



NOTES *from the Streams*

River of the Year

The North Branch Susquehanna River was named Pennsylvania's 2023 River of the Year. This branch of the Susquehanna River stems from New York and goes through the Endless Mountains area that I'm assigned to patrol, which includes Wyoming County. With the river flowing through scenic mountains, having some amazing history along its banks, outstanding Smallmouth Bass fishing and perfect for paddling, it is easy to see why this river received this recognition. As a Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO), I patrol along the North Branch Susquehanna River most shifts. Being fortunate enough to have the responsibility to help protect and conserve this river is rewarding. Even on the hottest, busiest and most stressful days, being out on the river makes for a good day being a WCO.—WCO David Raulfs Jr., Wyoming and Southwest Susquehanna counties.



photo-PFBC archives

North Branch Susquehanna River kayakers.

Youth

In Washington County, there is an annual kids fishing derby on Buffalo Creek called the Trout Tangle. There have been a lot of kids in the past 2 years participating, but 2023 was the most well-attended event to date. Over 300 youth participated. The stream was stocked with 2,500 trout, with a few trophy-sized fish mixed

in. The kids were provided a free lunch and lots of giveaway prizes. As I walked the stream, all I heard was excitement as the kids caught fish. It was a great event with a great group of people.—WCO Jonathan R. Stark, Washington County.

Best clients

As a WCO, we interact with many people every day from anglers, boaters or people just enjoying the outdoors. Although some interactions are not always ideal, the majority of them are positive. Sometimes, the job gives you a different view of people (not always for the good). But, there have been many occasions when I have been fishing with my son, and it makes me realize that I have a great job. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has some of the best patrons.

There are two occasions that come to mind. One day, my son and I were kayak bass fishing on a local lake. The bite was slow, but we managed to catch a few nice Largemouth Bass. When we decided to call it quits for the day, we got to the launch where another angler was loading his boat. He asked my son how we did, and my son replied with a short story of the day. The gentleman asked him what lures he was using, and my son told him. Then, the gentleman got in his tackle box and pulled out a topwater lure and handed it to him. He said, "Here, use this next time. I usually crush them out here with this lure".

On the second occasion, my son and I were steelhead fishing in Erie. We were wading down the stream finding holes to fish. A woman and a man were about to leave the hole above us, where they were catching fish. The woman yelled down to

my son and told him to come up and fish. We headed upstream and started talking to them and thanked them for giving us their spot on the stream. Before they left, they gave my son a fly to use—it was the one they had been catching steelhead on.

These experiences have made me appreciate the job and the people who are the customers of PFBC.—WCO Nathaniel J. Yingling, Cambria County.

Attack frog

We received a call from a man who caught a "prehistoric frog". The man had never seen a frog like it before. His first concern was it was poisonous. Unfortunately, he didn't have the means to send a picture, so I was dispatched to his house.

When I arrived on the scene, the man captured the frog in a container. He was worried, because the frog hopped at him several times. I identified the critter as an Eastern American Toad and told him the toad could be released back into his yard. The man replied, "I'm not releasing an aggressive frog in my yard." I then relocated the toad to a nearby creek.—WCO Travis D. Miller, Lehigh County.



photo-courtesy of WCO Travis D. Miller

Eastern American Toad