



For Immediate Release

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Fish & Boat Commission Acquires Easements in Erie County, Adopts Trout Management Plan

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) voted at its quarterly meeting today to acquire two easements along Crooked Creek in Erie County as part of the agency's strategy to improve public fishing and boating access and also adopted a five-year strategic plan for trout management.

"Crooked Creek provides significant steelhead fishing opportunities in the areas and regularly receives trout stockings," said PFBC Executive Director Doug Austen. "The acquisition of the easements will ensure that the public has access to these opportunities in perpetuity."

The two easement areas provide approximately a half-mile each of stream frontage and are located along Happy Valley Road and Lucas Road in Springfield Township. The properties are adjacent and the Lucas Road property will provide parking and a footpath to the creek.

The new trout management plan was developed based on input provided by a work group that consisted of commission staff, anglers affiliated with a variety of sportsmen's organizations, and independent trout anglers which are not affiliated with an organized group.

"Significant progress in addressing these issues over the life of this plan will ensure that adequate protection is being afforded to the resource and that the fisheries provided through the management of wild trout and the stocking of hatchery trout will provide excellent angling opportunities in Pennsylvania," said Austen.

Some of the key issues addressed in the plan include: the sampling of unassessed wild trout streams; protection of Class A wild trout waters; trout stocking in Class B streams; managing waters through fingerling stocking; stocked trout movement; in-stream flow and habitat protection and improvement; public access to trout waters; and the Lake Erie steelhead and brown trout stocking program.

Commissioners also voted to adopt amendments to regulations which reduce creel limits for American Shad and river herring in the Delaware River. These changes are consistent with regulations either now in place or planned in the near future in New Jersey, New York and Delaware. Effective Jan. 1, 2010, the creel limits for American shad will be reduced from six to three fish and for river herring from 35 to 10 fish in the Delaware River West Branch and the entire Delaware River main stem from the confluence of the East and West Branches downstream to the Commodore Barry Bridge. For the remaining 2.9 miles downstream of the Commodore Barry Bridge to the Delaware state line, the creel limits in N.J. will remain at six for American shad and 35 for river herring until at least 2011, when it is anticipated that N.J.'s Marine Fishery Council will reduce the creel limits. Given the fish restoration efforts on the two major tributaries to the Delaware, the commission also voted to impose a 10-fish-per-day creel limit on river herring on the Lehigh and Schuylkill rivers.



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Among other items on the formal agenda, commissioners voted to add the salamander mussel to the state endangered species list and approved a notice of proposed rulemaking to add the northern redbelly dace, northern cricket frog and blue-spotted salamander to the endangered species list and to remove the silver chub from the endangered species list, the mooneye, goldeye and skipjack herring from the threatened species list and the brook silverside from the candidate species list.

Commissioners also approved a grant of up to \$200,000 to American Rivers, Inc. for the removal of the Lower Shoop Dam on Middle Spring Creek, Southampton Townships, Cumberland and Franklin counties. Funding for the dam removal will come from the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission to mitigate impacts associated with the reconstruction and widening projects between mileposts 199 and 200.5.

Prior to the meeting, the commission presented William E. Sharpe of Port Matilda, Pa., with the 2008 Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award. A retired professor from Penn State University, Sharpe has devoted much of his professional career to producing scientific evidence that showed how acidic deposition was harming the state's aquatic resources, forest health, and human health through contamination of water supplies.

The Ralph W. Abele Conservation Heritage Award is the highest recognition the commission provides to persons who distinguished themselves in the cause of conservation. The award serves as a memorial to Ralph Abele for his steadfast and courageous work in protecting and conserving natural resources. Ralph W. Abele served as executive director of the commission from 1972 until 1987.

A complete copy of the meeting schedule and the full agenda for the meeting can be found on the Commission's web site at www.fishandboat.com/minutes.htm. The mission of the Fish and Boat Commission is to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

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