

Federation of Fly Fishers Strategic Plan 2009-2013

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Organizational Description

The Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) is a 501c3 non-profit organization dedicated to conservation, restoration, and education through fly-fishing. Since its inception in 1965, the FFF has grown to more than 13,000 members and representing more than 250 Clubs and 15 Councils. Members are primarily from North America; however the organization has grown internationally in recent years and now has members from more than 20 countries worldwide. The FFF is the only fly-fishing education and conservation organization of its kind. The FFF has maintained a unique bottom-up grassroots organizational structure, while also developing into a national and international voice for angler education, conservation, and fly-casting instructor training. Through its many members, Clubs, Councils, and national efforts, the FFF continues to be a strong voice for hundreds of thousands of fly fishers.

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission:

“Conserving, Restoring, Educating Through Fly Fishing”

The FFF is dedicated to conserving the resources that support Fly Fishing. These include high quality aquatic habit and preservation of the traditions and knowledge of fly-fishing. The FFF seeks recognition and protection for native fishes, restoration of aquatic habitat, and provides educational materials and services that promote the health, confidence, and environmental awareness/connection with nature of individual fly-fishers (i.e., fly fishing is therapeutic/restorative). The FFF is committed to educating future generations of anglers by providing the highest quality instructional and educational services and programs to anyone interested in fly fishing and connecting/re-connecting with nature. The issue of re-connecting with nature is critical in particular with the youth of today who have migrated to the world of electronics. The FFF is committed to maintaining its internationally prestigious fly-casting instructor training and certification program.

Vision:

Broad recognition of the FFF as the definitive voice of fly-fishers providing educational opportunities and resources that offer inspiration and create stewardship; and promoting healthy and diverse fisheries that offer recreation and sustain ecological function.

Guiding Principle:

The FFF holds a firm and abiding conviction that fly fishing as a way of angling gives to its followers the finest form of outdoor recreation as well as a unique connection to the natural world and aquatic environments. Our broad goal is to maintain and further fly fishing as a sport, and, through it promote and conserve angling resources, inspire angling literature, advance fellowship and a broader understanding of all anglers in true sport.

Values

- **Tradition** – The FFF is committed to preserving the rich traditions of the centuries-old sport of fly-fishing and elevating the standard of integrity, honor, and courtesy of anglers for the benefit of future generations and the environment.
- **Accountability** – The FFF is dedicated to operating in a transparent and accountable manner – assuring that all organizational funds are used to accomplish the FFF's mission and demonstrating the results of our efforts to members and the general public.
- **Partnership** – The FFF encourages partnerships and cooperation with like-minded non-profit organizations, individuals, and industry to increase organizational successes for the benefit of future generations.
- **Sustaining Resources** –The FFF strives to provide educational opportunities and resources that offer inspiration and create stewardship; and promote healthy and diverse fisheries that offer recreation and sustain ecological function
- **People** – The FFF seeks to recognize the efforts of all individuals involved in pursuing the FFF mission. The FFF promotes innovative ways to connect people with nature through all aspects of fly-fishing, with an emphasis on today's youth.

Goals and Strategies***Goal 1: Increase Public Awareness of the FFF / Solidify Organizational Reputation as the Definitive Voice of Fly Fishers***

The FFF's past and current visibility among the fly-fishing public is surprisingly low. As the number of individuals who fly fish has steadily increased, our membership has not followed suit. The mistaken perception of the FFF, even among supporters and FFF membership, places our organization largely in a social club category. While

many of the benefits of the FFF are social, we must be deliberate in taking steps to better identify ourselves as an advocate for all individuals who fly fish and enjoy related aspects of the sport– including a clean and healthy environment. Essentially, the FFF should position itself as a **“civic” group** rather than a **“social” group**. By shifting the terms used to describe our work, FFF will be more broadly viewed as an organization effective in doing unique work for many, as opposed to an exclusive group with work benefiting a select few. Results-oriented messages and use of multiple forms of communication will assist in achieving this goal:

- Communicating the impact of local, regional and national programs through print and electronic media in a timely and relevant manner.
- Utilizing partnerships with the fly fishing industry to support and promote the FFF in their product marketing.
- Utilizing partnerships with like-minded conservation and education organizations to support and promote the FFF’s conservation and education goals.
- Infuse data (outcomes and impacts of programs) into all FFF communications
- Raise awareness and interest in the FFF through on-line social networking tools. Communicate in multiple formats to maximize interests among all demographic groups.
- Update organizational messages and advertising
- Pursuing the other 6 strategic goals.

Goal 2: Increase FFF membership and support

As a mostly grassroots-driven organization, Membership and support represent an important input to all of the work we do. We rely on members to donate to the organization, conduct the good work of the organization in their community, and communicate the value of the FFF to their friends and community. They also represent a natural outcome or consequence of how well we work. The more effective we are in communicating our mission and the impacts of our work, the more likely people are to know about and support our work. (Volunteers are typically the biggest supporters – they are actively engaged in the work, committed and knowledgeable in the organization’s mission, and intent on helping the organization to succeed because they are highly invested in the work).

- Monthly Newsletter – PDF (present more data)
- Identify and recruit new members
- Retain members by structuring programs, communication, etc to meet their needs
- Conduct an annual membership survey
- Utilize e-mail marketing services to communicate with members in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Goal 3: Improve the capacity of FFF Councils and Clubs to implement FFF mission

The Federation of Fly Fishers often refers to the grassroots work of Councils and Clubs to describe the meaningful impact the organization has in educating, restoring, and conserving through fly fishing. Councils and Clubs clearly carry the bulk of the visible work of the organization. However, there are inconsistencies in the work across councils/clubs and many councils/clubs have expressed that their work is often limited by lack of technical assistance and resources that the national office could provide. A National-level FFF commitment to bring consistency to all FFF work, whether a national or local effort through improved training and technical assistance will increase the program impacts and visibility of the FFF. To achieve this goal, the national office will dedicate itself to the following:

- Develop training materials, and offer on-going training and technical support to councils and clubs. (Newsletters / Monthly updates in education, conservation, member-development, communication, fundraising)
- Offer annual seminars designed to provide FFF councils and clubs with tools to produce high-impact projects and programs consistent with FFF goals.
- Provide Councils and Clubs with standardized messages and outreach materials.
- Create more effective communication structures to facilitate discussion and exchange among councils, clubs, and the national office.
- Update and improve outdated training materials and provide multiple formats.
- Provide web based functionality for use by clubs and councils (Basic Web sites, Content management, event management, membership management, local forums etc) to councils and clubs.

Goal 4: Become a Data-Driven Organization

The most effective and successful organizations and businesses are those that constantly seek to understand their strengths and weaknesses and make programmatic adjustments through a performance-based learning process. A central component in achieving all of the goals outlined in this plan is the effective use of data and an organizational commitment to developing structures to capture and communicate data to our membership and the general public. This requires a National-level FFF commitment and priority to performance-based/data-driven decision-making to define programmatic goals and funding priorities.

- Design performance measurements for the FFF to understand its impact in areas of conservation, education, and fly-fishing professional development/innovation in the sport.
- Create simple reporting forms for FFF Councils to capture volunteer numbers, and quantify the benefits of all council area programs and projects.
- Collect, analyze, and act upon data-verified accomplishments to characterize the annual direction of the organization
- Communicate quantifiable accomplishments to current funders, members, and potential donors.
- Annual membership survey

Goal 5: Facilitate and Foster Partnerships

Some of the FFF's greatest successes have come as the result of major efforts that required partnerships with other non-profits, conservation groups, or the private sector. We must continue our organizational commitment to partnering when it is in the best interests of achieving our mission. Great partnership efforts require clear and consistent communication, honoring commitments, and giving due credit to all parties involved. To improve upon our organizational strength in partnering the FFF will:

- Develop a partnership communication framework to ensure consistency in our work with diverse groups.
- Identify new partners to help achieve programmatic goals.
- Approach past partners with new ideas and invite others to assist in FFF work.
- Provide appropriate recognition to all parties assisting in our work.
- Share best practices in partnering with Councils to improve their effectiveness

Goal 6: Redefine the role of the National Office

Since 2005, the FFF National Office's primary function was maintaining members, and overseeing the FFF International Fly Fishing Show and Conclave. Fortunately the role of the National Office has progressed to be much more today. The office is professionally staffed with individuals overseeing and managing the organization's activities in conservation, education, and fly-fishing professional development. Today the National Office is in a position to develop and lead consistent national programs that bring visibility to the FFF, set organizational priorities and communicate the impact of our work, and lead activities that improve the fly-fishing experience. To become a truly effective National non-profit, the National Office must take the lead in facilitating and managing the work of the entire organization (not just the region where the office is located.) To redefine its role, the National Office must:

- Collaborate with the BOD to design and implement all FFF programs in a fiscally appropriate manner.
- Create office structures to maximize staff effectiveness (better-defined job descriptions, support staff development opportunities, annual timelines, new committees, etc)
- Seek funding to expand FFF education programs by establishing an FFF Education Coordinator position whose duties will be leading in partnership effort, program development and outreach to K-12 school and afterschool programs
- Establish a communications policy and identify funding for staff to facilitate all internal and external communication, including the use of Web/Technology.

- Develop and Distribute training and technical assistance materials and workshops to FFF councils/clubs to improve overall organizational effectiveness.
- Operate FFF using standard and accepted business practices and protocols appropriate for small businesses and NGOs.

Goal 7: Expand and Communicate the FFF's programs in Education, Conservation, and Professional Development

Program accountability, effectiveness, and growth are central to meeting organizational goals. Whenever possible, the FFF must seek to communicate the value of its various programs and constantly pursue opportunities to expand services to new locations and individuals.

- Promote the FFF by expanding our Education, Conservation, and Professional Development Programs.
- Communicate the impact of our work in all areas (see data-driven goal)
- Provide opportunities to increase volunteerism and FFF member participation in program operations.

Goal 8: Maximize the effectiveness of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors determines the Mission, Vision and the organizational direction and success of the organization. The FFF must develop systems to maximize the effectiveness of this talented and dedicated group of individuals.

- Align the strengths and professional expertise of each Board Member with their committee and oversight duties.
- Develop standardized messages and tools to assist BOD in fundraising
- Increase the number of on-site/in-person BOD meetings
- Training for incoming Board Members
- Debriefing of outgoing Board Members
- Annual performance evaluation of Board Members (Annual Review of Overall Board Effectiveness)
- Clearly define the role of the BOD and subsequent committees of BOD members