

# WS Directive

1.201 07/20/09

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## MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY OF THE WS PROGRAM

### 1. PURPOSE

To state the mission and management philosophy of the USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services program.

### 2. REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

This directive replaces WS Directive 1.201 dated 09/16/03.

### 3. WS MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services (WS) is to provide Federal leadership in managing conflicts with wildlife. WS recognizes that wildlife is an important public resource greatly valued by the American people. By its very nature, however, wildlife is a highly dynamic and mobile resource that can cause damage to agriculture and property, pose risks to human health and safety, and affect natural resources. WS conducts programs of research, technical assistance, and applied management to resolve problems that occur when human activity and wildlife conflict with one another.

### 4. WS MANAGEMENT PHILOSOPHY

a. General Philosophy. In the United States, wildlife is a publicly-owned resource held in trust and managed by State and Federal agencies. Government agencies, including WS, are required by law and regulation to conserve and manage wildlife resources while being responsive to public desires, views and attitudes. In so doing, agencies must also respond to requests for resolution of damage and other problems caused by wildlife. Wildlife damage management is defined as the alleviation of damage or other problems caused by or related to the presence of wildlife. Wildlife damage management is an integral part of managing our Nation's wildlife resources.

Wildlife sometimes causes significant damage to agricultural crops and livestock, forests, pastures, property and infrastructure in urban and rural areas, and threatened and endangered species and their habitats. Wildlife also can threaten human health and safety through animal-borne diseases and hazards to aircraft, or affect quality of life.

Prevention or management of wildlife conflicts is an essential and responsible part of wildlife management. Before wildlife damage management programs are undertaken, careful assessments should be made of the problem and all options for resolving or mitigating the problem. Actions considered and employed should be biologically sound,

environmentally safe, scientifically valid, and socially acceptable. The WS program also strives to reduce damage caused by wildlife by emphasizing control methodologies designed to minimize risks to humans, the potentially affected wildlife species, non-target species, and the environment. WS research and methods development provide the scientific information and management techniques necessary to achieve this high standard. WS uses an integrated wildlife damage management (IWDM) approach to resolving conflicts with wildlife. IWDM includes the integration and application of all practical methods of prevention and control to minimize wildlife damage.

A responsive and effective WS program addresses the wildlife damage management problem, promotes more tolerance toward wildlife, and avoids the likelihood of management actions by an unqualified or untrained public. Failure to provide scientifically sound and acceptable solutions to damage caused by wildlife may force the public to attempt solutions on their own, which may be detrimental to wildlife, the environment, and people.

WS' vision is to improve the coexistence of people and wildlife, while considering a wide range of public interests that can conflict with one another. These interests include wildlife conservation, biological diversity, and the welfare of animals, as well as the management of wildlife for purposes of enjoyment, recreation, and livelihood.

b. Cooperation. An effective national WS program using the IWDM approach requires a close cooperative association with other Federal, State and local agencies. WS has signed memoranda of understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, Federal Aviation Administration, Department of Defense, and many State wildlife, agriculture, natural resource, and public health and safety agencies. These MOUs establish the framework governing WS activities by defining responsibilities and establishing procedures for cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

Congress frequently directs WS to perform specific wildlife damage tasks or to devote specified resources to particular damage problems. Additionally, cost sharing is an integral part of the WS program. If requested, WS may enter into agreements with other Federal or State agencies, county or local governments, or private organizations and individuals to resolve wildlife conflicts. In addition, WS provides technical assistance to the general public in the form of advice, recommendations, information, or materials for use in managing wildlife conflicts.

Because of laws unique to various State and local governments, cooperative arrangements may vary considerably. Cooperator participation is an important feature of the WS program, and resource-sharing with cooperating partners is fundamental to WS' mission.

c. Planning. WS activities may be conducted under national WS business plans and/or State level strategic plans which identify important Program focus areas and resources needed to accomplish specific goals and objectives. Annual work plans and financial

plans are developed for most cooperatively funded WS operational activities. These plans describe how the activities will comply with applicable laws, regulations, and policies and how funds will be spent. WS work/financial plans identify specific objectives in accordance with APHIS policy and management objectives. Cooperators participate in the planning process as well as evaluation of program effectiveness.

d. WS Methods Development and Research. The WS National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC) is the research arm of the WS program. NWRC is devoted to resolving conflicts caused by the interaction of wild animals and society. The Center applies scientific expertise to the development of practical methods to resolve these problems and to maintain the quality of the environments shared with wildlife. The NWRC conducts scientific-based research and methods development to provide WS and the American public science-based strategies and effective techniques to manage wildlife damage.

## 5. REFERENCES

WS Directive 2.101, Selecting Wildlife Damage Control Methods (07/20/09).  
WS Directive 2.110, Wildlife Services Research and Methods Development (07/21/08).  
WS Strategic Planning: Internal and External Perspectives (October 2000).

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin Mendoza, Jr." in a cursive script.

Acting Deputy Administrator