

## Chapter 2: The Planning Process

*This chapter describes the effort and ideas involved in developing this plan. It begins with a brief history of the plan, and describes the major steps in the process. It also includes a list of participating agencies and interest groups, and reviews how the public was invited to participate in the process. Finally, it provides a list of “planning principles” that were used to guide decision-making in the plan.*

### A Chronology of the Planning Effort

Oct. 1993-Sep. 1995	Several wildlife conflict incidents result in human deaths. (Woman killed by moose, Oct. 1993; man killed by moose, Jan. 1995; two people killed by bear, Chugach Park, July 1995; 24 people killed in aircraft collision with Canada geese, September 1995.)
Winter 1994-1995	Harsh winter results in 25 to 30% decline in moose population, including a record number of moose-vehicle collisions (resulting in 239 moose deaths).
November 1995	Representative Con Bunde holds a legislative hearing on moose problems and solutions in Anchorage.
1995, 96, 97, and 99	Board of Game considers controlled moose hunt in Chugach State Park.
February 1996	Focus groups on moose hunt conducted for ADF&G.
Winter 1996-1997	General population survey on wildlife issues initiated by ADF&G. Public meeting on survey issues, Alaska Public Lands Information Center (APLIC).
1997	Municipality begins Anchorage Bowl Comprehensive Plan.
Fall 1997	Public meeting on survey results held at Campbell Creek Nature Center.
Fall 1997	Creation of planning team.
Winter 1997-1998	Agreement on planning team group process, etc.
February 1998	Public meeting to identify planning issues, goals/objectives held at APLIC.
Spring 1998	Planning team develops plan goals and objectives.
Spring/Summer 1998	Inter-agency commitment documented via development of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).
Fall 1998	Planning team develops actions.
January 1999	Public meeting/open house to review actions held at Fairview Recreation Center.
Spring 1999	Planning team prioritizes actions and begins drafting plan.
May 1999	Public Review Draft Plan and newsletter summary released.
May-June 1999	Public meeting on Public Review Draft Plan, and public comment period.
July-October 1999	Planning team responds to public comments and revises document
November 1999	Final draft released for coordination with Municipality of Anchorage.
April 2000	Final plan released.

### Steps in the Process

The planning effort followed a standard comprehensive planning process. The basic steps were to: 1) review issues; 2) collect information about issues; 3) develop goals and objectives; 4) develop actions that could be used to meet goals and objectives; and 5) choose among these alternative actions. By calling them steps, this process implies tasks were approached serially; however, the planning team revised goals, objectives, and alternatives throughout the process. A brief discussion of these steps is given below.

**Issues.** “Scoping” and the development of a list of issues was the starting point for the plan. These were developed by the planning team but included input from public meetings held in fall of 1997 and February 1998. The list of issues is provided in Chapter 4.

**Goals and objectives.** These are broad, qualitative statements about what managers are trying to accomplish in the plan. Goals attempt to reflect broad public values toward wildlife and the environment, while objectives are more concrete. The planning team spent considerable time on this step through the winter of 1997-98 so they could be included in the goals and objectives of the Anchorage Municipality Comprehensive Plan. Information from the February 1998 public meeting and the survey of residents was useful during this step. Chapter 3 presents the goals and objectives for the plan.

**Indicators/standards.** This step involves choosing measurable variables to define and give meaning to the qualitative objectives above. Indicators and standards define healthy population ranges for different species, and establish tolerance thresholds for wildlife conflicts. The planning team implicitly developed these throughout the process, but explicitly defined them in the Public Review Draft. Information from the survey of residents and the public meeting/open house in January 1999 was useful for this step. Indicators and standards are presented in Chapter 4 on the state of wildlife in Anchorage.

**Developing and prioritizing alternatives.** The bulk of the planning effort in the past eight months has focused on brainstorming actions that could be used to meet the goals, objectives, and standards in the plan. Much of this work was done in planning team meetings, but included consideration of survey results and information from the public meeting/open house held in January 1998. The list and description of actions are the heart of the plan, and are presented in Chapters 5 and 6.

**Draft and final plans.** A Public Review Draft was developed in the spring of 1999 and was also summarized in a newsletter. As with any draft plan, the goals, objectives, standards, and actions in the plan were considered proposals, and the planning team received considerable public comment about them throughout the summer of 1999. Several revisions in the plan were based in part on those comments, and are discussed in sections of this Final Plan, which was prepared in August-September 1999.

## Agency and Interest Group Participation

The following lists the agencies and interest groups that participated in the planning effort. The list includes primary contacts for each agency.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game	David Fulton, Gay Muhlberg, Rick Sinnott, Jonne Slemmons, Barry Stratton, Doug Whittaker (consultant)
US Fish and Wildlife Service	Maureen deZeeuw, Karen Laing
US Army – Fort Richardson	Laurie Angell, Bill Gossweiler
US Air Force -- Elmendorf	Tom Liebscher, Kate Wedemeyer
Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage Office	Jeff Denton, Bruce Seppi
Chugach State Park	Al Meiners
Chugach State Park Advisory Board	Judi Ramage
Municipality of Anchorage:	
Community Planning & Development	Thede Tobish
Cultural and Recreational Services	Jerry Walton
Heritage Land Bank	Michelle Weston York
Anchorage Fish & Game Advisory Committee	Ray Reekie, Patrick Wright
The Great Land Trust	Beth Silverberg, Evie Witten, Abby Wyers
Alaska Wildlife Alliance	Greg Brown, Karen Deatherage
Anchorage Audubon Society	Malcolm Ford , George Matz
Eagle River Valley Community Council	Bob Carlson
South Addition Community Council	Karen Cameron
Bayshore Klatt Community Council	Smiley Shields
US Forest Service, Glacier Ranger District	Susan Oehlers
Risk Management, Anchorage School District	Tom Bibeau
Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau	Barbara Bryant
Anchorage Chamber of Commerce	Sean Skaling
Parks & Recreation, Girdwood Board of Supervisors	Norman Starkey
Nordic Ski Association	Dirk Sisson, Kimberly Griffin

## Public Involvement

Interest groups and the public had a number of opportunities to assist in developing the plan. Public involvement was essentially built into the process along three tracks.

First, the planning team was developed with representatives from several agencies or interest groups with wildlife responsibilities. While certain groups chose not to participate to a significant degree, they were kept informed throughout the process via summaries of planning team meetings. This collaborative process provided excellent opportunities for diverse voices in the community to express their views and shape the plan.

Second, periodic public meetings/open houses were held to keep interested individuals informed about the process. As shown in the chronology above, five public meetings were held during the development of the plan. All public meetings were advertised in the newspaper, and the meetings on actions and the draft plan were also publicized through a planning newsletter sent to wider mailing lists of individuals who might be interested in the effort.

Finally, values and attitudes of the general public were assessed through a scientific survey of residents (Whittaker and Manfredo, 1997). This survey was initiated in the beginning of the process, but anticipated a number of issues in the plan. A summary of the survey results is available from ADF&G.



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The public was invited to comment on the plan throughout the process. (Open House to brainstorm plan actions at Fairview Recreation Center, January, 1999.)

## Planning Principles

In developing the plan and preparing this document, the planning team was asked to consider a number of “planning principles,” listed below. The intent was to design a process appropriate to the need for a collaborative, integrated vision for Anchorage wildlife management. These “principles” helped define content needed in the plan, and encouraged an informal but effective decision-making environment.

***The plan must be clear and understandable; the general public is the target audience.*** The public is largely unimpressed by planning efforts. They often view planning as a ritualistic exercise that rubber-stamps decisions that have already been made, or as a long, drawn-out process that keeps bureaucrats employed writing unreadable documents. To combat this problem, the plan should be as accessible as possible with explicit statements about what government agencies would like to do and why.

***The plan should be comprehensive, but based on available information.*** The “comprehensive” planning ideal requires consideration of all possible information about an issue and consultation with all possible publics and stakeholders. In reality – mostly because of funding or schedule constraints – this plan must be developed with available information and open but limited opportunities for public involvement. When a decision cannot be made because we do not have enough detailed information, that decision should be deferred and information needs identified.

***Recognition that the plan will be non-binding, but important.*** As a plan that addresses the authorities and interests of several agencies and groups, we recognize that complete agreement is unlikely and that no agency will be able to commit to every idea in the plan. Accordingly, the plan is not designed to be legally binding. However, agencies should not underestimate the power of this kind of “vision plan.” In developing this plan, agencies are committing to seriously consider and utilize this plan in the making more detailed plans or other decisions relevant to their Anchorage wildlife management responsibilities.

***Recognition of a limited planning time horizon (about ten years).*** Plans are based on snapshots of information and reflect the interests and priorities of the time in which they are developed. The goal is to anticipate future issues and resources, but the ability to accurately predict is always limited. Accordingly, the plan should generally consider a ten-year planning horizon. If new information or circumstances create the need to revise decisions in the plan during the ten year period, amendments to the plan offer an explicit way for agencies to re-think positions and actions.

***Recognition of differences between “now” decisions, and intentions.*** Plans can have many different types of decisions. Some are “now” decisions designed for immediate implementation (e.g., policies on how to deal with wildlife conflicts). Others are “intentions” – what government should do if funding or other resources became available. The key to good planning is to recognize and clearly identify which kind of decisions are being made.

***The goal is to make decisions, even on controversial issues.*** A fault of many plans is that they only get agreement on the “easy” decisions. However, there is little point in planning only to satisfy the “lowest common denominator.” Accordingly, the goal is to push the team as far as it can go on every decision.

***If the planning team can’t reach consensus on a decision, a deferred decision is acceptable.*** In some cases, consensus may not be possible. In these cases, we will not use a majority vote to make a decision that will not be generally supported by all agencies. In these cases, our obligation is to document the

points of disagreement and defer the decision; we will also offer a specific process, timeline, and lead agency for tackling these issues in the future.

***Recognition of complexity and diversity in developing urban wildlife plans.*** Urban wildlife plans are usually more complex than those for rural or wildland areas. In this plan, decisions will address multiple species, issues, interests, and agencies.

***Recognition that Anchorage is likely to continue growing in both population and development levels.*** Anchorage has grown dramatically in the past three decades, and indicators suggest the city will continue to increase in population and development levels in the foreseeable future. The issue in this and other natural resource plans is to manage that growth so it does not diminish the characteristics, function, and benefits of the resources (e.g., wildlife and open space) that enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors.

***Recognition of the limitations of managing wildlife in urban areas.*** Urban wildlife plans are challenging because most of the land is not in public ownership, and lands that are public are managed for a variety of specific purposes that may or may not be compatible with wildlife goals. Many actions will need to include education/regulation options in addition to direct actions that can be contemplated for public lands.



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ANCHORAGE DAILY NEWS

***Recognition that cities are essentially “non-natural” areas.*** Urban areas are modified environments – there is little sense in thinking they can be managed to provide the full diversity of “natural” ecosystems. More importantly, plan choices may often need to be based on social values toward various species and habitat types, not full ecological potential. These decisions require both social and biological information.

***Recognition that there are few models for urban wildlife plans.*** There are few (if any) good models of multiple-species urban wildlife plans. In this effort, the planning team faces a challenge, but also has an opportunity to pioneer new ideas and think beyond the boundaries of more narrow agency mandates.

***Distinction between representing interest groups/agencies and representing the interests of the greater Anchorage public.*** Each planning team member represents an agency/group and will be expected to represent that agency at certain times in the process. However, there are other times when team members should remove their “agency hat” and put on a “community hat.” Wildlife do not respect land ownership boundaries, and there is good evidence that the public is unconcerned about the fine line of agency jurisdictions. The goal in this effort is sound, integrated wildlife management for Anchorage; this is more likely with a focus on the larger picture.