and southern Maine is a study in contrasts when comparing the nature and type of warden work. The north has broader, more remote areas and less people hence the more persistent traditional warden approach, i.e., "pinch 'em." Southern Maine is the opposite where a changing, complaint-driven dynamic results in less traditional warden work and more community-oriented policing. The wardens in the north are perceived to be generally less friendly and more "old school." Improving the image of the Maine game warden is an area in which additional public relations efforts could be of great help (See this chapter, Key Issue: Dedicated Communications Position.) The challenge for the Warden Service is dealing effectively with both of these geographical cultures, not one or the other.

### ***Key Issue: Sergeants Critical***

There are not enough lieutenants to effectively communicate messages down the chain of command from the Major/Colonel to the sergeants. The critical function of transmitting a uniform message from the Warden Service to both internal (all wardens and other appropriate agency staff) cannot be undervalued. In addition, communicating both to and from external stakeholders is also critical. Interviews and focus groups identified the need to improve such communication. Sergeant cooperation and accountability is critical.

### ***Key Issue: Dedicated Communications Position***

A perception widely-held within the Department is that the wardens have a public relations/internal communications need which is more than the current staff of I&E can meet. Often, public interaction requires a position dedicated to the communications function. Creating a new position within I&E, dedicated to the Warden Service public and internal communications need is recommended (For further discussion, see Chapter: Information and Education Division, Recommendation # 3). The person who fills this position would not be an officer, but would wear a Department uniform. Placing this position in I&E would best ensure message continuity across the entire Department.

Wardens are often the first responder to major search and rescue operations and other high profile situations. Many times a single warden must represent the Department to the media. Wardens must be prepared for these situations, and they require adequate training to handle media inquiries.

***Warden Service Recommendation # 17:***

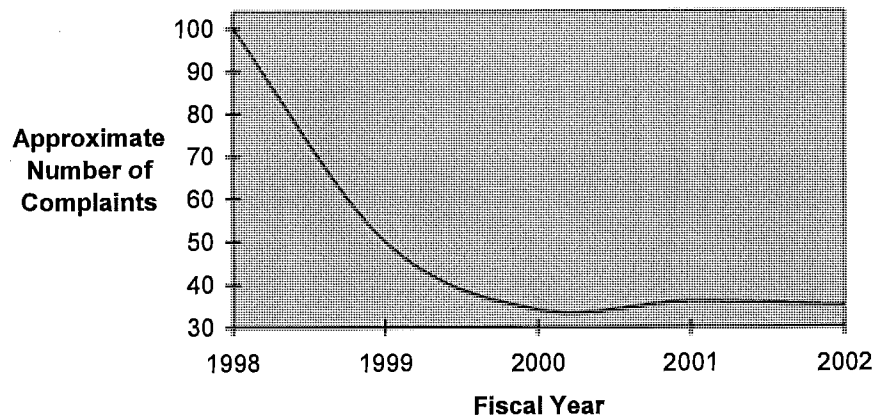
***Have I&E provide wardens training in working with the media.***

### ***Key Issue: Complaint Tracking System***

Today, the number of internal and external complaints made on wardens is approximately one-half the number of complaints as compared to five years ago (See Illustration 2). In 1999, the Warden Service implemented a system to document and track complaints. The system allows for tracking of actions following the complaint and it also earmarks multiple complaints being made on a particular warden. The system is working effectively to be able to monitor performance and take appropriate measures as needed. For example, when a particular warden receives multiple complaints, he/she may be initially counseled, and then with insufficient improvement, he/she may be enrolled in some form of "Charm School" behavior modification training. The Warden Service seeks out the most appropriate type of training based on the actual type of

charm that the individual needs. If the behavior continues to be problematic, he/she may receive disciplinary action.

**Illustration 2. Approximate Complaints from 1998-2002**



### ***Key Issue: Internal Complaint and Investigation Process***

Some wardens report the internal investigation process requires improvement. The current process is driven by MSEA Collective Bargaining Contract for law enforcement in which labor has just as much say as management. Some wardens suggest the manner in which it is handled does not establish two sides of an issue from the beginning, but rather goes immediately into the investigation stage, a stage in which the accused warden cannot respond. Without such preliminary investigation to establish just cause for conducting a full investigation, wardens may feel their careers are being jeopardized. In practice, there currently is no penalty for nefarious accusations.

To both provide greater accountability to the chain of command as well as building trust, it is recommended that an investigator or preferably a 1<sup>st</sup> line supervisor follow procedures outlined in the MSEA Law Enforcement Services Bargaining Unit, Article 11. This will make the supervisor more accountable. The supervisor has a role in detecting, educating, and correcting subordinates. Proactive and informed supervision is the key to preventing bad behavior.

**Warden Service Recommendation # 18:**

**Recommend staff reviews by first line of supervision for probable cause determination and have the new Inspector General evaluate all staff reviews. Re-evaluate the investigation process and procedures with voluntary input from all wardens; redesign, if warranted, under the guidance of the new Inspector General following the requirements of the Maine State Employees Association Collective Bargaining Contract for Law Enforcement.**

## **Accountability**

### **Key Issue: Time Accounting**

Under the present time/activity coding, roughly seventy-five percent (75%) of the wardens' time is spent protecting the resource, enforcing the fish and wildlife regulations. While the time/activity reporting system has been improved greatly, the process needs additional adjustment in order to obtain accurate time and activity accounting and reporting. Not only is it no longer legal for wardens to donate time, it is critical for managing public expectations to be able to know why wardens are always not available. It presents a significant opportunity for electronic solution.

A new Forms Committee within the Warden Service is underway. Part of what they are looking at is how to improve the coding for time and activity reporting. Currently, the codes for the activities are not adequate for the different types of work that the warden does. Often, since there is no correct category in which to code them, wardens must resort to lumping various specific work activities under one, broad code such as "Fish and Wildlife Protection," for example. This results in inaccurate reporting of the time spent on various warden activities. Such accuracy is critically needed to make compelling, defensible arguments when attempting to solicit additional funding. Time accounting needs to be improved as soon as possible since moving to work plans and prioritization of work requires an accurate picture of where the warden's work is currently being spent. This, in turn, can be used to justify an overtime request or new wardens if deemed necessary in the future (See Chapter: Warden Service, Recommendations #5 and #8).

## **Professional Development**

### **Key Issue: Lack of Career Advancement**

Currently, career advancement opportunities are severely limited within the Warden Service; thus, there is no career planning incentive or capability. It is logical to assume that career advancement options have been impacted as a consequence to the Warden

Service downsizing. Not having career advancement opportunities within the Warden Service negatively affects morale. (See Chapter: Warden Service, Recommendation #3).

### ***Key Issue: The Advanced Warden Training (AWT)***

Overall, new warden training appears to be working adequately. Wardens attend the state Criminal Justice Academy for 18 weeks with other Maine law enforcement recruits from other organizations and an additional 8-10 weeks of Advanced Warden Training.

The AWT has room for improvement. Interviews with wardens and former wardens indicated a perception that the balanced paradigm approach promoted in recent years by the Warden Service Bureau is not consistently modeled in the teaching of some of the instructors. Cited were examples of instructors' stories emphasizing the hard-core bust scenarios with all the associated drama and reality. Such stories are needed and appropriate for preparing candidates for the full picture of law enforcement. They are not incorrect, merely incomplete without balancing with examples and stories illustrating the other paradigm of wardens doing customer-service and proactive law enforcement.

#### ***Warden Service Recommendation # 19:***

***Assess instructor performance within the Advanced Warden Training School using anonymous feedback from candidates in the school; provide "train-the-trainer" training for the school's instructors as needed; highlight examples of customer-service excellence in the training curriculum.***

### ***Key Issue: Field Training Officers***

The Field Training Officer (FTO) program is critical to modeling future officers' behavior and training to do the job. FTO's should be volunteers, selected for their exemplar behavior, motivation and high performance. They should be trained and certified (suggest the San Jose Model or similar system). If an FTO's behavior and conduct contradicts what the new warden just learned as a candidate in the training school, confusion and diminished effectiveness for this warden will result. To ensure that all brand new wardens have a process in which they can report such inconsistencies while in field training without fear of retribution from their supervisor, continuous monitoring must be done.



***Warden Service Recommendation # 20:***

***Require all Field Training Officers to have appropriate preparatory training in order to become a Field Training Officer.***

***Key Issue: In-Service Training***

Wardens lack adequate in-service training opportunities, especially in lean times. However, it is extremely important for the wardens to keep their skills toned. They face life-threatening situations. Capable and qualified instructors can be found within the Bureau. Particularly, courses such as self-defense should be made available. Care should be taken to "open up" opportunities for wardens to help other wardens in this regard, and avoid reinforcing the perceptions that only those in the "good 'ol boy clique" are chosen.

***Warden Service Recommendation # 21:***

***Identify individuals from within the Warden Service who are qualified and capable of instructing in-service training for other wardens and solicit their help to make such training opportunities available.***

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<sup>1</sup> Duda, Mark. 2003. Public Opinion on Fish and Wildlife Management Issues and the Reputation and Credibility of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in the Northeast United States. Responsive Management for the Northeast Conservation Information and Education Association, p.39.

## **BUREAU OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES**

### **Overview**

The Bureau of Administrative Services (BAS) staff is committed to doing the best job possible. The managers and supervisors in BAS are knowledgeable and appear to work well as a team. They share a common goal of trying to provide consistent and high quality administrative support to the MDIFW Resources Management and Warden Service Bureaus and the Atlantic Salmon Commission (ASC). Focus groups of BAS external stakeholders, such as license-purchasing customers, reported the BAS has a high level of external customer support.

The following discussion presented in this chapter addresses four key areas that offer opportunities for the Bureau to improve and ten recommendations for consideration:

### ***Key Issue: Staffing***

#### **Personnel Division**

There is too much work for the two staff members managing personnel functions for MDIFW. Given the major responsibilities of the Personnel Division and the number of employees in the MDIFW and the ASC, it is clear that at least one staff member should be added if the Personnel Division is to fully and effectively meet its mandates. This is particularly so when external pressures and internal stress levels are increasing.

Some areas that could be improved by additional staffing in the Personnel Division include internal communications, employee recognition program, employee training including specialized training among divisions (e.g. hazardous chemicals), expanded safety and health program, and overall morale.



#### ***Administrative Services Recommendation # 1:***

***Add one permanent, full-time Personnel Specialist position, with primary duties focused on improving internal communications, to serve as the Department-wide training coordinator and the Department's employee health and safety officer.***

The Personnel Officer may be at least two pay grades lower than counterparts in other Maine agencies. MAT was unable to confirm this with outside sources. However, it warrants investigation by the Department. If there is a disparity, it should be rectified.

**Administrative Services Recommendation # 2:**

*Conduct a conclusive study of salary comparables and, if warranted, upgrade the Department's Personnel Officer's status in grade and pay to a level commensurate with Personnel Officers in other Maine state government departments who have similar duties and responsibilities.*

**Licensing and Registration (L&R)**

L&R has been functioning at an unsustainable pace. L&R clerks often work overtime and Saturdays, and they are recruiting volunteer assistance from clerical staff from other parts of the agency in exchange for overtime. There is insufficient office space to simply add additional licensing staff. Understandably, stress levels run high. However, the staff is committed to performing the best they can.

The functions of the L&R Division are complex and difficult to manage effectively. As is the case with other units of the Department, L&R faces increasing unfunded legislative mandates. If the Legislature adds a new type of license or registration requirement, for example, or micromanages special hunt lotteries, the L&R must adapt the necessary changes in the system. They must spend time and money to get the needed information about the changes out to the public in a timely manner. In addition, the Division has to provide information and summary data on most proposed bills affecting MDIFW activities (as many as 300 in recent years) and provide information at public hearings. All of this is very time-consuming layered on top of the routine duties of the L&R staff.

**Administrative Services Recommendation # 3:**

*Open lines of communication with the Legislature and key constituencies to ensure that proposed changes to licensing are feasible, economical, and efficient. Communicate the costs in dollars and/or dropped service.*

There is no simple solution to resolving the staffing overload issues within the L&R. These problems can only be solved using a multi-faceted approach. The Maine Online Sportsmen's Electronic System (MOSES) needs to reach full functionality to reduce the workload of the existing licensing staff (discussed in detail later in this chapter), and MDIFW needs to further streamline its license and permit offerings. Together these approaches can in time ease the stress and overload of L&R clerks. Following successful implementation of MOSES, workloads should normalize for L&E personnel and the workloads are more likely to be appropriate for the current staffing level.

**Administrative Services Recommendation # 4**

***Maintain current staffing levels in L&R following implementation of MOSES. Continue to contract data entry until backlogs are eliminated.***

MAT conducted a telephone survey of 38 license buyers whose names were supplied by Sportsmen's Alliance of Maine (SAM) to evaluate satisfaction with purchasing licenses and permits from MDIFW (See *Overview of license purchase survey by select SAM members for 2003 or 2004* in MAT Review Report, DATA, under separate cover). Overwhelmingly, the respondents were satisfied with their experience with a minimum average satisfaction rating of 4.5 on a scale of 5 for all sales channels. No respondents indicated dissatisfaction.

### ***Key Issue: Information Systems***

The Information Systems' (IS) "two-person team" does an excellent job of providing technical support and information technology (IT) services to the MDIFW headquarters and regional offices, staff located in remote areas, and the ASC. The current focus is trying to obtain the necessary computer hardware and software needed by employees to do their jobs and to do so in the most cost efficient manner. Every effort is made to operate inexpensively while providing quality and timely service.

#### **Basic Computer Support**

The most serious problem confronting information technology within the MDIFW is the lack of adequate funding to provide more than the most basic computer support for all staff (e.g., wardens in regional offices and remote areas). The Department has about 220 computers connected to the state network and another 13 computers with dial-up connections. The IS staff spends significant time traveling to remote locations for computer maintenance – a large burden when considering the computer to technician ratio of more than 115 to 1. There is also a serious lack of funding for software upgrades as well as for formal training for employees in the proper use of those tools.

#### **Computer Replacement Cycle**

The computer replacement cycle is often extended to five years, and many computers are obsolete. Many organizations replace computers at 48 months or less because of security risks, software compatibility issues, and support costs.

Currently, MDIFW inventories indicate that forty-four percent (44%) of Department computers use the Windows 98 operating system that is no longer supported by the manufacturer, Microsoft Corporation. The latest Microsoft operating system, Windows XP, includes the ability for remote administrators to troubleshoot and fix many problems on client computers through the Internet. Upgrading all computers to Windows XP would be an important time saver, reducing the workload for the IS staff. Some

computers will be up-gradable to XP with little additional hardware cost. Computers that do not meet minimum requirements for Windows XP need to be replaced with computers loaded with Windows XP.



**Administrative Services Recommendation # 5:**

***Upgrade all MDIFW computers to Windows XP or replace non-XP compatible computers to facilitate remote administration, increasing efficiency for IS staff. Minimally, all computers should run on operating systems supported by their manufacturer.***

The MDIFW communications is increasingly dependant on agency-wide computer access for all employees. Those employees that do not currently have computers or regular access to a computer are at a disadvantage because a large amount of information is shared via email and websites. All employees should have computer access. Employees who do not require an assigned computer should share workstations, e.g. hatchery employees. This need is discussed specifically for wardens in Chapter: Warden Service, Recommendation # 2.



**Administrative Service Recommendation # 6:**

***Provide computers or computer access to all MDIFW employees to include appropriate software and training. Sufficient funding must be allocated annually to pay for Internet connections and technical support for the additional computers.***

The Department has other serious information systems technology problems that could soon reach crisis proportions. For example, they have several legacy systems, including their federal billing and lottery hunts systems that are running on archaic coding, nearly 20 years old. As an example, in the case of the lottery hunts individuals will no longer limited to the number of applications (i.e., finite number) that can be submitted for a particular hunt, instead they may apply for an unlimited number (i.e., infinite) of applications. This one change alone will require a major re-write of the system coding, detailed technical analysis, and testing. There is currently no funding available to deal with these fast approaching technical dilemmas, although the Department has initiated efforts to address this issue.



**Administrative Service Recommendation # 7:**

**Analyze and re-write the legacy software, particularly the lottery hunts.**

*Strategy: Submit a supplemental request budget for comprehensive information technology upgrades with detailed justification for the computer upgrades (see Administrative Services Recommendation #5), new computers, software purchase, network access, and legacy system recoding.*

**Accounting**

The Accounting Section's staff of five employees is at the minimum level required to meet its assigned responsibilities and support functions for the MDIFW and the ASC. As the other Administrative Service functions within the MDIFW, the accountants have had to operate on ever-tightening funds. They have tried to take advantage of every opportunity to maximize the Department's ability to operate in Maine's severe fiscal climate.

Employee perceptions of the MDIFW accounting were bi-polar according to the employee telephone survey and interviews. When those with budget management responsibilities were asked if the cost accounting system provided them with accurate data, fifty-two percent (52%) agreed (strongly or moderately) and forty-eight percent (48%) disagreed. Also, senior budget managers were far more likely to disagree. According to the thematic analysis of employee interviews, seventy-three percent (73%) of the employees significantly rejected the idea they have the ability to know their budget throughout the year.

**Reporting**

The Accounting section provides each organizational entity (e.g., Wildlife Division, Warden Service, etc.) with a Monthly Expenditure Report, usually by the middle of each month, which details expenditures by type of operating expense. It does not show salary expenditures.

Some budget managers, particularly those in the Wildlife Division or those who are involved in multi-party land acquisitions find these reports incomplete, inaccurate, and difficult to understand. Other budget managers indicated that the reports were adequate and they received the information from accounting they needed to manage their programs. Interviews with employees found unanimous agreement that the reporting format was not useful for project managers.

Some budget managers do not get budget reports that accurately reflect their current budget because expenses were not yet entered in the accounting system. Accounting is an "after-the-fact" record of what has been spent, and reports will not reflect expenditures and encumbrances until bills have been entered into the accounting

system. The people expending most of the Department's operating funds lack a useful reporting tool to help them track their own expenditures. In essence, some project managers with budget responsibilities are "flying blind."

**Administrative Service Recommendation # 8:**

***Develop with input from representative budget managers, a standardized, electronic spreadsheet for tracking monthly operational expenditures for use Department-wide.***

**Accounting Systems**

The thematic analysis of employee interviews showed a split on whether budget managers felt their budget situation was clear, i.e. at any time during the budget cycle they were unclear on how much money they had to spend. The employee telephone survey has similar data. Of the 30 employees who said they have budget responsibilities, forty-seven percent (47%) disagreed that the cost accounting system provides them with the information they need.

**Project and "Job" Tracking**

Accounting has only partially tracked Federal Aid reporting for wildlife programs. In large part, the Wildlife Division keeps its own records for Federal Aid reporting because the MDIFW accounts are not tracking expenditures to the job level (Federal Aid refers to a project such as Spring Bear Monitoring in 2004 as a "Job").

The state accounting system has the capability to track expenditures to the job level by adding a single, eight digit data element to the accounting system. However, job-tracking capabilities for Federal Aid projects have not yet been implemented, citing workload and accuracy issues it would create for Department accountants. There are two overriding problems with multiple accounting systems for the Wildlife Division: The two systems will be very difficult to reconcile, and effort is duplicated.

Federal Aid accounting for the Fisheries Division has not had the same issues as the Wildlife Division. The Fisheries Division has fewer dedicated accounts to track, the budget is managed more centrally than the Wildlife Division budget, and to date fisheries has not yet begun job tracking. Currently, the accounting systems will meet the needs of the Fisheries Division. However, the US Fish and Wildlife Service regional office in Hadley, MA, which manages the Federal Aid programs for state fish and wildlife agencies in the region, plans to implement job-tracking requirements for all states under its authority. This will necessitate job tracking for Federal Aid programs managed by the Fisheries in the next biennial budget.

The Fisheries Division is currently developing its biennial budget and will implement job tracking per Federal Aid requirements. This will further necessitate a single accounting



solution for all MDIFW budgets. Departmental cost tracking to the project level is also discussed in Chapter: Department Overall, Recommendations # 14 and # 15.

### **Tracking Partner Contributions**

Another systemic shortcoming of the accounting systems appears to be an inability or failure to completely track partner contributions to land acquisitions and other dedicated funds. Because these revenue sources are not tracked through the central accounting system, individual project managers are responsible for tracking these revenue sources on their own. All revenue sources should be tracked through the central accounting system.

***Administrative Service Recommendation # 9:***

***Implement central tracking for partner contributions and other non-tracked revenue sources.***

Unfortunately, these changes will require some additional effort from the accounting section. This may require additional staffing, and the Department will need to weigh these staffing needs against other critical staffing needs across the agency.

### **Cash Flow**

The Department fights cash flow issues on an ongoing basis. Budget managers and the Chief Accountant reported that money is commonly shuffled among dedicated fund accounts to ensure that there is adequate funding to cover certain expenses. The state policy of restricting budget rollovers based on quarterly budgets is overly burdensome on MDIFW. The accounting team uses every tool at its disposal to give program managers maximum flexibility. By restricting quarterly rollovers, the state is creating an additional accounting burden, and further creating inefficiency because of the extra effort the Department expends to work within the constraints of this policy.

In order to maintain adequate cash, the accounting team aggressively manages payments on large recurring expenses such as Bureau of Information Services (BIS) charges and motor pool. Funds are commonly transferred between expended and under-expended budgets at the end of a quarter to ensure that the Department, as a whole, captures every dollar at its disposal. Funds are transferred back into the originating budget at the beginning of the quarter. This creates problems with reporting, and some budget managers feel that because of this practice they are never confident in the overall status of their budget. Again, this is as an additional cause for maintaining duplicative accounting systems in the Wildlife Division.

### **Key Issue: Engineering & Realty (E&R)**

The E&R section is responsible for maintaining MDIWF buildings, hatcheries, fishways, and dams with an operating budget of \$150,000 per year to inspect, repair, and upgrade

the facilities and infrastructure under MDIFW ownership and responsibility. This is probably less than one-half of the funding required for facilities operation and maintenance.

### **Dams**

The small amount of funding authorized for E&R activities greatly limits the staff's ability to conduct regular dam inspections, much less make the necessary repairs on the Department's 77 dams. They must focus on known emergencies and make critical repairs as cheaply as possible, while knowing that other significant problems are getting worse. Out of necessity, E&R essentially runs a "band aid" operation, fully understanding that they are fighting a losing battle of passing time and greater deterioration of dams statewide.

Several years ago, the Concord Dam, located west of Bingham, failed and caused a major washout of Route 16. The Maine DOT had to spend nearly one million dollars to repair the road damages. In late winter/early spring of 2004, there were additional dam failures; one dam failed on an impoundment that had provided a brook trout fishery and another dam gave way on a fish hatchery pond.

In addition to possible damages to downstream state infrastructures (e.g., roadways), dam failures in some locations could potentially harm private and commercial properties and threaten public safety. The potential liabilities associated with dam deterioration, disrepair, and failures are enormous. This is and probably will become a greater, critical problem for MDIFW in future years.

As evidenced by the dam failures, it is generally more cost effective to maintain infrastructure than fix the damage caused by dam or structural failure.



#### ***Administrative Services Recommendation # 10:***

***Increase the Engineering and Realty (E&R) operating budget to a level that provides for a "minimum maintenance" funding level (at least \$300,000) for MDIFW facilities, particularly dams; seek one-time funding to complete upgrades to those dams that are seriously deteriorated and could potentially threaten public safety and/or result in significant damage to downstream private properties or state infrastructure.***

*Strategy: Provide the Governor and Legislature with a detailed listing, in priority order, of those sites needing the most immediate attention and estimated costs for completing the restorations. Once restorations have been completed on the most deteriorated/threatening dams, this special funding could cease.*

MAT also recommends that E&R move to the new Bureau of Habitat (see Chapter: Department Overall, Key Issue: Structure, Recommendation #6).

### ***Key Issue: MOSES***

Through an extraordinary staff effort the BAS has met the challenges incumbent with the delay of The Maine Online Sportsmen's Electronic System (MOSES). The MDIFW sells about 450,000 licenses annually. Approximately sixty-five percent (65%) of the households in Maine have a PC and are connected to the Internet. Since March 1, 2003, the Department sold nearly 17,000 licenses electronically to people using their home PCs to access the Department's website. About forty-two percent (42%) of the antlerless deer permits were obtained via Internet.

The Maine Online Sportsmen's Electronic System (MOSES) was contracted approximately three years ago with Worldcom Telecommunications (now MCI) as an online and point-of-sale system for hunting and fishing licenses. The system was specified to include robust data mining capabilities to better enable the agency to understand its customers and the market for hunting and fishing licenses.

The Department will continue its hard copy license sales, but successful MOSES implementation should significantly reduce paperwork. Agents will be able to use either electronic entry (MOSES) or continue to use the paper applications, or have both available.

MOSES has so far cost the Department more than it is saving. MOSES has yet to deliver the data mining, customer convenience, and increased licensing efficiency that initially justified the project.

MOSES' development could easily be described as a "nightmare." Worldcom was originally chosen as the developer of MOSES because their bid was cheapest and they agreed to drop their price even more to accommodate the available funding (about two point one million dollars). Unfortunately, Worldcom filed for bankruptcy during the early stages of MOSES' development and MOSES was stalled. However, from the beginning of MOSES' development, the Department and Administrative Services employees acted appropriately. Looking at MOSES' history, there is no conceivable way that the agency could have anticipated Worldcom's bankruptcy. In fact, MAT was told in interviews that the agency was given no prior notification of the impending Worldcom problems until the evening before the Worldcom bankruptcy led national news stories.

Due to numerous factors associated with the slower than anticipated development and implementation of MOSES (e.g., Worldcom/MCI went bankrupt), the L&R has built up a tremendous backlog of license and registration data. To assist with this backlog, the Division contracted with a private firm to provide basic data entry for license data and registration renewals. The Department has worked out an agreement with MCI to

complete Moses development, and, at the contract completion, MDIFW will contract with Maine BIS to manage the MOSES database and provide customer reporting, etc.

No further recommendations are necessary regarding MOSES.

## **Management Assistance Team**

The Management Assistance Team (MAT) is an organizational management consultancy and training resource exclusively for state fish and wildlife agencies nationwide. MAT helps agencies increase their effectiveness by providing organization development, human resource development, team building, leadership development, and agency management consulting expertise and/or training by request.

MAT's funding is provided by a multi-state conservation grant to the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies. Because of this, there is no need for agencies to pay for MAT staff time, travel, or per diem when using MAT's services.

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