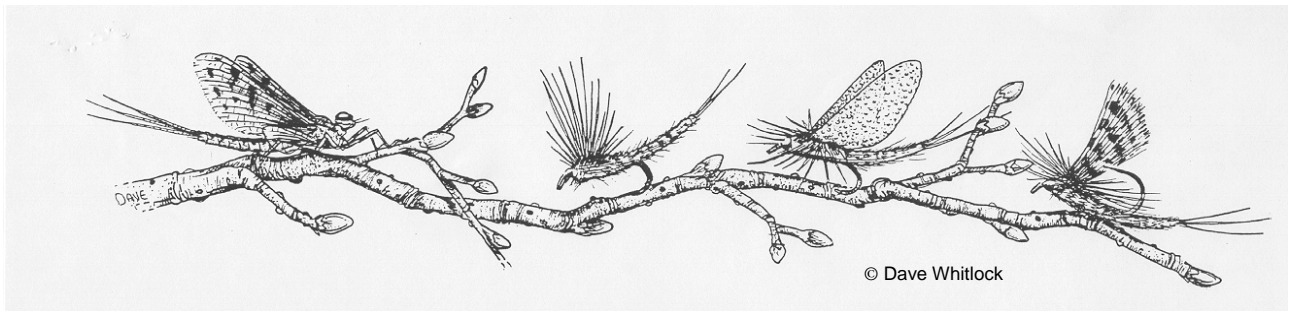


HAWKEYE FLY FISHING ASSOCIATION



STRATEGIC PLAN 2006 - 2011



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Hawkeye Fly Fishing Assoc.

Strategic Plan

1. Mission & Vision

The mission of HFFA is to promote awareness of and participation in fly fishing and its associated activities, work to preserve and conserve those natural resources that are important to fly fishing, and enhance fellowship and camaraderie among fly fishers.

In fulfillment of this mission, HFFA will work to ensure Iowa's warm- and cold-water fisheries flourish now and for generations to come, that HFFA consistently serves Iowa's outdoor enthusiasts as the primary source for fly fishing information and enjoyment, and anglers of all ages and skill levels can pursue quality fly fishing experiences in our region.

2. Purposes

The purposes of HFFA as stated in our Bylaws are set out below. Purposes do not exist in a vacuum however and, as such, some context for why these purposes are important may be useful.

2.1. *Promote fly fishing and associated activities*

Fly fishing, and its associated activities, provide many with a welcome respite from the pace of modern society. Fly fishing is an opportunity learn and expand one's understanding of natural history and the interaction between humans, wildlife, and the physical world. Fly fishing, as an alternative to conventional tackle, can provide new insight into how and why gamefish are pursued. Finally, fly fishing may be, as stated in the Bylaws of the Federation of Fly Fishers: "...the most sporting and enjoyable method of angling and the way of fishing most consistent with the preservation and use of game fish resources." In light of the benefits listed above, HFFA should work to make these benefits as accessible as possible to those who enjoy Iowa's fisheries.

2.2. *Educate others in the art and joys of fly fishing*

As members of HFFA and/or our local club(s), we are enthusiastic fly fishers for many different and individual reasons. However, nearly all passionate fly fishers can recall their earliest exposure to the sport as the result of another fly fisher's willingness to share their time and expertise with a newcomer. Many conventional anglers and non-anglers may have discovered fly fishing but do not know where or whom to consult to learn more. Traditionally, fly fishing has been depicted as complicated or elite – of which it is neither – but newcomers with no family background in the sport would not know otherwise. HFFA exists in part to provide learning opportunities and a community of fellow anglers of all skill levels to improve their fishing enjoyment, and hopefully, their quality of life.

2.3. Work to preserve and conserve those natural resources important to fly fishing

Our sport could not exist without the fish we pursue and the habitat they require to live. We are effectively in partnership with the fish we seek to catch because, if the future of gamefish is not secure, then neither is the future of fly fishing. Since there is usually a direct correlation between a fishery's water quality and the character of fishing it can provide, the land use choices made in given watersheds are of principal concern to an organization focused on fishing. More so now than ever, there exist pressures on land use which threaten Iowa's rivers, streams, and lakes, as metropolitan areas expand and the agricultural industry matures. At the same time, there are forces at work which promise enhanced water quality in the future. HFFA, in fulfilling this purpose should seek to advance those forces which improve the quality and quantity of fisheries available to fly fishers.

2.4. Enhance fellowship and camaraderie among fly fishers

Fly fishing can often be a solitary and quiet sport. But humans are generally inclined to seek out the company of others who share common interests. In the case of fly fishing, many in the fly fishing community enjoy sharing stories and skills with fellow anglers, and this process and the relationships it creates usually enriches the whole experience we call fly fishing. HFFA, as a state-wide organization, is the ideal resource to foster this exchange and provide the forums and opportunities necessary to do so.

3. Issues & Challenges

In 2006, and for the foreseeable future, HFFA will confront several issues. These issues will challenge the achievement of the organization's purposes and, arguably, are the very problems for which HFFA exists to address.

3.1. Water quality, fishery health, and habitat – including:

- Increasingly technical requirements for assessment of fishery health
- The commitment certain landowners/operators/stakeholders have to engaging in conduct adverse to fisheries (e.g. willingness to litigate, expend substantial funds to lobby for advantageous policies, etc.)
- Uncertainty and/or ineffectiveness of legislation from Des Moines
- Uncertainty and/or ineffectiveness of legislation and regulation from Washington, DC
- Ineffectiveness (through limited resources, unknown political mandates/pressure, other) of DNR in facilitating and enforcing compliance with existing federal and state laws affecting fisheries
- Increasing development in near-urban areas
- Aging rural water treatment infrastructure
- Industrialization of livestock and row-crop agriculture

- Global warming,¹ shifts in water temperatures, diminished aquifers and/or rainfall quantities, etc.

3.2. *Access to fisheries*

- Iowa is traditionally, and will remain, a state largely composed of private property. Private property that used to be accessible, however, may no longer be available for fishing, because:
 - Absentee and/or corporate landownership makes obtaining access more difficult or impossible
 - Increasing divide between rural and urban populations may make building relationships for fishing access more difficult and/or anglers are less likely to be aware of rural fishing opportunities
 - Lowered standards of integrity, honor, and courtesy among anglers/sportsmen may foreclose previously available fishing opportunities
- As the expense of traveling rises, anglers are presented with fewer options for quality fishing
- As urban populations grow, more and more new fly anglers will rely on urban or near-urban fishing opportunities
- As the variety of fly fishing tackle and flies expands and becomes more specialized, fly anglers are discovering “new frontiers” of gamefish traditionally not pursued with flies.

3.3. *Retention, Recruitment, and Expansion²*

- HFFA cannot function without maintaining and expanding its membership. This is in itself a challenge and an opportunity, because, through the process of seeking to grow the organization, HFFA has the chance to objectively appraise why it exists, whether the status quo should be maintained, and how it can best serve its membership in the years to come
- The fly fishing community may have historically established norms that perhaps exclude interested participants
- Iowa's population is an aging population
- There is an increasingly broad selection of activities/recreational pursuits competing for the attention of youth and families

¹ See, e.g., Dr. James E. Hansen, B.A. '63, M.S. '65, Ph.D. '67, University of Iowa, Director of NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies; Speech, Dec. 6, 2005, at the American Geophysical Union, San Francisco
<http://www.columbia.edu/~jeh1/keeling_talk_and_slides.pdf>.

² Like any organization, HFFA must provide a consistent benefit to its members and must represent a desirable opportunity for those individuals interested in the organization's purposes. And, like all organizations, HFFA has and will experience cycles in its membership and the activities in which it engages. In 2006, and for the next few years, the issues highlighted above will directly confront all fly fishers in our region, whether or not they are members of HFFA. HFFA is organized with the express purposes of taking on these challenges to our sport and continues to represent the best avenue for concerted work to ensure the availability and quality of fly fishing opportunities into the future.

- The rising expense of travel and the perceived increased costs for fly fishing gear, along with possibly diminished average disposable income, could deter fly fishing participation

3.4. *Offering Fellowship & Camaraderie*

- Coordination among local clubs and members and HFFA has been emasculated
- The Internet makes general knowledge, skills, and gear easily available, but local or specialized knowledge and gear that much more difficult to obtain
- With the exception of “A River Runs Through It”, many fishermen³ and non-fishermen may have limited awareness of fly fishing as a viable and rewarding angling option
- With competing time commitments, even dedicated fly anglers may find it hard to get together on a regular basis
- Consumers (hence members) increasingly expect customization and/or niche offerings to be available, or at least a wide variety of possible activities be available to choose from

4. Objectives & Action

To accomplish the purposes set out above, and address the challenges on the organization's horizon, HFFA will undertake or continue and expand the following initiatives. Fittingly, many of the actions taken will help realize multiple objectives and should be consciously implemented as cross-functional. In accomplishing these objectives, HFFA should consciously reach out and leverage the power of its existing membership, to enlist those members with the experience, skills, and abilities applicable to the various action items.

4.1. *Promotion*

Promotion is twofold: promote fly-fishing as a rewarding pursuit and promote HFFA as *the* central organization working on behalf of flyfishers in Iowa. HFFA needs to develop a coherent marketing campaign to establish HFFA as that sort of group, so that fly anglers and outdoor enthusiasts instantly know who to go to to learn more about flyfishing.

4.1.1. **Outings / Festivals**

- Continue Trout & Bluegill Outings; use outings as opportunities to showcase HFFA to interested new members, gain local press coverage, provide casting and angling instruction, host corollary programs (outing-specific tying demonstrations), fun contests, perhaps invite limited vendors to display

³ References to gender are intended to be neutral.

- Emulate the Nohr TU chapter's Spring Creek Festival hosted in Grant County, WI. This event features demonstrations, presentations, kids' activities, a few vendors, as well as display materials put together by the Chapter promoting the stream work they have done and chapter activities. Nohr TU netted more than \$9,300 from the 2005 Festival.
- Develop Parent-Child (or group chaperoned) camping/canoeing/flyfishing combination events where fly fishing may not be the sole focus.
- Investigate the feasibility of a Trout Camp or Bass Camp, either wholly HFFA led or coordinated with DNR, located at destinations with good facilities for youth groups plus access to good fishing.

4.1.2. Use the Website

- The website is a scalable venue for adding and providing information to members and non-members; e.g. fly patterns, cooking recipes (even for fish!), a fishing guide to local waters, member journal with database of fishing reports and analysis – think fraternity exam file (this could be 1) a great member benefit, 2) a recruiting tool, 3) a real resource for DNR wildlife mgrs.), weather reports for relevant areas, useful links, trip planning tools (B&B, campgrounds, canoe rentals, grocery stores, guides, maps, cafes, bars, churches), video library check in/out function, classified ads/gear trade list.
- Maintain and publicize a schedule of conservation activities on the website for members and visitors to access and plan for.
- Link to educational fishing websites, e.g. <http://www.takemefishing.org/>⁴
- However, need money for website expansion.

4.1.3. Booths at Programs, Meetings, & Shows

- Establish conference committee to review what shows and meetings might be most beneficial to commit to attend and coordinate staffing.
- Investigate a display at the state fair and partnering with DNR for placement in DNR exhibit hall to reach many visitors.
- Review and improve booth display.
- Consider attending other state meetings.

4.1.4. Partner With Other Program Sponsors

- An example: Fin & Feather's traditional boat try-out day gathers likely cross-over enthusiasts at a location conducive to demonstrating and speaking about fly fishing.
- Coordinate with Boy Scouts, FFA, 4-H for partnered programs and/or outings.
- Actively coordinate with DNR on any fishing clinics, whether multi-day or partial day events.

⁴ Others are: www.futurefisherman.org, www.discoverflyfishing.com

- Manage and strengthen landowner outreach (through ISU extension, NRCS, INHF, or HFFA directly) by encouraging them to fish/fly-fish on streams or ponds on their property.
- Also consider facilitating “fly fishing as therapy” programs coordinated through UIHC cancer center (and others),⁵ Tanager Place,⁶ or other restorative programs.
- Evaluate benefits and disadvantages to strengthening sponsorships from manufacturers and vendors like Scheels, Orvis, Feathercraft, Umpqua, St. Croix, Sage, etc.

4.1.5. Fishing Access

- Local clubs and individual members should endeavor to invite new anglers, even non-anglers, to go fishing, perhaps just for short trips.
- Local clubs, HFFA, and individual members should work with counties, DNR, municipalities to develop greater access and/or improve the fishery quality of existing public fishing prospects.
- Local clubs, HFFA, and individual members should work with private landowners to educate about the sportsmanship and conservation of the fly angling community and perhaps negotiate cooperative agreements for shared resource improvement to allow for limited fly-angling public access to private fisheries (incl. streams and ponds).
- Utilize workdays as multifunctional events, i.e. select projects that impact landowners of local or state influence, select projects that can be showcases for other inclined landowners, invite legislators and decision-makers (perhaps not even in the DNR “sphere”) to attend and participate in workdays and use those opportunities to network on a broader scale.
- Consider developing early-negotiated (to preempt price escalation) fishing access lease programs for HFFA members to fly-only private areas.

4.1.6. Recruitment / Organizational Continuity

- Establish a recruitment goal, e.g. increase club membership by 10% each year.
- Reach out to groups traditionally underrepresented in flyfishing (e.g. youth, women, minorities, urban populations, agricultural producers, hunters, non- “blood sport” outdoor enthusiasts) with programs or partnerships with organizations and municipalities that create opportunities to reach these groups.
- Create a youth-specific division of HFFA to foster fly fishing development in a simple, unthreatening, and fun environment.
- Build and use an efficient mailing (or e-mailing) list.
- Need to “close,” i.e. convert interested anglers into members.

⁵ Like www.reelrecovery.org and www.castingforrecovery.org

⁶ <http://www.tanagerplace.org/>

- Foster communication within the HFFA and with other people and organizations with common goals and priorities.
- Establish more local fly fishing chapters.
- Recruit and involve active volunteers who participate in club sponsored “work days” and events.
- Launch a loaner gear program comprised of donated and/or budget equipment to allow interested anglers to borrow gear and practice fly fishing on their own schedule, with or without instruction

4.2. Education

4.2.1. Outings

- Use outings as quarry-specific clinics with tips and techniques demonstrated for the particular game fish pursued at the outing.
- Plan in advance to invite non-fly anglers, local conservation board members, landowners, media, etc. to attend to learn more about fly fishing and habitat/ecology.
- Highlight a local conservation issue impacting the fishery of the outing.

4.2.2. Annual Meeting

- Continue to use and promote the annual meeting as the single best opportunity to learn more about fly fishing and all related activities/issues in one place at one time.
- Devote focused promotion to likely partner groups (as mentioned elsewhere in this plan) and pools of other potential attendees, well in advance of the show.
- Consciously develop programming consistent with the strategic plan.
- Continue and increase HFFA displays at the show that are “self-serve” for information.

4.2.3. Clinics

- Program at least one clinic per year in major local regions around the state, leverage local club talent and expertise.
- Consider theme clinics either focused on particular audience (e.g. high schoolers), or species/technique (e.g. dries and poppers for stream smallmouth).
- Work in conjunction with other organizations, e.g. Boy Scout groups, Iowa Women in the Outdoors/Becoming and Outdoors Woman, etc. to make fly fishing one component of a larger event.
- Increase fly casting as an educational goal for clinics; maybe even initiate a lightly competitive casting club-format event or series of events at workable times of the year.

4.2.4. Flyline / Newsletter

- Continue publication of the Flyline as the reliable method to inform membership of developments of interest in the state of the sport/pursuit and make Flyline available through multiple channels (could even have password-protected access on the website).
- Increase membership contributions of content for the Flyline and acknowledge/reward consistent contributors.

4.2.5. Youth Conservation Programs/Events

- Schedule youth-only or parent-child habitat-related projects, preferably fun and in the field, focused on simple subjects or projects where the results are readily apparent upon completion.
- Work with local teachers and school boards to increase the inclusion of fly fishing and/or conservation programs in schools; as schools become less inclined to conduct field trips, HFFA and DNR can bring certain programs to the schools instead.
- Expand youth programs to include aquatic biology, conservation, fish habitat, and fishing technique for youth serious about fly fishing.

4.2.6. Foster a habit of mentorship

- Familiarize friends and acquaintances with why you fly fish and how to do it.
- Teaching does not have to be in formal setting, or between an older person and a younger person.
- HFFA should develop guidance to help members with flyfishing mentorship.

4.3. Conservation

4.3.1. Grantmaking

- Accept at least three grant applications a year.
- Promote HFFA's grantmaking opportunities to solicit innovative and effective grant proposals.
- Take a watershed approach whenever possible.
- Work with DNR and possibly unconventional partners for ideas and possible "force-multiplying" opportunities.
- Develop a hierarchy of grant criteria, for example: projects should first endeavor to preserve existing high-quality fisheries, then attempt to protect threatened fisheries, then conserve impacted resources, and finally restore impacted waters.

4.3.2. Workdays

- Conduct at least three workdays a year.
- Incentivize attendance.
- Evaluate whether workday coordinator should be a "cabinet-level" position, i.e., should workday coordination be one of the duties of the vice-president or conservation director, or establish another officer tasked with facilitating workdays.

- Use workdays as educational opportunities (coordinate with local science and/or industrial tech classes).
- Use workdays as networking and promotional events (see 4.1.5, above)
- Investigate the use of interns and/or partner with ISU, Kirkwood, or UNI to offer opportunities to wildlife biology students to participate and possibly expand workday projects.

4.3.3. Water Monitoring

- Continue and promote the cold water snapshot program; support local snapshot programs, particularly for waters of angling importance.
- Cooperate with DNR to increase IOWATER enrollment so that more of Iowa's citizens are involved in the care of and advocacy for Iowa's waters.
- Expand the scope of monitoring done by HFFA's corps of monitors to include both land usage and water quality.
- Cooperate with IOWATER and other organizations to conduct specific monitoring projects that otherwise align with HFFA goals.
- Actively report water quality violations or suspected violations in a prompt and forthright manner.
- Maintain a formal list (on website, and with officers) of appropriate reporting venues for reporting violators in conflict with HFFA objective of protecting angling resources.
- Work to either expand the number of "approved volunteer water quality monitoring plans" (aka QAPPs or Quality Assurance Project Plans) so that data that is collected can be used for analysis and decisionmaking, or consider other ways to increase the use and reliance of IOWATER-collected data.

4.3.4. Regulations

- Within the rules applicable to tax-exempt organizations, HFFA will work to monitor and provide comment and information to decisionmakers on pending issues affecting water quality and fishery habitat with the objective of becoming a recognized authority regularly consulted on such issues.
- Members should be encouraged to stay informed on current issues affecting water quality and fishing, develop relationships with local legislators, and contact these legislators to provide input on matters of consequence to fly fishers in Iowa.
- Advocate for the establishment of clear and stronger water quality standards for all Iowa waters that are fishable, e.g. provide comment on the Coldwater Protocol, other water quality standards, and enforcement.

4.3.5. Fundraising

- More money means more programs we can do and more support that HFFA can give to projects consistent with HFFA's purposes.
- Fundraising shouldn't be limited to fly-only, trout-only type funding sources.

- Formally consider a routinized development program – for HFFA budget and for funding conservation initiatives.
- Seek out grants using HFFA as a conduit/coordinator for multi-partnered projects.
- HFFA is a 501(c)(3) charity and should take advantage of such status to increase charitable donations.
- HFFA should maintain a confidential and private list of contributors, expanded when possible, and managed with the intent to avoid over-extending reliable sources of support for the organization.
- Although conventional, HFFA should consider banquets or themed community functions because these are fellowship opportunities that can also be used for fundraising, promoting HFFA, networking, and education.

4.3.6. Coordinate with other groups advocating for clean water

- HFFA currently cooperates with IOWATER, Iowa Environmental Council (IEC), etc. I-CALL is one avenue for coordinated action. HFFA should take a leadership role in ensuring I-CALL functions, that its reach is expanded, and that it regularly provides meaningful information and important action alerts on water quality and habitat to recipients.
- Participate in land management workshops or meetings where watershed dynamics can be related to water quality and fish habitat.
- Reach out to non-fishing groups, e.g. 1000 Friends of Iowa, INHF, UI Hydrology Lab, universities, Practical Farmers of Iowa, Biowa – these are great potential partners for scholarship, habitat improvement, landowner outreach, and even sustainable/restorative economic development.

4.4. Fellowship

4.4.1. Annual meeting

- Occasionally obtain high end auction items or raffle prizes of art or equipment to generate interest and add value to member attendance.
- Review trends in the sport to anticipate and include programs of interest
- The Board should examine the benefits, disadvantages, and process (incl. amending the bylaws) to establish a permanent location for the HFFA Annual Meeting and be prepared to issue findings and a recommendation to the membership for consideration and/or action at the 2007 annual meeting.

4.4.2. Flyline (See also 4.2.4)

- Consistently produce a publication, with regularity, that the HFFA membership looks forward to receiving.
- Include new features and suggestions from the membership, e.g. board or club member spotlight(s) in each issue. In addition to adding fun reading material, this would enhance fellowship by putting names with faces and building personal connections among the members prior to club/HFFA gatherings.

- Highlight one or more fishing report submissions to the website, if that feature is implemented.
- Partner with major or regional publications to include one article of interest from the partner in each Flyline – value to partner is increased exposure and possible subscriptions from HFFA members; value to HFFA is leading-edge and national content for members.
- Locate Flyline on website (password protected) and make available by e-mail or US Mail at discretion of individual members.

4.4.3. Outings

- Use HFFA as a vehicle for coordinating/leading group trips, out-of-state trips.
- Maintain mealtime gatherings as consistent and welcoming opportunities for interaction.
- Plan mini-outings as supplements to workdays.
- Promote outings as retreats for HFFA leadership and those interested in becoming more active.
- Fishing events should be organized and publicized well in advance to encourage new and old members to fish together, thereby creating member ownership, belonging and camaraderie.
- Consider including appropriate raffle items and/or programs of interest as additional value to attending outings.

4.4.4. Joint club activities

- Plan activities that allow for clubs from neighboring areas to get together, fish new water, and exchange ideas on tactics, flies, and possibly plan conservation projects on shared watersheds of concern.
- Enhance and update HFFA culture to encourage “knowledge sharing” and intermingling across local clubs, through programmatic means if necessary, to stimulate discussion and expansion of members' knowledge and enjoyment as a whole, across age groups, regions, and skill levels.
- Conclude and issue 2nd Ed. of HFFA fly patterns book.

4.4.5. Activities with other states

- Attend or exhibit at multi-state expos, conclave, or outings to get new ideas for HFFA activities, partnerships, and organizational improvement.
- Allows for joint cooperation on watersheds that cross or adjoin state boundaries.

4.4.6. Streamline, systemize, and improve HFFA management

- Establish consistent (and written where needed) policies regarding club rods/kits, finances, workday arrangements.
- Use the website for executive coordination and volunteer recordkeeping (e.g. www.nohrtu.org, see *Administrative* link).

- Develop a leadership program that encourages active involvement of leaders and develops members interested in serving the organization as new leaders – this introduces new ideas and mitigates burn-out.
- Investigate and obtain any leadership development training materials available from FFF, IEC, etc.
- Reconstitute standing committees and solicit interested members to serve actively on same.
- Create opportunities for HFFA leadership to participate in public and private member forums to develop skills that enable easy interaction with the public.

5. Measurement & Review; Revision

- 5.1** Board of Directors shall, at least once each year before the Annual Meeting, review the prior year's activities to determine if such activities were consistent with the plan and accomplished any quantitative objectives contained in the plan.
- 5.2** Board of Directors shall, at least once each year before the Annual Meeting, compare the prior year's activities, as well as correspondence, observations, and/or member input, to the strategic plan and determine if the strategic plan contains omissions or deficiencies that should be considered at the Annual Meeting.
- 5.3** Board of Directors shall, at least once each year at the Annual Meeting, consult the strategic plan and promulgate any quantitative objectives consistent with the plan that are to be achieved in the upcoming year.
- 5.4** The Board of Directors, and the membership, can amend, modify, or rescind this strategic plan by ordinary action as provided in the HFFA Bylaws.
- 5.5** Board of Directors shall, at least once every five years, review the strategic plan and annual summaries, to determine and propose changes to the strategic plan.