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.
   - Discussed funding at legislative lunches in Commissioner districts.
   - Briefed House Democratic Policy Committee on funding options.
   - Board of Commissioners approved proposed rule-making requiring senior resident lifetime license holder to purchase a trout/salmon permit annually.
   - Began offering voluntary youth fishing licenses.

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.
   - 

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.
   - 

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.
   • Secured the release of capital budget dollars for Colyer Lake, Glade Run Lake, and Speedwell Forge Lake.
   • Continued to advocate for the release of capital budget dollars for other high-hazard, unsafe dams, including Meadow Grounds Lake and Somerset Lake.

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 annual State Wildlife Grant (SWG) fly-in in Washington, DC.
   • Participated in Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association congressional visits.

**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*.
   • Provided review of upper Delaware thermal relief proposal by NY DEC and drafted a PFBC counterproposal
   • Directed questions, examples recommendations regarding of degree of protection provided by their 2012 Low Flow Protection Policy to SRBC
   • Participated in a multi-agency meeting with the Corps, DCNR and PFBC regarding finalization of the Section 22, Phase 2 modeling of six operational scenarios and effects on water quality in F. E. Walter Reservoir and the Lehigh River
   • The following dam removal projects are in various stages of implementation on wild trout streams: Taylor Run, Tioga Co.; Driftwood Br. Sinnemahoning Creek, Cameron Co.; Cacoosing Creek, Berks Co.; UNT to Frankstown Br. Juniata River, Blair Co; Long Run, Clinton Co.; Toms Run, Cumberland Co.; Twomile Run, McKean
   • Attended several meetings to discuss and coordinate submission of a proposal to the Sinnemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Grant program to obtain funding to develop a wild trout and restoration monitoring program.
   • Met with representatives from the Big Spring Watershed Association to discuss future management of Big Spring Creek (07B).
Attended a meeting with a Slate Run Sportsmen’s group to assist Commissioner Worobec in addressing issues pertaining to the management of the Delayed Harvest Area on Pine Creek in Lycoming County.

Discussed options for extending the Delayed Harvest Area on Pine Creek.

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

- Met with PADEP Staff to align effort on Susquehanna River studies.
- Provided a presentation on the Susquehanna River Smallmouth Bass mortality issues at Wildwood Park’s Winter Seminar Series at Olewine Nature Center in Harrisburg.
- Conducted an internal discussion to improve the American shad egg viability and collection from Smithfield Beach.
- Participated in the first Ohio River Asian Carp Coordination Meeting at the Ohio River National Wildlife Refuge in Williamstown, West Virginia.

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.

- Activities to address the congressionally required comprehensive revision of the Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) included meetings of the joint PFBC-PGC Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is composed of partner conservation agencies and organizations. These committees were established to guide and assist with the revision process. The revision process is being facilitated by the PFBC Conservation Coordinator and the PGC Conservation Planning Coordinator. The comprehensive revision of the SWAP is due September 30, 2015. An approved State Wildlife Action is required for receipt of State Wildlife Grant funds.

- **Eastern Pearlshell-SWG inventory project initiated to assess historic distribution and gap areas in Delaware.**

- **Bog Turtle**—met with USFWS and state partners within region to assist with developing monitoring protocol used in habitat management. Also, attended bog turtle Susquehanna Recovery Unit meeting. Continued effort to gather data on individual turtles marked in PA, database the information, and start to manage surveyors in distributing their time and effort among occupied sites for long term monitoring. The bog turtle (Section 6) monitoring grant was amended to include the health assessment and another year of sampling. Data is being compiled and summarized for bog turtle trapping surveys at the sites of the first year of the PDIS project, as well as across all 5 years of trapping for the final report. Other NFWF funded bog turtle habitat restoration project activities: continue to engage bog turtle landowners for securing site access for project activities and conservation easement programs; conducted habitat assessments and presence/absence surveys, wrote habitat management plans for NRCS WRP bog turtle initiative, and aided partners (USFWS and USDA); continue conducting aerial photograph analysis resulting in potential sites identified remotely. Previously approved Tulpehocken/Quittapahilla Grant funded Bog Turtle assessment project contracting being worked on. **Section 6 funded**
project to assess historic and gap areas across southeast PA still under contracting phase. Continued work on Cherry Valley property acquisition.

- **Eastern Spadefoot**: reviewed annual report of Berks County preserve management plan. Consulted on several development projects, some in need of conservation and mitigation.

- **Eastern Massasauga**: Implementation of restoration plan was initiated in November 2012. Significant woody vegetation removal activities began in late December 2012, with the bulk of work done in January and February 2013. This first phase restoration of 30 acres complete (trees, shrubs cleared and grubbed). Seeding will occur in spring 2014.

- **Timber Rattlesnake**: Continue to cooperate with Penn State monitoring study on State Forests concerning Marcellus/Utica shale development activity impact. Assisted with the development and implementation of habitat maintenance and/or habitat improvement programs for specific management units, targeting existing gestation sites. Implementation has begun and will broaden to include more sites in various state forests and state game lands.

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 (PA Amphibian and Reptile Survey-PARS) project is ongoing. Data records continue to be gathered from academic and museum collections. Approximately 160,000 records have been collected from various institutions, including PFBC files. The pilot interactive website for volunteers and project participants was launched on June 1. To date, over 727 people have contributed records and over 6,000 records have been submitted since the project has started. 618 new records have been submitted in 2014.

- The Eastern Massasauga habitat restoration and monitoring project is ongoing. Winter vegetation management occurred on a 50 acre tract in Venango County. Snakes have been outfitted with radio transmitters and are being tracked as to habitat use. We also recently learned that over 400 acres of upland foraging habitat has been restored on State Game Lands in NW PA.

- 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 SWG grant to compile the PA fish data, quality assurance on the data, and conduct a status assessment on the darters is ongoing. The fish data contained at PFBC in electronic format was compiled from PNDI, PFBC ARDB, and PFBC Scientific Collectors Databases (along with historic museum and academic databases). This time consuming and tedious process has involved acquiring known data sources and reformatting them into a standardized table for review. Standardized fields have been developed to facilitate review and to store information about the review for future data use. To date, upwards of 100,000 records have been entered from Scientific Collectors, 275,000 from PFBC records, and 700 from PNDI records. Duplicate records have been partially addressed, but will become more of an issue.
once the project moves from the data compilation stage to the record review. The initial review process has been focused the darters addressed in this grant, Bluebreast Darter, Tippecanoe Darter, Spotted Darter, and Gilt Darter. These data were then used to construct draft Documentation Forms for the delisting process. Currently the forms and summary report are being finalized. The review of species from this point forward will be in priority order based on the level of concern and status uncertainty.

- A SWG grant to focus on the status assessment on the endangered Eastern Pearlshell mussel, as well as a Section 6 funded project to study the Dwarf Wedgemussel in the Delaware River tributaries is underway. New Eastern Pearlshell occurrences have been reported near the Little Schuylkill River as well as records in the Maiden Creek watershed.

- Continued to work on numerous status assessments: Ohio Lamprey, Bowfin, Timber Rattlesnake, Redbelly turtle, Blanding’s Turtle, Blackchin Shiner, Pugnose Minnow, Longear Sunfish, Black Bullhead, and Horneyhead Chub.

- Activities to address the congressionally required comprehensive revision of the Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) included meetings of the joint PFBC-PGC Steering Committee and the Advisory Committee, composed of partner conservation agencies and organizations. These committees were established to guide and assist with the revision process. The revision process is being facilitated by the PFBC Conservation Coordinator and the PGC Conservation Planning Coordinator. The comprehensive revision of the SWAP is due September 30, 2015.

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.
  -

- By July 2012, complete documentation of PFBC-approved sampling protocols for large rivers.
  -

- By December 2012, complete documentation of PFBC-approved sampling protocols for lakes.
  - Completed the first draft of the Lake Sampling Protocols document.

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.

- Completed a white paper titled “PA Aquatic Life Use-Warm Water Fishes: An Evaluation of Additional Criterion to Qualify for Special Protection.” A workgroup of PFBC and DEP personnel was formed and six meetings were held from 2010-2013. The workgroup reviewed Pennsylvania’s current water quality protection regulations and then evaluated other criteria initiatives that could potentially be added
to the list of criteria that qualifies a waterway for special protection. The initiatives that were considered included the Warm Water Index for Macroinvertebrates, Warm Water Index for Fish, Sport Fish Abundance Data, Best Waters, and Ecological Significance.

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.
   • Attended an Unassessed Water Angler Participation review meeting with staff and TU representative from the Allegheny Mountain and Susquehanna Chapters, Contract FB Hodorwicz presented an overview of the pilot program to incorporate angler information to aide identifying wild trout waters for 2014 Unassessed Waters surveys.
   • Attended the Keystone Cold Water Conference in State College and presented material on the Unassessed Waters Program
   • Attended a meeting of the Lloyd Wilson Chapter of Trout Unlimited and presented information on how sportsmen could assist in identifying Unassessed Waters.
   • Attended meetings of the Neshannock, Western Pocono, Muddy Creek and Gods Country Chapters of Trout Unlimited to present information on how sportsmen could assist in identifying Unassessed Waters.

H. By July 2014, evaluate and improve gamefish management programs for muskellunge, walleye, channel catfish and striped bass/hybrid bass.
   • Conducted the PFBC MUSKIES Inc. Coop Nursery meeting, to coordinate the program.
   • Initiated the Walleye stocking evaluation of Shawnee Lake (11C) utilizing trap nets and gill nets.

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.
     • The Commission continues to administer two GLRI Grants (FY11 and FY12). These grant funds provided by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. EPA, are being used to address diverse issues associated with aquatic invasive species (AIS) including: monitoring, education and outreach, research, intra and inter-state coordination, and tracking through iMapInvasives http://imapinvasives.org/paimi/map/, associated with AIS in-and-around the Great Lakes. Funds from the FY11 grant are being used to support PFBC field staff and Fish Production Services implementation of biosecurity protocols through the acquisition of materials and supplies. In this reporting period, PFBC staff updated information into the Great Lakes. Accountability
System (GLAS), submitted the requisite annual report, and are providing administrative oversight of these grants.

- Represented PFBC at quarterly PISC meeting.
- Reviewed several applications to PA Dept. of Ag. regarding importation of non-native species.
- Provided a presentation at Wellsboro area joint AIS workshop (SRBC, PFBC, Tioga Cons. Dist., TU).
- Developed a generic AIS warning sign, which will be distributed to PFBC Regional Law Enforcement offices.

- 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.
  - Worked with Conewango Watershed association to coordinate eradication of water chestnut from Akeley Swamp
  - Continued to monitor for new outbreaks of golden alga
  - Conducted research into the origins of didymo in PA 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.
  - Conducted a critical review of Chapters 71 and 73 of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Code pertaining to propagation and transportation of fish in Pennsylvania.
  - Hatcheries staff met with representatives from the PA Aquaculture Advisory Committee to determine potential pathogen testing requirements for fish imported into Pennsylvania.

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.
• By June 2015, investigate the feasibility of fish passage improvements on the Lehigh River in collaboration with state and local partners.
  • A final report was completed by KCI Technologies for the Lehigh River Fish Passage Feasibility Study. PFBC is working with project partners to address follow up items associated with the public comments received.

• By June 2015, facilitate or complete at least 40 small dam removals in collaboration with state and local partners.
  • Collaborated with partners to facilitate the advancement of the following dam removal projects: Taylor Run (WT), Tioga Co.; Driftwood Br. Sinnemahoning Creek (WT/ST), Cameron Co.; Skinner Creek (WT), McKean Co.; Cacoosing Creek (WT), Berks Co.; UNT to Frankstown Br. Juniata River (WT), Blair Co.; Long Run (WT), Clinton Co.; Toms Run (WT), Cumberland Co.; Twomile Run (WT), McKean Co.; Conewango Creek, Warren Co.; E Br Brandywine Creek (ST), Chester Co.; Little Cove Creek (ST), Franklin Co.; Pennypack Ck, Philadelphia Co.; Conococheague Creek, Franklin Co.; Chiques Ck (MF), Lancaster Co.; Solomons Creek, Luzerne 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.*

  •

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.
Responsive Management (RM) continued to survey participants in 2013 PFBC Family Fishing Programs that occurred in the last quarter of 2013. This is part of RM’s ongoing national study on the effectiveness of recruitment and retention programs. Post-program surveys are being completed using adult and youth participants over the age of 10. Preliminary results are expected during the second quarter of 2014.

Initiated analysis of participant data (for those 16 years and older) that was captured during the period January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013. Participant data captured through the FFP on-line pre-registration system resulted in 2,940 records, and the paper registration process (used in 2013 only) resulted in 1,155 records. The PALS database will be searched for customer identification (CID) numbers for those participants providing date of birth. Of those with CID numbers, license purchasing history will be determined. This analysis is scheduled for first quarter 2014.

By July 2013, utilize information captured from participants in the Commission’s educational programs to direct future fishing and safe boating programs.
- E-mail addresses from participant database were used to send e-mails promoting the March 18 “Gear-Up for Mentored Youth Fishing Day” program. Past participants residing in neighboring zip codes were selected.
- E-mail addresses from the participant database will be incorporated into the next scheduled PFBC e-mail blast.
- Using information from the Trout in the Classroom database, schools near Mentored Youth Fishing Program waters were identified and were sent promotional materials.

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.
- Conducted a Boating Advisory Board meeting on March 6, 2014 where the following items were recommended to be advanced to the Commission as proposed rulemaking:
  - Amendment to Section 95.3 Lights for Boats to clarify and update the language of the regulation;
  - Amendment to Section 109.2 Sailboards to include a definition of paddleboards;
  - Amendment to Section 109.4 Waterskiing, Aquaplaning, Kiteskiing, Etc to prohibit the use of airborne devices;
  - Amendment to Section 111.49 Northumberland County to reduce the length of the slow, no wake zone on the West Branch Susquehanna River on the southeastern side of Packer’s Island in Sunbury.

**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.
   -

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

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.
   - The Commission provided funding to the Borough of Selinsgrove to construct a new boat launch facility along the Susquehanna River. The Boat Launch facility was completed in January of 2014.
   - The Commission provided funding to the Venango County to construct a new boat launch facility on Justus Lake in Two Mile Run County Park. The Boat Launch facility was completed in January of 2014.
   - The Commission provided funding through the USFWS Boating Infrastructure Grant Program to the Urban Redevelopment Authority of Pittsburgh for the construction of transient boating facilities along the Monongahela River. The facility was completed in February of 2014.
   - The Commission acquired Public Fishing Access and Conservation Easements on five properties along Caldwell Creek in Warren County. The easements provide public fishing access to approximately three miles of stream that include the Catch and Release Fly Fishing Only section and a portion of the trout stocked section of Caldwell Creek.

**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.
   -

B. By December 31, 2013, complete migration of the IT supported access applications used by the Bureau of Fisheries to a new modernized platform.
   - **ARDB, Trout, Real Estate, Pathology, Warm Cool, COOP, AME/Eel, Habitat-Fish Passage, Special Activities Permit Applications:**


• Maintenance and User Support - ongoing

ii. Encroachment Application (ACT 13)
   1. Maintenance and user support -ongoing

iii. SIR Tracking (ACT 13)
   1. Maintenance and user support -ongoing

iv. Scientific Collectors (ACT 13)
   1. Development – in progress
   2. Training-initial training session was conducted
   3. Production go-live scheduled 5/5/2014

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.

**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.
   • Complete
   • By January 2012, continue agency-wide and bureau specific implementation of climate assessment improvement items.
     • Years of Service pins were distributed to employees who were celebrating 5 year-increment anniversaries with the Commonwealth.
     • Praise for our employees continued to be received through the HR resource account. Supervisors and employees were made aware of positive feedback received from our customers so that appropriate notification and recognition could occur for those employees receiving praise.

B. By July 2012, begin implementation of a succession planning and leadership development program.
   • Materials continue to be collected and developed to prepare for an internal mentoring program.
• An internal Accelerated Grievance Procedures training has been developed and will be taught in 2014. This course is now loaded into the LSO training system. Dates have yet to be determined for the course to be taught.
• An internal Hiring Process training continues to be developed and will be offered in 2014.
• An internal two-day Effective Writing course was offered to PFBC employees. All feedback received regarding this course was extremely positive. Plans are in place to continue to offer this course one time per year.
• A course on “How to Conduct a Workplace Investigation” has been developed and will be offered in 2014. This course is now loaded into the LSO training system, however specific dates for the classes to be conducted have not been determined yet.
• An internal Sexual Harassment course has been developed and will be conducted in 2014.

C. By January 2011, begin implementation of Supervisor Development Training.
• Two employees were nominated for the Commonwealth’s Emerging Leaders program. One employee was from the Bureau of Administration and one employee was from the Bureau of Hatcheries.
• One employee from the Bureau of Engineering was nominated for the Commonwealth’s Leadership Development Institute.
• HR will continue to conduct yearly classes for the four required Supervisory Courses: EPR training, Labor Relations training, and Fundamentals of Supervision training. Until we run an in-house Sexual Harassment training (in 2014), we will continue to rely on OA to teach that course.

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.
•

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.
•

**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.
   
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.
   
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

- Spent considerable time advocating against the Endangered Species Coordination Act (HB 1576), attempting to negotiate a compromise, and explaining the value of the pending upgrade to the PNDI Environmental Review tool.
- Delivered 2013 Annual Report to the House Game and Fisheries Committee.
- Advocated for amendments to the Recreational Use of Land and Water Act.

Bureau of Administration

PALS
- As of April 1, 2014: the total number of 2014 fishing licenses sold and vouchers redeemed and active multi-year licenses were 247,126 which is a 0.34% increase from the same time period last year; the total number of 2014 permits sold and vouchers redeemed and active multi-year permits were 213,810 which is a -0.88% decrease compared to the same period last year.

Boating
- As of April 1, 2014, the Commission’s 2014 new boat registration transactions decreased 8.31% to 2,757, new titling transactions decreased 2.79% to 1,600 and boat renewals have decreased 3.23% decrease to 92,961.
- As of April 1, 2014, there were 511 (1) Year Launch Permits and 2,488 (2) Year Launch Permits sold, which is a 13.17% increase from 2013.

Multi-Year Licenses
- As of April 1, 2014, the Commission has sold 4,406 3-year multi-year licenses and 1,891 5-year multi-year licenses in the 2014 license year. The Commission has sold 3,846 3-year
multi-year permits and 1,694 5-year multi-year permits in the 2014 license year. Almost 88% of all multi-year license buyers purchased multi-year permits.

**Mentored Youth Fishing Permit and Voluntary Youth Fishing License**
- As of April 1, 2014, there have been a total of 1,503 Mentored Youth Fishing Permits and 910 Voluntary Youth Fishing Licenses sold.

**Legal Office**
- 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 sought 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. On July 12, 2013, the trial court dismissed the Commission’s complaint, concluding that the Commission only has authority to bring actions for civil damages for violations of Chapter 25 of the Fish and Boat Code and has no authority to bring a cause of action under West Virginia common law. The Commission filed a notice of appeal with the West Virginia Supreme Court, and on February 20, 2014, the Court decided to hear the appeal. Oral argument before the Court took place on April 8.
- On October 16, 2013, the Commission filed an appeal of its NPDES permit for the Tylersville State Fish Hatchery with the Environmental Hearing Board (EHB). Staff from the Commission and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) met on two occasions to discuss possible resolution of the case, and on March 25, 2014, the EHB stayed all prehearing matters until July 15, 2014. On or before that date, the parties must file settlement documents with the EHB or a joint status report setting forth what additional matters need to be accomplished to settle the appeal. As of the date of report preparation, the parties had reached a settlement agreement in principle; however, the details of that settlement had not been memorialized in writing.
- In July 2013, the Office of Administration (OA) and counsel for the Commonwealth’s insurance carrier settled a workers’ compensation claim from a former hatchery worker whose estate alleged that he developed terminal cancer from exposure to chemicals at the hatchery. The estate also has a products liability claim outstanding in federal court against manufacturers of the chemicals used at the hatchery. The Commission is not a party to that lawsuit, but its records have been subpoenaed and several of its employees have been deposed.
- Christopher P. Bennett, an Ohio resident, timely applied for a nonresident Lake Erie trap net license for 2014, and Commission staff denied the application. On March 14, 2014, Bennett filed a Petition Appealing Staff Action Denying Application and Granting Renewal Licenses and a Request for Stay. The Bureau of Law Enforcement filed an
Answer. On April 3, the Commission’s Executive Director denied Bennett’s request for a stay because Bennett did not demonstrate good cause for a stay. The Executive Director concluded that because the laws of Ohio prohibit the issuance of a commercial fishing license to a Pennsylvania resident, the Commission is therefore prohibited from issuing a commercial fishing license to an Ohio resident, such as Bennett, under section 2903(f) of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Code. The Executive Director will appoint a presiding officer to hear the appeal.

- The Commission continues to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) and the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) as Trustees to pursue potential claims for natural resource damages resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the Centre County Kepone Superfund Site (CCK Site) near State College. The CCK Site includes a former chemical manufacturing facility operated by the Nease Chemical Company from 1957 through 1977. Operations were eventually taken over by the Rutgers Organics Corporation. Throughout its production life, the plant produced specialty chemicals, including Kepone, an insecticide produced from 1959 to 1962, and Mirex produced in 1973 and 1974 as a fire retardant and insecticide. Releases from chemical production and storage areas have contaminated on-site soil and groundwater beneath the site, presumably to the end of production in 2003. Affected groundwater flowed into Spring Creek. Fish over the entire length of Spring Creek downstream from the site were found to contain contaminants released from the site. In September 1983, the site was placed on the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s National Priorities List. From 1999 through 2011, remediation was conducted on the site that included pumping and treating contaminated groundwater, excavation and off-site disposal of contaminated soil, surface water drainage improvement, fencing, deed restrictions and monitoring. The Trustees have met to discuss recovery of natural resource damages at the site. Rutgers Organics has been notified of the potential claim and has participated in an initial meeting with the Trustees. Additional meetings with Rutgers Organics are anticipated.

- The Commission continues to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the USFWS, DEP and DCNR as Trustees to pursue potential claims for natural resource damages resulting from the release of hazardous substances from the Metal Bank Superfund Site, which is located on the western shore of the Delaware River in Philadelphia. According to available information, from 1962 to 1985, the site was used for scrap metal storage. For approximately five years, during the late 1960s and early 1970s, electrical transformer salvage operations were performed at the site. Some of the salvaged transformers contained PCBs, which were released to soils and groundwater at the site, eventually seeping into the Delaware River and contaminating river surface water and sediment. NOAA is the lead administrative trustee.
Bureau of Boating and Outreach

Education Program Results, 1/1/2014 to 3/28/2014

Boating safety education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program/activity</th>
<th>Number in this quarter</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boating Safety Education Certificates (BSEC) Issued</td>
<td>1,110</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates issued through distance learning</td>
<td>809</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificates issued through classroom courses</td>
<td>296</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Boating courses scheduled</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boating and Water Safety Awareness (in-school)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Angler education & fishing promotion

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport Show (show days)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Ice Fishing Programs (FIFP) scheduled</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Ice Fishing Programs conducted</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Ice Fishing Program attendance</td>
<td>445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Conducted activities related to planning, implementation, and postponement of the 2014 Mentored Youth Fishing Days. Regional staff contacted the owner/manager of the selected waters and partners providing on-site support.
- Distributed 50 youth life jackets at the Allegheny Sports, Travel and Outdoor Show. The give-away was a partnership between the Port of Pittsburgh, Cabela’s (Wheeling, WV store) and the PFBC. In order to receive a jacket, youth and accompanying adult picked up a coupon at the PFBC booth and attended a presentation on life jacket fit and wear. Staff from the PFBC, USACOE, USCG Auxiliary, US Power Squadrons, and local law enforcement provided assistance.
- Scheduled two “Gear-Up for Mentored Youth Fishing Day” programs for the evenings of March 12 and March 18. The programs were designed to help promote the Mentored Youth Fishing Days and provide participants with basic trout fishing skills. The first was scheduled for March 12 in Gettysburg, however due to low registration the program was cancelled. The second occurred on March 18 and was held at North Park Lake, Allegheny County. Nearly 50 adults and children participated.
- Finalized plans for the 2014 Linesville Open House scheduled for April 5, 2013.
- Printed and produced digital editions of the Spring PLAY newsletter.
- Printed and produced digital editions (including e-zine) of the March/April and May/June Pennsylvania Angler & Boater magazine.
- Produced Mentored Youth Fishing Day posters and flyers, stocking truck decals and “Angler Thank You” campaign materials.
- Printed and produced the online version of the 2013 PFBC Annual Report.
- Conducted Ice Safety and Water Rescue for the First Responder courses for PFBC staff.
- Represented the Commission in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan meetings to update the state’s current plan and place greater emphasis on fishing and boating recreation activities.
• Coordinated climate-controlled storage of PFBC Water Rescue equipment, boats, and trailer at PEMA’s Special Operations Center (SOC) in Harrisburg.
• Coordinated the use of vehicles, rescue and communications equipment from PEMA in addition to funding for certain travel and training costs associated with PA-HART.
• Coordinated the development of a PFBC WCO Swiftwater Strike Team Type 1. Scheduled and began providing training.
• Completed updates and editing on “Water Rescue for the First Responder” NFPA 1670 Awareness Level course which became available on-line in April 2014. A revenue code was established to track income distributed (per student completing the course) to the Commission by the on-line provider.
• Participated in a workgroup for FEMA-NIMS Resource Typing for Rescue Boats.
• Trained Instructor cadre for Harrisburg City Fire Dept in PA Basic Boating and completed Ice Rescue & Emergency Response training with Harrisburg City Fire Dept.
• Conducted DCNR Ranger Block Safety Training in Harrisburg during March, April & May
• Continued logistical planning PA-HART 2014 Vigilant Guard Exercise set for May 12th-14th, 2014.
• Participated in planning for the PA-HART/PFBC/USCG/PEMA joint exercise scheduled for September 2014 in Erie, PA.
• Conducted multiple PA-HART training missions, one of which was held on PFBC’s Benner Spring State Fish Hatchery property.

Bureau of Fisheries

• Evaluated 17 grant proposals submitted in the Sinnemahoning Watershed Restoration Grant Program.
• Conducted a 10-year review with the National Park Service of the Valley Creek Trustee Council and restoration activities associated with the Paoli Railyard Superfund Site settlements.
• Completed a hydrogeologic study in the vicinity of the area Corry SFH in response to the newly developed Foster Well complex. It is anticipated that the additional wells will produce up to 1400 gallons of water/minute to the Corey SFH facility.
• An internal DHM and DFM meeting was conducted to better coordinate activities related to the establishment and maintenance of the PFBC’s Priority Waters Lists for habitat work. A work group has been assigned the task of developing a process for screening potential priority waters with a first draft due in May 2014.
• Chaired the newly established Aquatic Habitat Initiative Partnership workgroup. This group has been established to develop a clearinghouse of the efforts and priorities of other agencies and organizations and see where we share common interests. This will reduce duplication of efforts and provide opportunities for more efficient partnerships.
• Attended the Coldwater Task Group Meeting in Buffalo, NY on February 4-5, 2014.
• Attended the Walleye Task Group meeting in Sandusky, Ohio on February 19-20. FB Hosack attended the Forage Task Group meeting in Sandusky, Ohio on February 20, 2014. Pennsylvania data was provided to the Task Group.

• Attended the 2014 BASS Classic two-day Conservation Summit in Montgomery, AL.

• Attended the Pre-Lake Erie Committee and the Lake Erie Committee Meetings to set the bi-national harvest quotas on Yellow Perch and Walleye in Lake Erie.

• Conducted fish salvage at Nessmuk Lake, Tioga County, in response to a future dam modification and improvement project.

• Participated in the Angler Thank You campaign throughout the Commonwealth on both the regional and traditional Opening Day of Trout Season.


• Participated with the planning and implementation of the 2014 Keystone Coldwater Conference. The 11th Keystone Coldwater Conference was held on February 21 and 22 at the Ramada Conference Center in State College. This year’s conference, titled “Coldwater Resources: Current Practices in Conservation, Protection and Restoration” focused on providing attendees with current information and techniques that protect, conserve and restore our coldwater streams. Sessions focused on building partnerships, current research, and best management practices to ensure our coldwater ecosystems are protected well into the future.

**Bureau of Hatcheries**

• Due to the long cold winter, this was a difficult stocking season with many frozen waterways. Even so, all trout were stocked in waters as requested prior to both opening days.

• Continue to work with Union City water Authority on Land Use Agreement.

• Preparing for well studies for the Corry SFH. Staff will be closely monitoring flow rates and water table levels.

• Steelhead stocking was delayed by heavy ice cover on Lake Erie tributaries. Stocking has now been completed.

• Trap netting for walleye brood is underway and spawning will commence in April.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary Information of Species Stocked</th>
<th>01/01/2014 thru 04/01/2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Species</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lifestage</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Trout-Steelhead</td>
<td>YRLN</td>
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</table>

• Trout Stockings: Number of adult and fingerling trout stocked or scheduled to be stocked between January 1, 2014 and March 31, 2014.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SPECIES</th>
<th>NUMBER STOCKED</th>
<th>LIFESTAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brook Trout</td>
<td>187875</td>
<td>Adult</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown Trout</td>
<td>210793</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow Trout</td>
<td>631462</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Golden Rainbow Trout</td>
<td>7349</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL ADULT TROUT</td>
<td>1037479</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Policy and Planning Office**

Angler Thank You Campaign – 32 teams of PFBC employees were actively engaged in saying “thank you” to our customers during the campaign. Staff were equipped with specially made and donated hats and armed with swag bags containing items that were donated by business partners, and in all 1500 “thank you” bags were assembled and distributed. In addition, licensed anglers were given the opportunity to get a free hot beverage at one of nearly 200 locations statewide.