January – March 2012 Quarterly Report

Strategic Plan Implementation

The following updates include the major activities or accomplishments during the quarter that further the July 2010 – June 2015 PFBC Strategic Plan. The bulleted list does not include every detail about what is being done on a particular goal, just the highlights that help to track implementation.

If there is nothing listed for a particular goal, either there was nothing major to report during the quarter, or work has yet to commence on the goal.

Overall, please also note that it is intended to be a tracking tool for the strategic plan rather than an auditing tool.

Issue 1: Escalating costs of traditional services and increasing demands for activities require the development of alternative funding sources and methods.

Strategy 1: Develop alternative funding sources and methods to offset escalating costs of traditional services and better accommodate increasing demands for activities.

Goal 1: Actively pursue innovative, as well as traditional, funding sources, compensation for services provided to all Pennsylvanians, and funding for the completion of priority infrastructure projects.

A. Advocate for passage by July 2011 of alternative, secure, long-term funding (e.g., special fees or permits, General Fund, sales tax revenues, Renew Growing Greener) to compensate the Commission for services provided to all Pennsylvanians and the Commonwealth in general for lost natural resource values.
   • Successfully negotiated one oil and gas cooperative agreement, issued one seismic survey license, and are actively pursuing one oil and gas cooperative agreement and two water access opportunities.

B. Advocate for a Marcellus Shale severance tax that includes dedicated conservation funding, including support for functions performed by the Commission, until such a tax is enacted.
   • HB 1950 passed the House and Senate and was signed into law by Governor Corbett as Act 13 of 2012 on February 14. Act 13 includes $1,000,000 annually to the PFBC “for costs relating to the review of applications for permits to drill unconventional gas wells.” Act 13 includes additional funding provisions that might also benefit the PFBC, including potential funding for high hazard dams via the H2O PA program.
   • Staff developed a plan for implementing the $1,000,000.

C. Advocate for passage by December 2014 of sales and marketing flexibility, including, but not limited to, multi-year licenses and group or family licenses.
SB 1049 unanimously passed the Senate on March 5 and is awaiting expected action in the House.

SB 1402 was introduced by Senator Alloway on January 31. The bill includes several updates to Title 30, including a number of fee increases.

D. Deleted via Amendment 1

E. Advocate for and seek capital funding to make Commission-owned high-hazard dams safe, complete state fish hatchery upgrades, and other priorities identified in the Commission’s Infrastructure Plan.

- Preliminary work is proceeding to develop a coal re-mining project for Hereford Manor Lake property and use the royalties to repair its dams.
- Worked with House and Senate members and staffers to include funding for high hazard dams as part of Act 13. While funding was included for H2O PA, it is unclear whether additional money will be available for high hazard dams.

F. Advocate for passage of existing and new federal legislation to protect and expand funds available to the Commission to support our mission.

- Participated in the Teaming With Wildlife (TWW) Fly-In, in Washington, DC, and conducted subsequent follow up with Congressional offices. This annual event provides an opportunity to meet with the offices of PA Members of Congress to inform them about the critical value of the State Wildlife Grants Program to PFBC and the natural resources of the Commonwealth. This activity is conducted in collaboration with PGC. Preparatory activities for this event included development of the 2012 SWG Summary document.
- Provided comment to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service regarding a regulation change to the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration recreational boating access subprogram that expands the eligibility requirements to include land acquisition and facilities for non-powered recreational boats. In Pennsylvania, the change allows the Commission flexibility to utilize the funds between powerboat and unpowered boat access.

**Issue 2:** Current and increasing threats to our aquatic resources demand the Commission provide better resource management and protection.

**Strategy 2:** Provide better resource management and protection to reduce the impacts of current and increasing threats to our aquatic resources.

**Goal 2:** Improve protection, conservation and enhancement of aquatic resources and habitats.

A. By July 2010, continue implementation of the *Strategic Plan for Management of Trout Fisheries in Pennsylvania*.

- Conducted an overwinter fingerling trout survival survey on Cove Creek and evaluation of temperature logger data from Cove Creek and Little Juniata Creek in support of the fingerling trout evaluation work.
Participated in meetings to discuss progress on the Francis E Walter Phase II flow modeling effort and 2012 Francis E Walter releases.

Met with Pittsburgh District Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) representative to discuss enhanced coldwater releases from ACOE reservoirs under Pittsburgh District control in support of the tailwater trout initiative.

Prioritization of waters with the potential to improve or create new tailwater trout resources was completed and presented to the Fisheries Committee at the January Commission Meeting.

Removed five streams from the ATW list as part of the Class A and B study initiative.

Helped organize and conduct the 2012 Keystone Coldwater Conference. The theme of the conference was “Responsible Land Use: Protecting Habitat and Native Species”. Approximately 240 people attended the event and the program can be viewed at the following web site: http://www.outreach.psu.edu/programs/coldwaterconservation/


Chaired the DRBC Subcommittee for Ecological Flows meeting and presented a thermal protection program proposal for consideration.

Attended Ohio River Basin Ecosystem Flow Study workshop. TNC and participants developed flow – ecological response hypotheses to be used in evaluating hydrology and making flow protection recommendations by July 2012.

Coordinating trout habitat improvement projects on the Lackawanna River with Lackawanna Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Site evaluations planned for spring 2012.

Continued project coordination activities associated with the Big Spring Creek Phase 2 Habitat Enhancement Project.

Prepared Falling Spring Branch Habitat Enhancement Project Monitoring Report (Franklin Co).

Prepared Shingle Run (wild brook trout) monitoring report relative to habitat project construction and met with the Shade Creek Watershed Association regarding obtaining grant funding to continue water quality improvement work on Shingle Run.

The following dam removal projects are in various stages of implementation on wild trout streams: Taylor Run, Tioga Co.; Skinner Ck, McKean Co.; East Br. Clarion River, Elk Co.; Wetmore Run (2 dams), Potter Co.; Driftwood Br. Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron Co.; Cacoosings Creek, Berks Co.; Valley Creek, Chester Co.; UNT to Frankstown Br. Juniata River, Blair Co.; W Br Perkiomen Creek, Montgomery Co.; Diehls Hollow, Centre Co.; Furnace Creek, Berks Co.

Worked on an acid rain remediation project for improvement to water quality in a tributary to Mosquito Creek (Clearfield County) for restoration of a wild brook trout fishery.

Partnered with agencies and groups on wild trout habitat improvement work on both Asaph Run, Tioga County and Upper Kettle Creek in Clinton & Potter Counties in accordance with two Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture Grants from USFWS.
• Met twice with members of Spring Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TU) & ClearWater Conservancy regarding preparation of a grant application to obtain funding for a trout habitat improvement project on Spring Creek in Milesburg, Centre County.

• Arranged three meetings with PFBC staff from various programs and external interested parties to prepare a riparian buffer plan for PFBC’s Fisherman’s Paradise property on Spring Creek, Centre County that will improve & protect wild trout habitat quality.

• Provided planning assistance to Kettle Creek Watershed Association regarding how to solve a stream bank erosion problem for a wild trout section on Kettle Creek.

• Arranged a meeting between Division of Habitat Management biologists and Penn State/USGS Cooperative Research Unit to discuss methods for evaluating the success of fish habitat improvement projects that benefit wild trout.

• Managed 13 different grants with various partners under the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grants Program for a number of fish habitat improvement projects that benefit wild trout in various waterways in Cameron, Elk, McKean, & Potter Counties.

B. By December 2010, begin implementation of large river management plans for the Delaware, Susquehanna, and Three Rivers systems.

• Data collected from the 2011 field season was entered into the database and analysis was started; no final reports have been completed to date.

• Developed Field Schedules for the 2012 field season.

• Convened the Susquehanna River Policy Committee which is focused on addressing smallmouth bass population declines that have occurred since 2005. Presented 2011 studies and 2012 proposal from the Susquehanna River Technical Committee.

C. By December 2010, begin implementation of statewide action plans for the following species: Eastern pearlshell mussel, bog turtle, Eastern spadefoot toad, Eastern massasauga rattlesnake, and timber rattlesnake.

• Eastern Pearlshell
  o On-site habitat degradation surveys scheduled for March 2012.
  o Detailed physical habitat and host fish surveys scheduled for summer 2012.
  o Continued data analysis on two monitoring stations.
  o Researched feasibility of developing a mussel propagation facility.
  o Assessed potential restoration sites in Schuylkill drainage.
  o 2 Species Impact Reviews have been reviewed in the project period with potential Eastern pearlshell impacts.

• Bog turtle
  o Planning for review of Section 6 project bog turtle monitoring project data for contact of landowners in preparation of surveys at the sites of the first year of the project.
  o PFBC subcontract finalized with Mid-Atlantic Center for Herpetology and Conservation for National Fish and Wildlife Federation (NFWF) Bog turtle Restoration project, moving forward with projects.
o Working with partners USFWS and MACHAC, completed habitat management project at Adams County site, including management plan.

o Currently working with USFWS and MACHAC partners on two habitat restoration projects – one in Monroe County, and the other in Bucks Co.

o Working with contractor (MACHAC) to plan bog turtle habitat management training for PFBC staff.

o Submitted Section 6 (non-traditional grant program) land acquisition proposal to USFWS for acquiring property in Berks County for bog turtle protection, conservation and management.

o Submitted Section 6 (traditional grant program) for three bog turtle proposals for inventory, monitoring, surveys of extirpated population in NW PA.

o 14 Species Impact Reviews have been reviewed in the project period with potential bog turtle impacts.

• Eastern Spadefoot
  o Final report for Eastern Spadefoot Assessment project completed and submitted to USFWS.
  o Reviewed annual management plan report for Berks County site.
  o 31 Species Impact Reviews have been reviewed in the project period with potential Eastern Spadefoot impacts.

• Eastern Massasauga
  o Staff assisted WPC partner with habitat management on private land.
  o 32 Species Impact Reviews have been reviewed in the project period with potential Eastern Massasauga impacts.

• Timber Rattlesnake
  o Report on Phase 2 of the project is complete. Assessment of PA status is underway.
  o Continue focus on gap areas utilizing radio telemetry and on the ground search teams.
  o Beginning prioritization of Timber Rattlesnake sites in need of habitat management on two state forest tracts.
  o PFBC will assist with DCNR and PSU study to determine Marcellus Development effect on Timber Rattlesnakes in North Central PA.
  o 126 Species Impact Reviews have been reviewed in the project period with potential timber rattlesnake impacts.

D. By July 2011 and annually thereafter, facilitate or complete population inventories and home-range assessments for 10% of the state-listed endangered, threatened or candidate species identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan.

• State Wildlife Grant projects herpetofauna data compilation and massasauga habitat restoration and monitoring project were further reviewed and edited, being prepared to be submitted to the USFWS and contracts developed.

• Completed status assessments on numerous species. Commission agenda commentaries prepared and submitted for species to be listed or delisted for proposed rulemaking at upcoming at April Commission meeting: Chesapeake Logperch
(Threatened), Round Hickorynut (Endangered), Pistolgrip Mussel (Endangered), Rayed-Bean mussel (Endangered), and the Eastern Mud Turtle (Endangered). The American Brook Lamprey is proposed to be de-listed (removed from Candidate list).

- Numerous other status assessments are underway: Ohio Lamprey, Bowfin, Acuminate crayfish, Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Spadefoot.
- Ongoing work with timber rattlesnake assessment project – focus has shifted to monitoring study sites, prioritizing sites for habitat management, assessing sites in gap areas.
- The Conservation Coordinator, working with the PGC Wildlife Action Plan (WAP) Coordinator, a meeting of essential PFBC and PGC staff was convened to initiate revision of the PA-WAP which is due October 2015.
- Atlantic sturgeon in the NY Bight (which includes the Delaware and Susquehanna River), were listed by NOAA as a federally endangered species. The action becomes official on April 6. The PFBC had recommended listing in official comments on the proposal.

E. By December 2012, develop a PFBC sampling protocol manual to ensure consistent data collection techniques for waterways.
   - By September 2010, complete documentation of PFBC-approved sampling protocols for wadeable streams.
     - Complete.
   - By July 2012, complete documentation of PFBC-approved sampling protocols for large rivers.
     - Conducted a large river protocol meeting to guide completion of final draft of large river protocols. Draft River protocols were completed and returned to the River Biologists for a final review prior to submission to the Division Chief, which is due by March 15th.
   - By December 2012, complete documentation of PFBC-approved sampling protocols for lakes.
     - Staff is currently working to complete first draft of lakes document. Document is to follow Large River Protocol design.
     - Designed hatchery study to evaluate PFBC channel catfish spawning boxes.
     - Continued work on development draft lake habitat project evaluation protocols (evaluating fish use of artificial structures).
     - Developed draft lake littoral zone detailed habitat assessment protocols.

F. By January 2013, complete the evaluation of the inclusion of additional water quality protection criteria for special protection classes of Warm Water Fishes in 25 Pa. Code Chapter 93 in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.
   - PFBC and DEP personnel met to discuss numerous criteria proposals for special protection classes of Warm Water Fishes. Bob Lorantas presented fish management data that could be utilized for the existing Ecological Significance criteria.
G. By January 2014, sample at least 2,500 prioritized, un-inventoried streams with the potential to support wild trout identified by PFBC staff as most at risk from the effects of human activities and pursue partnerships and funding to augment Commission sampling efforts.

- Completed one unassessed water survey; 30 wild trout waters proposed for listing at April Commission meeting. Numerous other unassessed stream reports in process or completed.
- Developed PFBC webpage for streams that have been surveyed that could potentially be acted upon in the future. This gives the public additional notice of upcoming actions.
- Assisted in the interview and hiring process for the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) biologist assigned to assist the PFBC with the coordination of the unassessed waters program.
- Worked with NFWF to finalize and distribute a call for proposals to qualified groups wishing to participate in the unassessed waters program.

H. By July 2014, evaluate and improve gamefish management programs for muskellunge, walleye, channel catfish and striped bass/hybrid bass.

- The Walleye Plan is complete and available on the PFBC web site.
- The Channel Catfish Plan was presented to the Division of Fisheries Management staff at the annual Division meeting for final comments. Posting on the PFBC web site and public presentations are anticipated for late spring/early summer of 2012 in order to seek public comments.
- The Muskellunge Management Plan is undergoing final internal edits of the first draft. Distribution to the Fisheries Division is anticipated in late spring with public comment being sought in late 2012.
- Studies are being conducted to improve the survival of walleye and muskellunge eggs during the disinfection process at spawning.

I. By June 2015, minimize the impacts of aquatic invasive species and disease on aquatic resources.

- By July 2010, begin implementation of an education and outreach program targeted at anglers and boaters as identified in the Pennsylvania Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan and in cooperation with partners on the Governor’s Invasive Species Council of Pennsylvania.
  - To assist in promoting awareness of AIS, the Conservation Coordinator worked at the PFBC and PISC booths at the January Farm Show.
  - A draft of the 2012 Annual Great Lakes Restoration Initiative report for AIS projects was delivered to the USFWS on 5 March and is awaiting approval.

- By July 2010, begin implementation of action plans, as necessary, for Didymo, Asian carp, water chestnut and golden algae as identified in the Pennsylvania Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan and in cooperation with partners on the Governor’s Invasive Species Council of Pennsylvania.
- Draft Rapid Response plans prepared – currently under internal review
• **Asian Carp**
  o Participated in two multi-state Asian carp science meetings summarizing latest science and control research results.
  o Planning for an intra-agency and inter-state meetings on Asian Carps continues.
  o Participated in National Invasive species Awareness Week activities and joined other states from the Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association in meetings with Congressional Offices and the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service focused on targeting Asian carp further downstream in the Ohio River Watershed.

• **Didymo**
  o Continuing to monitor the literature for effective biocide development and genetic detection methodology.
  o Early stage planning for surveying infected waters is underway.
  o Work on protocol for water hauler disinfection procedures and regulations within Pennsylvania continues. Meeting involving river basin commissions, DEP, PFBC, and Marcellus industry representatives is in the planning stage; will likely occur in April or May 2012.

• **Golden Algae**
  o Continued work on protocol for water hauler disinfection procedures and regulations within Pennsylvania.
  o Planning meeting involving river basin commissions, DEP, PFBC, and Marcellus industry representatives is in the planning stage will likely occur in April or May 2012.
  o Continuing to encourage federal and PA State government agencies to share knowledge of elevated chloride/TDS waterways and the presence of golden alga in waters of the southwestern Commonwealth.

• **Water Chestnut**
  o Early stage planning for surveying infected waters is underway.
  o Working to expand list of possible stakeholder to help with monitoring and possible eradication.
  o Approached PA Sea Grant with idea of developing signage for infected waters.

• By December 2010, begin implementation of an action plan, as necessary, for viral hemorrhagic septicemia as identified in the Pennsylvania Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan and in cooperation with partners on the Governor’s Invasive Species Council of Pennsylvania.

• By April 2013, amend the Commission’s regulations concerning introduction, propagation and transportation of fish in Pennsylvania’s waters to minimize the spread of aquatic invasive species and disease.
o Staff began researching other states, evaluating what changes are needed to existing fish importation regulations, and crafting draft recommendations for improvement.

J. By June 2015, improve fish passage efforts on the Susquehanna and Lehigh Rivers and small streams.

- By September 2014, collaborate with other natural resource agencies in the FERC relicensing of the four Lower Susquehanna River hydroelectric projects to ensure incorporation of provisions for timely and effective upstream and downstream fish passage consistent with American shad, river herring and American eel restoration goals and resident fish needs.
  o Staff continue to review and provide written comments on 2011 study reports for the Conowingo, Muddy Run and York Haven Dam FERC relicensing projects. The York Haven discussions include proposed design and development of a nature like fishway rather than a mechanical lift. Plans have been made for a downstream American shad movement study in 2012 at York Haven.

- By June 2015, investigate the feasibility of fish passage improvements on the Lehigh River in collaboration with state and local partners.
  o Continued work on Engineering study on options for fish passage at Easton and Chain Dams.

- By June 2015, facilitate or complete at least 40 small dam removals in collaboration with state and local partners.
  o Continued project coordination activities associated with the Wilson College Dam Removal and Stream Habitat Enhancement Project (Conococheague Cr, Franklin Co.).
  o Assisted City of Bethlehem with funding acquisition for removal of 1st barrier on Monocacy Creek; Lehigh Co.
  o Assisted partners with dam removal efforts: East Branch Brandywine Creek; Chester Co., Darby Creek; Delaware Co., Cacoosing Creek., Berks Co.
  o Discussed potential dam removal projects in the Conemaugh River Watershed with Lisa Hollingsworth-Segedy from American Rivers
  o Assisted partners with coordinating dam removal projects on Taylor Run (WT), Tioga Co.; Turtle Creek (ST), Westmoreland County; Wetmore Run (WT, 2 dams), Potter Co.; Driftwood Br. Sinnemahoning Creek (WT/ST), Cameron Co.; Skinner Creek (WT/ST), McKean Co.; East Br. Clarion River (WT/ST), Elk Co.; Darby Creek (ST, 3 dams), Delaware Co.; Cacoosing Creek (WT), Berks Co.; Valley Creek (WT), Chester Co.; Stony Creek (ST), Montgomery Co.; Miller Run (ST), Somerset Co.; Bigby Run, Somerset Co.; UNT to Frankstown Br. Juniata River (WT), Blair Co.; Pond Creek (SGCN), Monroe Co.; Middle Spring Creek (ST), Cumberland/Franklin Co.; Little Sewickley Ck, Westmoreland Co.; W Br Perkiomen Creek (WT), Montgomery Co.; Diehls Hollow (WT), Centre.; Jordan Creek (ST),
Northampton Co.; Yellow Breeches Ck (ST), Cumberland Co.; Furnace Creek (WT), Berks Co.

**Issue 3:** The Commission needs to better understand recent generations’ disconnectedness from the Commonwealth’s aquatic resources and respond to anglers’ and boaters’ desires for excellent recreational fishing and boating opportunities.

**Strategy 3:** Increase the Commission’s knowledge and understanding of its users to enhance recreational fishing and safe boating opportunities.

**Goal 3:** Improve the Commission’s knowledge of its users in order to better direct Commission programs and services.

A. By March 2013, conduct the first bi-annual, statewide survey of active and lapsed anglers and boaters to supplement the Commission’s use of the 5-year *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.*
   - Began planning for the development of a statement of work to guide the acquisition of a vendor to assist with the statewide survey.

B. By June 2015, increase youth and family participation in fishing, boating and aquatic resource education programs.
   - By July 2010, continue collecting participant data for analysis of the behaviors, motivations and demographics of the users of the Commission’s educational programs.
     - Implemented changes to on-line participant registration system to include other program types, gather additional information on participants, and add hold harmless and photo release statements.
   - By July 2013, utilize information captured from participants in the Commission’s educational programs to direct future fishing and safe boating programs.
     - Utilized information from recent Responsive Management and RBFF surveys to direct planned angler education efforts in 2012 to include Family Fly Fishing programs (including at least one directed at females) and Family Fishing Festivals (to be held 3 Saturdays in May).
     - Utilized information provided by partner organizations on training needs and responded by presenting fly casting instruction, paddlesports training and PFBC promotional session and exhibit at the PA Recreation and Park Society (PRPS) Conference, March 18-21. Also scheduled fly casting and paddlesports training for DCNR’s Bureau of State Parks staff for 2nd and 3rd quarter 2012. Coordinated and scheduled training for members of the Pennsylvania State Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance for 2nd and 3rd quarter 2012.
C. By July 2010, continue efforts to amend the Commission’s boating safety regulations and/or education requirements and, as needed, pursue corresponding legislative changes to further reduce the number of recreational boating accidents and fatalities.

- Completed 2011 Recreational Boating Accident Analysis.
- Conducted a meeting of the Boating Advisory Board where they reviewed and approved four regulatory amendments to be advanced for the Commission’s consideration on temporary boat registration, capacity plates, wake surfing, and passenger for hire vessels.
- Updated boating & watercraft safety policy for Commission employees and volunteers.
- Provided comment to the U.S. Coast Guard regarding recreational vessel accident reporting recommendations made by the National Boating Safety Advisory Council.

**Issue 4:** The public continues to identify a need for access to the Commonwealth’s aquatic resources.

**Strategy 4:** Increase public access to the Commonwealth’s aquatic resources.

**Goal 4:** Retain and add new access to fishing and boating opportunities.

A. By June 2015, review existing and create new boating and fishing access programs to reflect the priorities of the Commission and its customers.

- The Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for the Commission’s Voluntary Public Access/Habitat Incentive Program grant was approved by the USDA. The Commission received the $500,000 that was awarded through this grant program following USDA’s approval of the PEA.
- Presented a workshop on our public fishing access program at the Keystone Coldwater Conference.

B. By June 2015, complete two watershed access plans per year delineated in the PFBC Access Strategy priority list.

- Met with representatives of the Schuylkill River Heritage Area to develop a workshop on improving access to the Schuylkill River Water Trail in the area covered by the Heritage Area. The workshop will be held on March 20, 2012.
- Worked with the National Park Service, Chesapeake Bay Office on the final draft of their Public Access Strategy. NPS’s Strategy used the Commission’s Fishing & Boating Access Strategy as a model.

C. By December 2014, improve public access to at least five lakes, ten Class A streams, ten Class B, C and D streams, and ten stocked streams with no wild trout reproduction.

- Secured funding for Walnutport and Treichlers access improvements on Lehigh River through use of Palmerton Superfund Site settlement funding.
- As part of a dam removal project on Yellow Breeches Creek, a landowner donated a 500 ft public access easement. This is an agenda item in the next Commission meeting.
Articipated a meeting of the DEP/RC&D Sinnemahoning Stakeholders Committee & worked with PFBC Public Fishing & Boating Access and Bureau of Law Enforcement staff to acquire a property for development of a public fishing and boating access area on Bennett Branch of Sinnemahoning Creek.

- Worked with various project partners to improve public fishing & boating access opportunities at two lakes in McKean County.
- Worked with various project partners to improve public fishing & boating access opportunities through planning for construction of four new canoe accesses on two streams in McKean County.
- Completed the final inspection and authorized payment to the Sports and Exhibition Authority of Pittsburgh to improve public access to the Allegheny River along the Convention Center Riverfront Park in Pittsburgh.

**Issue 5:** The Commission’s existing data are not well-integrated and therefore not optimally used to proactively manage the aquatic resources under our jurisdiction.

**Strategy 5:** Improve the Commission’s utilization and integration of existing data to proactively manage the aquatic resources under its jurisdiction.

**Goal 5:** Optimize agency operations through integrated information systems management.

A. By December 2010, ensure integrity of agency data through the use of GIS.
   - Completed with resolution to be included in new Resource First Portal.

B. By December 31, 2013, complete migration of the IT supported access applications used by the Bureau of Fisheries to a new modernized platform.
   - The following deliverables related to implementation have been completed as of March 31, 2012:
     - **Iteration 1** - Water and Attributes, Flowing Water Section and Attributes, and Re-sectioning of Flowing Water
       - Completed Iteration Testing
     - **Iteration 2** - Reports relating to Water and Section information
       - Completed Reports Design, Code and Unit Test
       - Completed Iteration Test
     - **Iteration 3** – Site, Survey, Catch and Age fish data - create, update, view and delete – scheduled completion date 4/25/12
       - Completed Requirement Review
       - Created and Presented Prototype to Fisheries Committee
       - Completed Design, Development and Unit test of Phase 1 of Iteration - Site and Survey information
       - 95% Complete on Design, Development and Unit Test of Phase 2 of iteration – catch data, age fish data, Habitat Assessment, Site Width and Invertebrate data
o **Iteration 4** - ARDB reports that include site, survey, catch and aged fish data (85 reports) and Narratives
  ▪ Begin Requirements Review

o **Live Demo** - all of Iteration 1 and 2, as well as progress to date on Iteration 3
  ▪ Feb 29, 2012
  ▪ Presented to IT and Fisheries Committee members
  ▪ Positive feedback received

C. By January 2012, begin integration of priority agency information systems, including the current GIS environment, as identified in the *Modernization Plan for IT Infrastructure and Software Resources*.
   - Letter of Understanding (LOU) complete with OA/OIT’s Office of Geospatial Technology and identified potential number of concurrent map users that may request GIS data via the new application, as well as data storage requirements.
   - PFBC’s Geospatial Technology and Business Solutions section began work on required GIS web services needed for the new Resource First Portal. Deadline for completion is July 31, 2012.

**Issue 6**: Limited financial and human resources require the Commission to more effectively manage our internal resources.

**Strategy 6**: Strengthen performance and operations by managing limited financial and human resources more effectively.

**Goal 6**: Optimize agency efficiency and ensure continuity of operations through infrastructure planning and employee development.

A. By August 2010, improve accessibility to on-going training opportunities for all staff and Commissioners.
   - By July 2010, gain a better understanding of the climate of the Commission’s workforce and implement strategies for improvement.
   - By January 2012, continue agency-wide and bureau specific implementation of climate assessment improvement items.
     o Climate Assessment Action Team recommendations were presented and accepted for implementation. The implementation strategies will be discussed at an upcoming executive staff retreat scheduled for May.

B. By July 2012, begin implementation of a succession planning and leadership development program.
   - Planning for a staff retreat to launch the Commission’s succession planning program has begun. Kim Helton from OA’s Bureau of Workforce Planning and Development has agreed to design a special session for executive staff.
   - Planning for a re-launch of the leadership development program has begun.
C. By January 2011, begin implementation of Supervisor Development Training.
   •

D. By September 2011, conduct a full review of State Fish Hatcheries to identify strategies for promoting cost savings with the least adverse effects on services to the angling public.
   • Complete. Report and presentation during the previous quarter.
   • Starting to follow the timeline to implement strategies.

E. By July 2012, begin implementation of a comprehensive multi-year Infrastructure Plan for the engineering, maintenance and development of the Commission’s hatcheries, marinas, dams, accesses and administrative buildings to ensure continuity of critical operations.
   • The collection of comprehensive infrastructure data for all PFBC facilities has begun. IT has been enlisted to build a SharePoint application to order the information and maximize use of already existing information.

**Issue 7:** Due to the limitations of current communications systems, technologies and processes, the Commission must improve its internal and external communication methods and systems.

**Strategy 7:** Improve internal and external communications by strengthening the use of current communication technologies and processes.

**Goal 7:** Improve internal and external communications systems to develop an informed and engaged workforce and increase the public’s access to and use of Commission information.

A. By July 2010, establish a direct line of internal and external communication with the Commission’s Executive Director.
   • Complete.
B. Deleted via Amendment 1

C. By July 2011, begin implementation of a business plan that makes the best use of the Commission’s core publications and exhibits.
   • Conducted cost analysis for the annual production order of litterbags (100,000 drawstring plastic bags imprinted with boating safety information) to ensure competitive pricing for this product. Successfully secured a waiver to purchase from the lowest non-contract vendor, resulting in a savings of approximately $14,000 compared to the state contract price.

D. By January 2012, annually evaluate, and modify as needed, employee communications strategies.

E. By July 2014, complete the redesign of the Commission’s website.
Major Activities and/or Accomplishments not Directly Connected to Strategic Plan Implementation

Legal

- In September 2011, the Commission sued Consol Energy for civil damages resulting from the 2009 pollution incident on Dunkard Creek that caused a massive fish kill spanning nearly 30 miles of stream in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. The lawsuit seeks compensatory damages for dead fish, mussels and amphibians, as well as lost fishing opportunities for Pennsylvania anglers and punitive damages to deter future pollution. The primary lawsuit was filed in West Virginia where the pollution originated. Last fall, Consol filed a notice of removal, transferring the case to the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of West Virginia. Consol contends that the case should be decided based on federal law and that federal law provides no monetary remedy for the Commission’s losses. The Commission is contesting the transfer and has filed a motion to remand the case back to West Virginia state court. As of the date of report preparation, the federal judge had not yet issued a decision on whether to retain or remand the case. The parties are proceeding with discovery in the U.S. District Court and have exchanged requests for production of documents and interrogatories.

- In 2011, Mr. Brian Simpson, who is proceeding pro se, brought an action in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Pennsylvania against Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Wes Osborne. Mr. Simpson alleged, among other things, that the deputy violated his fourth amendment rights. Senior Deputy Attorney General Thomas Donahoe represents Osborne. In February 2012, an initial case management conference was held. Mediation, which was scheduled for April 2, has been postponed and will be rescheduled.

- In an action before the U.S. District Court for the District of Colombia, Plaintiffs Martha’s Vineyard / Dukes County Fishermen’s Association and Michael S. Flaherty have challenged what they characterize as the “continuing unlawful management” of river herring and shad along the East Coast of the United States by two sets of Defendants: (1) United States Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and the National Marine Fisheries Service and (2) the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) along with its member states’ executive officers charged with conservation of fisheries resources and individual citizens appointed by member states’ Governors acting in their official capacity as Commissioners of ASMFC. Executive Director Arway was named in his capacity as an ASMFC commissioner. Last fall, the court granted the defendants’ motions to dismiss. However, the plaintiffs have appealed. The appeals court issued a briefing schedule with briefs to be submitted this spring and summer. No date has been set for oral argument, but it is expected that it will take place in the fall.

- In January of 2007, the Commission filed an action in the Court of Common Pleas of Susquehanna County against Nicholas Demaree after Demaree built a fence that blocked the public’s access to the Commission’s boat launch at Quaker Lake. Demaree claimed to hold title to the lake through a deed that was not recorded until after the Commission developed the site. In September of 2011, the court issued its decision granting the Commission ownership of the disputed area, thereby preserving public access to Quaker Lake. In January 2012 following post-trial motions, the court reaffirmed its decision in the Commission’s
favor. However, Demaree’s counsel has filed a notice of appeal with the Commonwealth Court of Pennsylvania.

- In an appeal to the Environmental Hearing Board (EHB) of the renewal by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) of an NPDES permit to GenOn Inc. for its power plant at Shawville, the Commission asserted that the permit’s thermal limits for the wastewater discharge to the West Branch of the Susquehanna River are not sufficiently protective of warm water fishes. In October 2011, the parties finalized a settlement agreement that replaced DEP’s thermal limits with the protective limits calculated by Commission staff and that will require GenOn, Inc. to contribute a total of $300,000 over the next three years to the Commission for a project or projects of the Commission’s choosing. The EHB approved the settlement, and GenOn already has paid $150,000 to the Commission. In February 2012, the Sierra Club filed an appeal of the final permit issued by DEP, alleging, among other issues, that the public will not have an opportunity to comment on the plant redesign that GenOn must submit to comply with the new thermal limits. Shortly after the appeal, GenOn issued a press release indicating that it intends to shut down the Shawville plant because it is no longer profitable. The shut down does not relieve GenOn of its obligation to continue with settlement payments. It is unknown at this time if the Sierra Club will continue with its appeal.

Administration

PALS
- As of March 7, 2012 the total number of 2012 fishing licenses & permits sold and vouchers redeemed were 206,492 which is a 4.4% increase from the same time period last year.

Boating
- The Commission’s 2012 new boat registration transactions has increased 23.5% to 2,349, new titling transaction has increased 26.5 percent to 1,422, and boat renewals have remained steady with a .58 percent increase at 84,620.
- As of March 7, 2012, there were 236 (1) Year Launch Permits and 1,217 (2) Year Launch Permits sold, which is a 44% increase from 2011.

Fisheries
- Discussion between Area Fisheries Managers, Stream and Lake Staff to establish priority watersheds where DHM will focus efforts.
- Assisted with the Quemahoning Reservoir Habitat Enhancement Project
- DES Watershed Analysis Section is currently planning to conduct the 2012 Hatchery Biomonitoring at Oswayo State Fish Hatchery and at the Tylersville State Fish Hatchery. These surveys will be conducted cooperatively with the Department of Environmental Protection Northcentral Regional Office.
- DES Watershed Analysis Section will prepare comments to the Department of Environmental Protection for the revision of General Permit BWM-GP-8 Temporary Crossings and Environmental Testing or Monitoring Activities in Chapter 105 Dam Safety and Waterway Management.
- DES Aquatic Resources Section represented PFBC’s position for lost fishing use associated with the Chesapeake Towanda Creek spill settlement negotiations.
- DES Aquatic Resources Section coordinated aquatic herbicide permit program changes with PA DEP’s NPDES permit requirements for pesticide use in waters.
- DES Natural Diversity Section drafted regulation and criteria for threatened and endangered species surveyors.
- DES completed monetary value assessment and interrogatory responses for the Dunkard Creek aquatic life kill case.
- Staff worked with PGC and West Virginia DNR in planning a workshop on Marcellus shale for the annual meeting of the NE Assoc. Fish and Wildlife Agencies in WV.
- Planning for 2012 Cabela’s fish tagging contest underway.

**Boating and Outreach**
- Established the Heroes of Water Rescue Award, and solicited and reviewed nominations. The Award’s first recipient will be acknowledged at the April 2012 Commission meeting.
- Conducted Water Rescue for the First Responder training for 15 PA Game Commission Officers.
- Certified 8 individuals as Ice Rescue and Emergency Response instructors.
- Coordinated Water Rescue instructor training for 72 emergency response personnel in Virginia.
- Approved the Water Rescue curriculum for use by a municipal police department in New Jersey.
- Registered the Commission’s Water Rescue courses and the PA Basic Boating course in the Department of Health’s Continuing Education system to allow emergency response and medical professionals to receive continuing education credits.
- Submitted an article on the Commission’s Water Rescue program to NASBLA’s Small Craft Advisory magazine.
- Completed updates to the 2012 Boating Handbook and 2012 Boating Recap brochure with delivery of final print products received in January. Mandatory cold-weather life jacket wear messaging was incorporated into these publications and will also be available on regulatory and informational signs.
- Developed a partnership to incorporate six Ned Smith line art prints into six upcoming consecutive issues of the Pennsylvania Angler & Boater magazine. This will be matched with a promotions campaign touting the added value of these limited-edition prints as incentive to increase subscriptions.
- Coordinated GIS map updates (2012 regulations, access improvements, water trails, etc.) for printed and online region guides.
- Hosted “Pennsylvania’s Fly-Fishing Heritage” event at the Commission’s Harrisburg headquarters (http://www.fishandboat.com/images/video/1-30-12event/fly-fishing-program.htm). More than 170 individuals were in attendance, comprised of registered visitors, members of the Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited (CVTU), Commissioners and PFBC staff. The three-hour event was highlighted with presentations by John Randolph, editor emeritus of Flyfisherman magazine; a presentation by George Daniel, noted fly-fishing champion and author; and fly-tying demonstrations by CVTU members.
• Completed radio public service announcements (PSAs) and updated online Media Resources for the Opening Day of Trout.
• Completed arrangements (agreement, data and approved template) for the Commission’s participation in RBFF’s Angler Retention Direct Mail Campaign to be launched with an April 2 mailing.
• Established a partnership with the Pittsburgh Pirates that provides fishing license buyers the opportunity to purchase discounted ballpark tickets while receiving a limited-edition ball cap. Continued cross-promotion and other promotions are in the planning stages.
• Established a trial limited sports marketing ad campaign with the Philadelphia 76ers-Flyers (through Comcast). Web banners promoting fishing and the purchase of a fishing license (with links to PFBC’s Outdoor Shop to purchase a license) will commence on March 14 and run through June 18, 2012. With three ad changes permitted, emphasis will be on “March Madness” (the southeast’s opening day for trout), family fishing time (Take Me Fishing in PA) and opening day of bass fishing (June 16).
• The following campaigns have marketing concepts and products in development at this time: Fish-For-Free Days, Wear It Pennsylvania campaign, Cabela’s Fish-Tagging Contest, Shakespeare’s rebate program to license buyers and a proposed selected fishing waters program.
• Contributed to the development of a Request for Proposals for a water trails economic impact study in response to Senate Resolution 143 (2011).
• Distributed 50 youth life jackets at the Allegheny Sports, Travel and Outdoor Show, on February 19. The give-away was a partnership between the Port of Pittsburgh; Cabela’s (Wheeling, WV) and the PFBC, where youth and accompanying adult received instruction on life jacket fit and wear. Staff from the PFBC, USACOE, USCG Auxiliary, Power Squadron and other local law enforcement provided assistance.
• Received the 2012 Government Partner Award from the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Educators for the Trout in the Classroom program.
• Finalized plans for the 2012 Linesville Open House, scheduled for April 7, 2012.
• Education Program Results, 01/01/2012-03/07/2012

Boating Safety Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boating Safety Education Certificates (BSEC) Issued</th>
<th>762</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSEC issued via distance learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>BSEC issues via classroom courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boating Safety Courses on PFBC Calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>PFBC Basic Boating Classroom Courses (BB)</td>
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<td>BB students</td>
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Angler Education, promotion

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Family Ice Fishing Programs (FIFP) scheduled</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Ice Fishing Programs (FIFP) held</td>
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<td>Program requests received &amp; processed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Programs presented (confirmed)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*no ice, program held on dry land, fished with conventional gear

- Successfully trialed bulk e-mail software application for e-mail marketing to lapsed anglers. First use will be in April to accompany Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation’s (RBFF) direct mail campaign (74,000 mailers) to Pennsylvania lapsed anglers. E-mail software will also be used to provide messaging to the Commission’s growing list of e-mail subscribers and other sources of address capture.
- Confirming requirements and drafting a communication plan to begin implementation of Facebook for promoting the Commission’s messages and events.

**Engineering**

- Leaser Lake Dam underwent a major construction project in 2011, which involved the construction of a new spillway. Further work needs completed on the embankment drains and with the surrounding vegetation but with good weather it will be completed early Spring.
- Opossum Lake Dam underwent a major construction project in 2011, which involved the construction of a new spillway. With only a few details that need finished on the spillway and the surrounding vegetation, the project will be completed early Spring.
- Dutch Fork Lake Dam: Construction continues on the DGS administered dam reconstruction project. The scheduled completion date for this project is July 13, 2012. At this time, physical inspection is 43% complete and application of payments is 34% complete.
- Hereford Manor Lakes (Upper and Lower Dams): Construction began on the DGS administered project on October 12, 2011 for the phase one project to breach the existing dams. The scheduled completion date is November 10, 2012. At this time, physical inspection is 14% complete and application of payments is 13% complete.
- Canonsburg Lake Dam: DGS held a bid opening August 10, 2011 for the dam rehabilitation project. DGS has evaluating the bids and is currently awaiting PFBC approval to award the contract. Construction began on the DGS administered dam rehabilitation project on November 3, 2011. The scheduled completion date is July 26, 2012. At this time, physical inspection is 45% complete and application of payments is 37% complete.
- Speedwell Forge Lake Dam: The Lake was drained beginning on October 19, 2011 due to flood damage of the spillway caused by Tropical Storm Lee. The lake is expected to remain drained until funding can be secured to rehabilitate the dam. Ensuring the ability to rehab the dam, once funding is secured, a 100’ wide trapezoidal breach will be made into the earthen embankment. This work is scheduled to be completed Fall 2012.
- Tamarack A&B Dams: These were drawn down 4ft. beginning November 22, 2011 to address seepage around outlet conduit. Engineering is still monitoring this situation.
- Walnut Creek Marina: Design began for the Walnut Creek Rehabilitation Project by a consultant administered by DGS.
**Hatcheries**

- The steelhead spawn was very successful this year and the egg goals were reached in a timely manner. Due to warm temperatures, walleye culture started early this year and collection of brood and spawning started in mid-March. Trout hatchery staff has been busy with the start of stocking season. Hatchery Managers needed to make adjustments in the stocking schedules in order to accommodate changes in the motor carrier safety regulations so anglers should double check the stocking schedule on the PFBC website to confirm stocking information. A Bureau of Hatcheries Meeting was held in January and an increased emphasis on safety is being stressed at our facilities. Site inspections are being conducted by a safety specialist and recommendations are being made to Hatchery Managers. Hatcheries are reviewing their safety programs, identifying areas that can be improved upon and implementing those solutions.

- Several nurseries within the PFBC Cooperative Nursery Program that supply fish to the Lake Erie programs had trout that tested positive for a specific pathogen (IPNV). According to the Great Lakes Fish Health Committee Guidelines, fish with this pathogen are not to be stocked in the Lake Erie drainage in order to minimize any potential impact on the fisheries (including steelhead and brown trout). These fish were euthanized and other fish from PFBC State Fish Hatcheries will be stocked as replacements so there will be no loss to the stocking programs in Erie. Approximately 97% of the steelhead goal will be stocked by both the PFBC and the cooperative nurseries. Improved disinfection and biosecurity procedures are being prepared for the cooperative nurseries to follow.