



Conservation Federation

MISSOURI

Five Year Strategic Plan
March 2019 – March 2024

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Message from the Board

As the Conservation Federation of Missouri moves through its 80th year of existence, we can look back with a great sense of pride. We have accomplished much as an organization on our own and in partnership with others. Our foundation is solid and our purpose over the years has been clear. However, the challenges we face today and in the future are many and great.

As it was 80 years ago, the battle for conservation and scientific management of our natural resources wages on as political forces continue to seek ways to control the work of conservation and natural resource professionals. The demands and shifting character of society today requires all of us to think differently about the management and use of the land, water, and related forests, fish, and wildlife resources. And with so many voices trying to be heard, it is increasingly difficult to squeeze through the crowd to find a place at the table.

This strategic plan is an effort to fine-tune and focus the Federation in order to better prepare for the immediate challenges and what lies ahead in the future. It does not address everything the organization needs to do but it does highlight our most fundamental priorities, with the overriding idea that we exist primarily to further the cause of conservation and to provide the citizens a voice in the ongoing debate.



This Plan identifies goals and objectives that will guide CFM over the next three to five years. Objectives are supported by an initial set of strategies that will be evaluated and modified over time as needed. Staff will use objectives and strategies as the basis for development of annual work plans and accomplishment reporting.

Strategic Planning - Anticipatory decision-making meant to establish a framework for making day-to-day decisions, and a means by which those decisions may be evaluated.

Goals - Generalized directional statements for an intended purpose (e.g., to improve, increase, maintain, decrease, provide, etc.); qualitative and usually not quantified.

Objectives - Concise statements of what will be accomplished.

Strategies- Statement(s) of an approach to achieve an objective(s).

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	3
<i>The Mission of the Conservation Federation of Missouri</i>	3
Advocacy	3
Legislative and Policy Action	4
Statements of Position and Resolutions	4
Education, Outreach, and Partnerships	5
Conservation Leadership Corps	5
Missouri Collegiate Conservation Alliance.....	6
Share the Harvest.....	6
Awards and Scholarships	6
Funding and Finances	9
Organizational Development	10
Governance	12
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	14

Introduction

The Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM) Board of Directors has the responsibility to conduct and manage the business of the Federation. An essential prerequisite for effectively meeting that responsibility is the availability of a strategic plan that articulates organizational goals and objectives that may be used as the basis for effectively conducting CFM activities for the next 3-5 years.

The following information is an update to the strategic plan originally developed in 2015. It is our intention that this plan guide the work of CFM, understanding that selecting priorities will be a dynamic process based on the realities of the moment. However, this document is expected to provide a solid foundation for day-to-day decisions and activities by the leadership and staff of CFM.

The Mission of the Conservation Federation of Missouri

To ensure conservation of Missouri's wildlife and natural resources, and preservation of our state's rich outdoor heritage through advocacy, education and partnerships.

Advocacy

For over 80 years, CFM has been known as "The Voice for Missouri Outdoors." Actively involved in state and national issues relating to conservation and natural resources, the Federation has long been a prominent and effective leader, respected for our opinion and fairness. Our history of standing tall for Missouri conservation speaks for itself. Today, however, many voices are vying for the listener's ear, and it has become increasingly difficult to distinguish which issues are important and worthy of our time. We believe it is our duty to sort through the clutter and advance a balanced opinion representative of the views and values held by all Missourians who believe in the idea of wise use and scientific management of our state's abundant natural resources.

The Federation's history is also deeply connected to the departments of Conservation and Natural Resources through the many common goals we share. We clearly feel a responsibility to preserve and ensure continuation of the authority and dedicated funding assigned to these two agencies as granted by the voters of Missouri. We also seek opportunities to support the programs and actions of these agencies consistent with our own mission while simultaneously serving as a watchdog, understanding that a special level of public accountability is required of these agencies because of their unique standing and responsibilities.

Finally, many other governmental and non-governmental organizations have the ability to influence the conservation of our precious natural resources, and how those resources might be used and enjoyed by citizens today and in the future. As opportunities develop, we will work with these groups and affiliates to achieve favorable outcomes as true partners.

Legislative and Policy Action

Monitoring legislative and policy issues at the state and national level is an important CFM function. Through the watchful eyes of members, affiliates and partners, CFM attempts to sort through and prioritize topics of interest, looking for the best way to advance our unique point of view. Experience has told us that many members do not understand the basic legislative process or how to effectively interact with elected officials. CFM has an opportunity to teach members the intricacies of legislative advocacy through workshops and developing tips and tools that can be used by any members to further our shared goal of conservation and environmental protection. Moreover, the CFM Legislative Action Center (LAC) exists for the purpose of establishing a community of citizen-activists interested in acting in support or opposition to legislative, regulatory, or policy issues affecting the use and enjoyment of our state and nation's natural resources.

Statements of Position and Resolutions

A critical activity performed by CFM is the monitoring of conservation and natural resource issues and the formulation of an organizational stance or position based on the best available information and/or science. Member and board supported letters and resolutions are frequently developed as a means of expressing CFM support, opposition, recognition, or advice on a particular topic. Formal letters, resolutions, and public testimony are some of the most important ways for us to express our opinion as a conservation organization.

GOAL I - To successfully advocate for scientifically sound and necessary conservation and natural resource laws, regulations, policies, and programs at the local, state, and federal levels.

Objective A. Monitor legislative and policy initiatives at the state and federal levels, and regularly engage and inform the board of directors, Resource Advisory Committees, members, and the public about the need for action.

Strategies:

1. Annually evaluate the Legislative Policy Committee; keep membership fresh and active.
2. Annually revise/update the Legislative Policy Platform document for Executive Committee review and approval by December 1.
3. Regularly update the *Legislative Action Center* (e.g., weekly, monthly, as needed), and work to enhance sign-ups and website visits.
4. Produce a weekly electronic Legislative/Policy Update Report during the legislative session similar to the *Federation Report*.
5. Continue annual Conservation Day activities at the Capitol each legislative session.

GOAL II - To create a community of citizen-activists by providing them with the information and tools needed for tracking and acting on issues of common interest.

Objective A. Develop political action tools, training, and events for board members, affiliates, and general members as a method of strengthening CFM's ability to address political/legislative/policy issues.

Strategies:

1. Request the Legislative Policy Committee lead the development of political action tools and workshop in collaboration with staff.
2. Conduct periodic advocacy workshops for members to learn skills needed for effectively interacting with governmental leaders and processes.

Objective B. Regularly monitor issues important to CFM and prepare well researched, vetted, and timely letters, resolutions, or public testimony consistent with our organizational mission and goals.

Strategies:

1. Regularly inform and engage Resource Advisory Committees (RAC) on issues of interest; encourage RACs to meet and work more independently from the annual convention.
2. Conduct periodic workshops for RAC chairs and members to discuss expectations, how/where to find information about current natural resource issues, and provide networking opportunities with natural resource professionals.

Education, Outreach, and Partnerships

As we carry forward the work and vision of those who came before us, we must ensure CFM remains relevant and that our purpose is clear and well understood. Engaging and convening members and non-members around issues of common interest, inspiring action, and creating a long-term commitment to Missouri's natural resources is our ultimate goal. Fundamentally, we are a community of citizens who care deeply about conservation, natural resources, hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation. Our biggest challenge is achieving statewide recognition and trust in a way that leads to substantial growth of this community, and an expectation that CFM will help lead the way for the future.

As we have done in the past, CFM will bring the full force of its name and reputation to programs and initiatives that focus on the involvement and engagement of our members and affiliates, with a special emphasis on advocacy, education, leadership, and the youth of Missouri.

Conservation Leadership Corps

Securing Missouri's natural resources for use and enjoyment today and in the future depends strongly on the interest and direct engagement of an informed citizenry. Ensuring future

generations understand and are prepared to tackle the challenges ahead is a critical role for CFM. Preparing young people to become effective leaders may be CFM's greatest legacy.

The Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) offers high school and college students a unique opportunity to learn about conservation and advocacy with an emphasis on leadership, teamwork, communication skills, and policy development. CLC also provides a meaningful, educational experience while interacting with established professional and non-professional conservation leaders. Through this program, we hope to develop the next generation of conservation leaders as well as enthusiastic future CFM members. Regardless of where their chosen careers lead them, it is our hope that CLC participants are prepared to personally influence the management and conservation of Missouri's natural resources for the benefit of all Missourians and beyond.

Missouri Collegiate Conservation Alliance

The Missouri Collegiate Conservation Alliance (MCCA) is a coalition and network of college-level students created for the purpose of sharing information and promoting engagement on issues pertaining to natural resources and conservation in Missouri. Open to any college student, the program also serves as a way to promote future conservation leaders and advocates.

MCCA works to 1) Unite college students across Missouri who care about conservation, 2) Educate on key conservation issues in Missouri, and 3) Engage participants through advocacy efforts and CFM's Legislative Action Center.

Share the Harvest

In 1992, Missouri archers initiated a system to share deer meat (venison) they harvested with people in need. From that beginning a statewide program was developed in partnership between the Department of Conservation (MDC) and CFM called *Share the Harvest*. Today, this program provides an easy way for archery and firearm deer hunters to donate lean high protein venison to Missourians in need of food. *Share the Harvest* demonstrates a cooperative effort between business and government to accomplish a positive outcome. In addition, meat processors, a vital partner, receive positive community feedback for their involvement. Other participating organizations have an organized community service project they can support, and MDC has yet another tool for managing Missouri's valuable white-tailed deer resource.

Awards and Scholarships

The work of conservation and natural resource management is accomplished in many different ways and at many different levels. Awards are an important way for CFM to recognize commitment and achievements that may otherwise go unnoticed or be underappreciated. Moreover, timely recognition of accomplishments and excellence serves to inspire and build long-term relationships. Supporting the pursuit of dreams and the next generation of professionals is the purpose of CFM scholarships. Investing in today's youth as they work to achieve their educational goals is an important way for CFM to demonstrate its commitment to the future of Missouri and natural resource management.

GOAL III - To help citizens discover and understand the importance of natural resources and the outdoors to their quality of life and economic well-being through awareness and support.

Objective A. Increase CFM's overall media presence statewide.

Strategies:

1. *Conservation Federation Magazine* – Keep content fresh and relevant; manage content consistent with organizational goals; broaden story content to cyclists, birders, climbers, gardeners, etc.
2. Social media - Stay current and use as part of a broader communication/marketing strategy; modify use according to target audience use trends and tendencies; maintain production of the online newsletter (*Federation Report*).
3. Podcast – Produce six per year; seek future sponsors to offset cost.
4. Website – Keep up-to-date; conduct a review/audit of the entire site for functionality and relevance.

Objective B. Collaborate with affiliates and other organizations on programs that promote participation in hunting, fishing, conservation, and other nature-based activities.

Strategies:

1. Risberg Grants – Award \$10,000 in annual support to qualifying affiliate grant proposals; pursue raising additional funds to increase the annual award to \$25,000.
2. Governor's Youth Turkey Hunt – Maintain partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation and the Governor's Office.
3. *Operation Game Thief (OGT)* and *Operation Forest Arson (OFA)* – Maintain current role and level of support; provide occasional promotion through the magazine and social media outlets as necessary.

Objective C. Promote the *Share the Harvest* program adequate to increase the number of whole white-tailed deer donated annually (2017-18 season baseline: 5,969 Missouri deer hunters).

Strategies:

1. Increase public awareness and support, and maintain public/private funding sources.
2. Engage partners, affiliates, and others (i.e., businesses, private individuals, and government) for support in informing their peers of *Share the Harvest* needs and benefits.

GOAL IV - To develop the next generation of natural resource conservation leaders through educational programs and mentorship, while also promoting a life-long affiliation with CFM.

Objective A. Achieve an annual Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC) enrollment of up to 50 qualified Missouri students through retention and recruitment.

Strategies:

1. Actively recruit student participation through affiliates, partners, professional societies, and educational institutions and organizations.
2. Develop a standard 3-year program syllabus detailing base activities and events for each student level (i.e., 1st year student, 2nd year student, 3rd year student).
3. Provide financial support to students to offset cost of attending events/activities (e.g., travel stipends); develop procedure for student application.
4. Actively engage CLC alumni support; implement a post-CLC support and communications network through social media and events.

Objective B. Secure significant outside funding to provide multi-year program support.

Strategies:

1. Develop a projected total 3-year program budget.
2. Solicit outside support to individuals/organizations with adequate financial capability, and who share program values.
3. Research grant opportunities adequate to fund a full program cycle (i.e., 3 years).
4. Determine a projected annual need and solicit CFM members, affiliates, and CLC alumni to donate to student sponsorship and the annual scholarship.

Objective C. Support Missouri Collegiate Conservation Alliance (MCCA) participation and engagement.

Strategies:

1. Seek student engagement and participation through mainstream social media (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook); increase opportunities for student involvement.
2. Produce and distribute an electronic quarterly newsletter.
3. Coordinate development of advocacy toolkits with Legislative committee; distribute through website and other means.

GOAL V - To annually recognize those individuals who demonstrate an extraordinary level of commitment and accomplishment with regard to the conservation and management of Missouri's natural resources, and all that it represents.

Objective A. Identify a pool of award nominees by January 1 of each year, adequate to advance one highly qualified nominee in each category.

Strategies:

1. Ensure the Awards Committee has a clear set of operating procedures with identified process steps and deadlines for promoting the awards and identifying viable nominees.
2. Increase awareness of awards by soliciting nominations to a broad group of organizations and agencies.

Objective B. Promote the availability of scholarships and screen applicants by January of each year, adequate to advance one award for each scholarship at the CFM convention.

Strategies:

1. Review scholarship application process and make improvements as necessary, including moving to an online application process; ensure the Scholarship Committee has a clear set of operating procedures with identified process steps and deadlines for promoting the scholarships and identifying viable candidates.

Funding and Finances

Organizational growth and effectiveness depend heavily on our ability to seek and maintain a steady stream of financial supporters whether it be members, donors, or other means. Moreover, proper management of existing funds and investments is critical to our future success because those funds have been given to us in a moment of trust and with an implied or explicit expectation.

Asking for money is difficult but a core part of any active non-governmental 501(c)(3) organization. Fortunately, our over-arching purpose is highly regarded by most people, and our history shows that when the cause is clear and justified, support will come. However, competition among and between groups and various causes means we must continuously seek financial support, but to do so in a strategic way with an eye on securing our future as an organization.

GOAL VI – To ensure a fiscally sound organization.

Objective A. Aggressively increase fund raising activities to achieve a level of annual unrestricted income adequate to support and sustain the operational capacity and programmatic needs of the organization.

Strategies:

1. Assess the relative role and expectations for each of the following as part of an overall funds' development strategy:

- Membership fees; Investments; Endowments; Gifts and donations; Legacy/planned giving; Grants; Events.
- Role for board members (e.g., direct giving, opening doors).
- Role for affiliates in fundraising (e.g., direct giving, opening doors).
- Role for business alliance.

Objective B. Achieve annual operating/program income adequate to meet anticipated needs and growth.

Strategies:

1. Conduct an analysis of anticipated needs adequate to project needed operating/program income.
2. Monitor the burden (i.e., percentage) of personal services/payroll against annual unrestricted revenue and set a maximum allowable level.
4. Develop a sustainable method for administering payroll – pay increases.

Objective C. By March 2020, CFM has at least ten new donors (\$5,000+), and 3 major donors (\$10,000+).

Strategies:

1. Develop a major donor list by March 1, 2019; contact and follow up with at least (24) new major donors each year.
2. Identify a priority list of potential corporate donors; initiate at least two contacts and follow-ups per month.

Organizational Development

All successful organizations must change and adapt to meet the challenges of their environment. Even the Federation, with its long, storied history must be aware of changing conditions and the need to be agile, timely, and relevant. So, as we look to the future, we will remain aware of our past and those who have come before us; but we will not rest on the laurels of our history. Building our organizational capacity will be critical to effectively fulfilling our mission and growing programs and initiatives. Key elements will include choosing our priorities carefully and adding or maintaining staff so that we may accomplish our goals while growing and living within our means.

Finally, inspired volunteerism has always been a centerpiece of CFM. Of course, some people give more of their time than others, but it's important to understand that regardless of whether someone is an avid, occasional, or potential contributor to the CFM cause, everyone is important to our future success. Therefore, it is critical that we engage our members in ways that are respectful and worthy of the trust and commitment they bestow to the Federation. Inspired volunteers/members, adequate funding, and a dedicated professional staff are the core organizational elements that make CFM strong.

GOAL VII - To develop and sustain a dedicated membership representative of the diverse character and interests found within Missouri.

Objective A. Develop and implement a 3-year membership strategy by March 1, 2019.

Strategies:

1. Request the Ways and Means Committee work with the Membership Coordinator to analyze and recommend options for a general membership campaign.
2. Analyze and recommend options for reaching non-traditional outdoor interest groups.
3. Determine best methods of pursuing membership renewals.
4. Determine best methods for recapturing lapsed members (i.e., those who haven't renewed in last 2 years).
5. Investigate the potential of business alliance and/or affiliate members offering a workplace incentive/match for employees joining CFM; develop a pilot initiative with a cooperating member to research feasibility.
6. Request each Board member annually provide at least five names of potential members and solicit each with an introductory invitation and incentive package.
7. Periodically (i.e., 12-18 months) audit the performance of the membership bookkeeping system (DonorPerfect) and associated steps and processes.

Objective B. Increase membership (combined individual/student/sustaining/lifetime) annually (i.e., positive growth), achieving 5,000 members by 2021 (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 2,786*).

- Individual Memberships \$35 (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 2,179*)
- Student Memberships \$20 (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 82*)
- Sustaining Memberships \$100 (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 142*)
- Lifetime Memberships \$1,000 (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 265*)

Objective C. Increase the number of affiliate memberships (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 95*); diversify affiliate members to include a wider variety of outdoor-related organizations (e.g., bicyclists, campers, horseback riders, etc.)

Strategies:

1. Identify groups/organizations offering high potential in becoming an affiliate member.
2. Develop appropriate messages/talking points for pitching memberships (i.e., why should you be a membership of CFM?)

Objective D. Steadily increase the number of business alliance members over the next five years, maintaining at least 10 members at the Platinum level (*July 31, 2018 baseline: 87 all levels combined, 5 at platinum*).

Strategies:

1. Identify and prioritize gaps in business alliance representation; actively pursue highest priorities.

Objective E. Determine member satisfaction regarding CFM direction through a general membership survey in March 2019.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a general membership survey in March 2019.
2. Conduct a survey of affiliate members in July 2019.

Governance

Among the factors determining organizational success are 1) clear sense of purpose and direction, 2) inspired members, 3) an engaged and visionary leadership, and 4) a dedicated, passionate staff.

Meeting organizational needs and future challenges requires us to continuously improve leadership and management as well as our supporting processes and procedures. As we move forward, we must give special attention to keeping board members diverse and enthusiastic, staff roles and responsibilities clearly defined, and governing processes and procedures up-to-date. A special emphasis shall be given to nominating and electing board and executive committee members based on a need for diversification of age, gender, skill, and background.

GOAL VIII - To build organizational capacity sufficient to fully accomplish our mission and enhance CFM's stature and operational ability.

Objective A. Ensure all regular committees are fully engaged and operational.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a review of all regular committees and make recommendations for combining, deleting, re-chartering, and/or re-defining as needed.
2. Review committees for full membership, expectations, and deadlines.
3. Encourage Resource Advisory Committees to work more independently; conduct a workshop for chairs to help develop process and identify issues for potential action.

GOAL IX - To maintain a diverse and active board of directors engaged in organizational leadership, direction setting, and funds development.

Objective A. Produce and regularly update a succession plan for board members and officers, including a list of potential, future board members.

Strategies:

1. Assess process for informing the general membership of the opportunity to serve on the board and executive committee.
2. Identify qualities and skills desirable for future board member selections.
3. Assess process for identifying, screening/vetting, and advancing candidates for consideration.

4. Assess how executive committee members are nominated and elected.

Objective B. Conduct regularly planned board and committee meetings for purposes of conducting CFM business, training, and maintaining organizational cohesiveness.

Strategies:

1. Regularly offer (i.e., every two years) a new board member orientation session.
2. Require each board member to participate on at least one CFM committee.
3. Request each board member continually evaluate their personal network of friends and associates for possible supporters and/or new board members.
4. Engage the board more thoroughly through occasional board retreats, educational opportunities, and technical presentations.
5. Seek board advice and engagement more frequently on strategic issues.
6. Recognize board members when they leave; conduct an exit interview.

Objective C. Conduct periodic reviews of executive committee and board functions, and overall organizational effectiveness.

Strategies:

1. Conduct a board organizational assessment once every two years, during the second year of each 2-year term.

Objective D. Ensure all needed operational policies have been identified, updated, and/or developed.

Strategies:

1. The Executive Committee shall periodically review the status of all organizational policies and make associated recommendations as appropriate.
2. The Executive Director shall update the Executive Committee on the status of all organizational policies including consideration of any needed policies or updates including:
 - An emergency/disaster plan that addresses building security and staff safety
 - Technology security and associated files and back-ups
 - Hard copy file and records security, including archiving of historical records

Objective E. Regularly review the status of the by-laws and make annual recommendations for action.

Strategies:

1. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall regularly review and annually report to the Executive Committee any discrepancies and need for revisions.
2. The Constitution and By-Laws Committee shall engage outside assistance with a bylaws review.

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