



For Immediate Release

July 13, 2010

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Commissioners Approve 5-Year Strategic Plan, Emphasize Need for Alternative Funding and Resource Protection

Harrisburg, PA – After nearly one and a half years of thoughtful deliberation, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) announces the approval of a new strategic plan to guide its major efforts over the next five years. The planning process began in the fall of 2008 with informational meetings and the collection of input from staff and stakeholders.

“The Board of Commissioners provided high-level guidance, input and validation throughout the process,” reported newly-elected Commission President William Worobec during the agency’s quarterly meeting today. “We are extremely pleased with the level of staff involvement from across the agency. They refined the issues, strategies and goals, and conducted budgetary and personnel analyses of each goal statement at a level we’ve not seen before. While it was hard work, it was critical to prepare the Commission for successful implementation of the plan.”

The immediate need for alternative funding to allow the Commission to fulfill its mission features prominently in the plan. In a timely reaffirmation of the PFBC’s current position, the plan highlights the importance of a Marcellus shale severance tax that includes dedicated conservation funding, including support for the Commission.

“The Commission’s reliance on fishing licenses and boat registrations does not afford us the funding and staff resources to proactively work with the industry and other agencies to protect aquatic resources as new natural gas well sites and associated infrastructure are developed throughout Pennsylvania,” Executive Director John Arway stressed. The Commission’s approval of the plan which includes a severance tax goal comes less than a week after the Governor signed legislation stating the intent to pass such a fee by October 1.

Energy extraction and transmission are just two of a number of threats highlighted in the plan that prompted the Commission to develop goal statements that are specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic and time-bound.

“The stakes are too high to talk in generalities, and we want all Pennsylvanians who share a commitment to maintaining and improving natural resources and our quality of life to understand that we mean business,” said Mr. Arway.

That business will include, among other things, implementing large river management plans for the Delaware, Susquehanna, and Three Rivers systems; action plans for managing specific non-game species and combating destructive aquatic invasive species and disease; evaluating and improving



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management programs for muskellunge, walleye, channel catfish and striped bass/hybrid bass; and sampling more streams than ever before to determine whether they support naturally reproducing wild trout and providing them with the protection they deserve.

The Commission's infrastructure – its people, facilities and properties – is another major focus of the five-year plan. With more than one-quarter of its employees eligible for retirement over the next five years, the Commission will provide its employees with training and development opportunities to maintain and improve programs and services for Pennsylvania's citizens and visitors. One such popular program, the Commission's public fishing and boating access program, will see an additional focus in the strategic plan with implementation of the recently completed *Pennsylvania Fishing and Boating Access Strategy*.

An enormous backlog of capital improvement requirements and an extensive list of long-term maintenance needs require the Commission to take a deliberate approach to planning, funding and implementation on its properties.

"Any homeowner can relate to the importance and expense of regular property maintenance and improvement," stated Mr. Arway. "The Commission's expenses are compounded by our numerous buildings and properties across the Commonwealth that we own, operate and maintain. We must be good stewards of anglers' and boaters' dollars as well as the environment, which is why we're taking a comprehensive approach to addressing our infrastructure over the next five years."

"The Commissioners and I encourage anglers and boaters to take some time to review our new five-year strategic plan on our website and let us know what you think," added Mr. Arway.

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. For more information about fishing and boating in Pennsylvania, please visit our website at www.fishandboat.com.

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