

Ralph Abele Legacy Research Project
Final Report

Submitted to the
Ralph W. Abele Scholarship Fund Board

Submitted by
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Biography of Project Consultant

Acknowledgements

This project was undertaken with the support of numerous individuals, many of them having known and/or worked with Ralph Abele in his professional capacities with both the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. A special thank you is extended to the members of the Ralph W. Abele Scholarship Fund Board, especially Wayne Kober, as well as staff of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, especially John Arway, Gary Moore, Ted Walke, and Teresa Erdman.

Each of the interviewees, whose stories are summarized in this report, deserves special credit for taking the time to reflect on and share their experiences and knowledge of Ralph Abele. A special thank you is extended to his children, Ralph Abele, Jr. and Jennifer Smith who shared personal stories about their father and their family life.

All of the individuals involved in this project, in big and small ways, have contributed greatly to an important chapter in Pennsylvania's conservation and environmental heritage - that is the contributions and importance of a mighty figure in this history - Ralph W. Abele.

Executive Summary

In January 2012, a project was undertaken by the Ralph Abele Scholarship Board to document the history and contributions of Ralph Abele as one of Pennsylvania's leading conservationists and environmentalists. A project consultant was hired to accomplish two tasks: 1) create a finding aid for papers relating to Abele held at the Fish and Boat Commission office in Harrisburg; and 2) collect oral history interviews of individuals who knew and worked with Abele. The Project Scope and Purpose is further described on page 4.

A summary and description of the research findings begins on page 4 also. The description is divided into two parts: 1) a review of themes that resulted from the oral histories; and 2) a review of the results of the finding aid research. This report also contains immediate and short and long-term recommendations resulting from the research. These recommendations begin on page 7.

Moreover, each of the 21 oral history interviews is detailed in Attachment A (it is noteworthy that 10 to 15 oral history interviews were planned for this project. However, it quickly became apparent that more individuals were worthy of oral history interviews.). A detailed analysis of the contents of each of the 22 boxes in the archival collection is available in Attachment B.

The project was completed on August 1, 2012, with the submission of this final report to the Board of the Ralph Abele Scholarship Fund. Although additional work was undertaken for the oral history component, the project was completed both within the timeframe and budget as summarized in the Project Purpose and Scope.

Biography of Ralph Warren Abele

Ralph W. Abele (1921-1990) served as the Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission from 1972-1987. His impact on Pennsylvania and national conservation is incalculable. From his time at the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee of the House and Senate (Pennsylvania General Assembly) until his passing on June 15, 1990, Ralph Abele was a tireless advocate for the environment.

Abele was born on a farm near Pittsburgh on August 13, 1921. He was active in Scouting from an early age and attended the National Boy Scout Jamboree in 1937 where he realized the importance of protecting and conserving nature and the environment. He was also inspired by reading Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*. Leopold (1887-1948) was an American author, scientist, forester and environmentalist, and served as professor at the University of Wisconsin. Abele was also inspired by books authored by Ernest Thompson Seton (1860-1946), a noted author and wildlife artist who was one of the founders of the Boy Scouts of America.

Following high school graduation, Abele attended the University of Pittsburgh where he studied geology intending to become a petroleum engineer. He served as a company commander in the U.S. Army's Third Armored Division in Europe during World War II where he earned the rank of major. Following the war, Abele remained active in the Army Reserves with a tank battalion and a helicopter unit.

In 1945, he was married to Marguerite (Peggy) Dietz and the couple settled in Pittsburgh where Abele became a food broker. He became the leader of Boy Scout Troop 230 in Mount Lebanon where he and his troop volunteered in the conservation movement in Western Pennsylvania. Abele and his troop were awarded the William F. Hornaday Award for distinguished service to conservation.

In 1960, Ralph Abele moved to Harrisburg to work as Executive Secretary of the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee of the State House of Representatives. There he worked on important environmental legislation including amendments to Pennsylvania's Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, the Sewage Facilities Act and the Conservation Amendment to the Commonwealth's Constitution.

In 1972, Ralph Abele was appointed Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission. Among his many concerns were protecting aquatic resources, clean water, prosecuting polluters, rewriting the Fish and Boat Code, professionalizing the agency (he created the Bureau of Education and Information), the use of science to manage resources, Operation FUTURE and restoring Shad to the Susquehanna River. He was also a member of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission, the Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, the Pennsylvania Environmental Quality Board, a Director of the Pennsylvania Forestry Association and a life member of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. He received numerous awards during his career such as the Pennsylvania Wildlife Federation's Conservationist of the Year

award. Abele was also well known for his “Straight Talk” articles that appeared in the *Pennsylvania Angler*. His professional accomplishments were many and Abele earned wide respect among Fish Commission staff, conservationists and environmentalists, legislators and policymakers, the public, and many others. He considered his greatest achievement as establishing the Fish Commission as a true conservation agency.

Following his retirement in 1987, Abele remained active in conservation and served on numerous boards and committees for organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation and the Pennsylvania Nature Conservancy. He also served as an elected director of the Board of Education for the Greenwood School District in Perry County (his home was in Millerstown, Perry County). Abele passed away in June, 1990, following an unsuccessful open heart surgery at Polyclinic Hospital in Harrisburg.

Project Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this project was to capture the legacy of Ralph W. Abele for future generations and to give the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission a resource as it applies to Abele's accomplishments to the future. The first part of the project was to capture oral histories of those who knew Abele, his family members, friends, colleagues, and those impacted by his work. These interviews, digitally recorded and backed-up with two copies, will be archived in an appropriate manner consistent with the second part of this project which was to document archival material on Ralph W. Abele at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's headquarters and to create a written summary finding aid. The project also resulted in the development of immediate, short-term and long-term recommendations. A total of over 140 hours was dedicated to this project by the project consultant.

Funding for this project was provided entirely by the Ralph W. Abele Scholarship Fund which is not affiliated with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. Furthermore, funding for this project was provided entirely by private contributions to this Fund. There is no funding for this project that was provided directly or indirectly from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania or its agencies and entities.

Summary of Research

Oral Histories

Twenty-One oral history interviews were conducted for this project in the spring of 2012. They are summarized in Attachment A. The project consultant originally planned to conduct 10 to 15 interviews. However, it soon became apparent that more individuals could contribute to the Abele story. Thus additional interviews were conducted (within budget). The title of the interviewees reflects their position at the time of the interview. The interviews range in time from 45 minutes to over 3 hours. All interviews were digitally recorded. Two copies were made of each interview recording and summary: one on CD and one on a flash drive. There are several important observations and themes that emerge from the oral history research:

- 1) Abele was highly regarded and admired by each interviewee. He had earned their respect as a conservationist and environmentalist. Several interviewees referred to Abele as having a natural interest in the environment and conservation and as inspiring others to have such an interest;
- 2) Abele was a leader among leaders. He served in Pennsylvania's environmental and conservation movements along with Maurice Goddard, John Ladadio, Lenny Green, Larry Schweiger, Pete Duncan and many others. He also served national and regional organizations (as mentioned in his biography above). He earned the respect and trust of many, not only in the Commonwealth, but on a national and regional level as well. He clearly emerged as one of Pennsylvania's great environmental leaders and remains highly regarded in this respect many years after his passing;

- 3) Abele was a mentor to many. However, he didn't always see himself in that role. It was his natural ability to mentor and advise others though he didn't outwardly boast of his skills in this regard.
- 4) Abele was a strong advocate of "Resource First" and "Operation FUTURE," two Fish Commission initiatives that placed science at the center of managing aquatic and amphibian resources. For example, Abele pushed politics aside in determining the distribution of Trout in Pennsylvania Waterways. Politics was replaced by science in determining resource care, protection and distribution. Moreover, he expressed special concern over the protection of rattlesnakes that he saw as being threatened by so called "Rattlesnake Roundups."
- 5) Abele was tireless. Seldom did other see him tire especially when it came to issues about which he was greatly concerned. He had great vigor. He could switch from one issue to another with equal enthusiasm. Several interviewees commented that Abele had an overactive thyroid that contributed to his high level of energy (he took medication for the condition). His tirelessness inspired others.
- 6) Abele wasn't afraid to speak or write about what was on his mind. His "Straight Talk" articles reflected this as well as his letters to officials and others. Moreover, he wasn't afraid to verbalize his views and positions whether it was to a governor, legislator, Fish Commission staff or commissioner, member of the public, etc.
- 7) Abele was sentimental. Numerous interviewees reflected on stories of his sentimentality. For example, he would send letters to Fish Commission staff congratulating them on certain achievements. He walked through the entire office almost every morning saying hello to staff. He took time to talk with them and often expressed concern or offered advice over personal issues with which they might be dealing. He often sent letters to congratulate the children of those he worked with such as Pete Duncan's two children who referred to him as "Uncle Ralph." He had humanistic attributes that many recognized but he didn't boast about, it came natural to Ralph Abele.
- 8) Abele was a practical joker. He would often pull pranks on various individuals. For example, he would often mail letters using a pseudonym to various individuals that would take curious views on certain issues or "poke fun" at them. Several interviewees referred to Abele's ability to be a joker and prankster. This reflected his humorous and lighter side.

These interviews provided important perspectives on Abele as a professional, conservationist, environmentalist, and as a human being.

Finding Aid

A “finding aid” is what historians, archivists and researchers refer to as a guide to materials contained in a particular archival collection. Usually archival materials are arranged in boxes (similar to banker’s boxes) and in folders within the boxes. Boxes are usually labeled as are the file folders within the boxes.

For this project, 22 boxes of archival material relating to the Fish and Boat Commission and Ralph Abele were analyzed to determine their contents. The contents of each box and file folder are summarized in Attachment B. The boxes are located in a basement storage room at the Fish and Boat Commission offices on Elmerton Avenue in Harrisburg. Attachment B summarizes the contents of the file folders within each box.

Below are general observations about this particular archival collection:

- Not all of the material relates to Ralph Abele. Some material is pre-Abele such as the material contained in box 10. And, some material is post-Abele such as material contained in box 23. However, all material relates to the Fish Commission, and, later, the Fish and Boat Commission.
- The boxes and their contents generally cover a time span dating from the early to mid-1960s to the early 1990s. The bulk of the material, however, relates to the tenure of Ralph Abele.
- There are gaps in the numbering of the boxes. For example, a gap exists between boxes 15 and 23 as well as boxes 27 and 31. A question, therefore, is whether the other boxes exist or whether the box numbering sequence is mislabeled. Many boxes are unlabeled such as boxes 5, 8, 9, 10, 15, 23, 24, 25, and 26; and numerous folders within these boxes are unlabeled. The project consultant reviewed and summarized the material within each unlabeled (as well as labeled) box and file folder.
- Numerous issues are covered in the boxes as summarized in the finding aid. For example, box 1 is labeled SRAFRS or Susquehanna River - Anadromous Fish Restoration Committee and most material is pre-Abele; box 2 is labeled Executive Director and mainly holds material relating to Abele’s tenure; box 4 is unlabeled and includes executive director testimony and legal proceedings before FERC on dam licensing issues and fish passageways; box 9 includes materials on endangered species and President Carter’s 1978 fly fishing trip to Pennsylvania; and box 31 relates to Allegheny River dredging issues.

Recommendations

Immediate

Based on the project research, it is apparent that there are two immediate initiatives that should be undertaken:

1. Disposition of Archival Material – Appropriate staff from the Fish and Boat Commission should immediately work with the Pennsylvania State Archives to have the archival materials documented for this project and transferred to the State Archives for proper processing and storage. A policy should be established between the Fish and Boat Commission and the State Archives for further disposition of Abele-related materials that may be found in the future.
2. Pennsylvania Heritage Article – Ralph Abele is clearly worthy of an article in *Pennsylvania Heritage* magazine published by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Cheryl Riley, who knew and worked with Abele, has expressed interest in writing this article. It is recommended that the appropriate staff at the Fish and Boat Commission facilitate discussions with the editor of *Pennsylvania Heritage*, Michael O'Malley, and Cheryl to complete this task.

Short Term

Based on the project research, it is apparent that several short term initiatives should be undertaken:

1. Website Information – The Fish and Boat Commission's website can be updated with information on the results of this project. For example, audio clips from the many oral history interviews as well as general information on the Abele papers can be added to the website.
2. Presentation on Abele – A formal presentation using the appropriate media should be developed on Ralph Abele and ways should be identified to utilize such a presentation to educate the public, school children and college and graduate students regarding his legacy. For example, the Goddard Chair at Penn State University could be encouraged to use such a presentation in courses taught on environmental history and policy. The presentation could also be available on the Fish and Boat Commission's website.
3. Additional Interviews – There are additional individuals who can be interviewed regarding Ralph Abele. It is recommended that these individuals be identified and interviewed.

4. Abele Video – Discussions should be undertaken with WITF, PCN, or other appropriate media entity to produce a Ralph Abele video such as was done with Maurice Goddard. Should such a project be undertaken, it is recommended that some of the individuals interviewed for this Legacy Project be interviewed on camera.

Long Term

Based on the project research, it is apparent that there are several long term initiatives that can be undertaken:

1. Biography – A project can be undertaken to write and publish a biography of Ralph Abele. The biography would consist of both primary and secondary source material. The biography would include information from the Abele papers, “Straight Talk,” information on Abele available from the Fish and Boat Commission, excerpts from the oral history interviews, summaries of specific initiatives undertaken by Abele during his tenure with the General Assembly and the Fish Commission, and information from various other sources.
2. Format for Biography - With regard to long-term recommendation #1, an Abele book could be made available in both a print and electronic format. A print format could be designed and printed by the Fish and Boat Commission, an independent printer, or university press.
3. Fundraising – An Abele biography can be used as a fundraiser by the Abele Scholarship Fund or other appropriate environmental organizations.
4. Collaboration with the Pennsylvania Department of Education – A collaborative effort should be undertaken between the Fish and Boat Commission and the PDE’s environmental education program to incorporate the legacy of Ralph Abele in its programs and outreach. Specifically, the Abele legacy can be incorporated into the following education standard areas: Standard 4.5 – Humans and the Environment and Standard 4.5.6.A – Examine how historical events have shaped the sustainable use of natural resources. Further collaboration can be undertaken to ensure that PDE environmental education programs include information on other environmental leaders in the Commonwealth’s history and to ensure that their contributions are incorporated into Standard 4.5 and Standard 4.5.6.A.
5. “Master Narrative” on Pennsylvania’s Conservation History - While it is beyond the scope of this project, it is apparent that there is a larger story to be told about Pennsylvania’s environmental and conservation heritage especially in the 20th century and during the 1960s and 1970s. A large and long-term project can be undertaken to create a “master narrative” or comprehensive history of this important legacy. Two main sources of information are available to create such a history: archival collections and oral history interviews (this is

especially critical as many of the people who were part of this movement in the 1960s and 1970s should be interviewed soon).

Such a project would likely result in a book. A website, video, or other media can be utilized to tell this important story. It is projected that such a project would likely require 1.5 to 2 years of research along with an additional 1.5 to 2 years to write and publish a book. Funding for such a project would need to be secured from a private foundation and/or other appropriate funding sources. The project would be best managed by a non-profit entity that would employ or contract with the appropriate researcher(s) and scholars(s). The final product would not be an academic publication, rather, it would be a product written for the general public.

It has been noted by several individuals involved in the Abele project that no such initiative has been undertaken by any other state. Moreover, many individuals who have been involved in the Abele project wholeheartedly support such an initiative as Pennsylvania was clearly a leader when it came to environmental and conservation policy in the 20th century.

6. Conservation Heritage Institute – While it is again beyond the scope of this project, the idea of creating a Pennsylvania Conservation Heritage Institute has been mentioned during the course of the Abele Legacy research project. The goal here is to preserve and inform regarding Pennsylvania's remarkable conservation heritage. Such a program could be housed at a university, it could be part of a non-profit organization such as the Parks and Forests Foundation, it could be an adjunct of a state agency such as DCNR, DEP or the Fish and Boat Commission, or it could be independent of state government (perhaps the preferable option). Funding options would need to be considered and pursued.

Attachment A
Oral History Interview Summaries

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Gary Moore, Special Projects Coordinator, PA Fish and Boat Commission

Date of Interview: 2/28/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 21 minutes.

Summary of Interview: Gary Moore began his career with the Fish and Boat Commission on 10/14/80 in Erie as a Waterways Conservation Officer. He has held various positions with the Commission including Assistant Regional Manager in Cumberland County, Regional Manager in Erie County, investigator on such issues as commercial fishing and fraud, Legislative Liaison, and, at the time of the interview, serves as Special Projects Coordinator.

Gary explained that Abele was a geologist by training, graduating from the University of Pittsburgh. He served as a colonel in the U.S. Army during World War II, and then he worked for a time as a food distribution salesman before coming to work for the General Assembly. Gary first encountered Abele in 1962 at Greentree Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh on 'Scout Sunday.' Abele was a Boy Scout leader in Western Pennsylvania and Gary was a member of a local Scout troop. He remembers being very impressed with Abele and knew of his reputation as a leader. Gary also encountered Abele's son, Ralph, Jr. while the younger Abele served on the staff of a Boy Scout Camp in Tionesta. Gary encountered Abele again in 1975 when he served as a Park Ranger for the federal government at Raystown Lake in Huntingdon County, PA. Abele, Maurice Goddard, and various other state officials were at Raystown to sign cooperative working agreements between and among state agencies and the federal government. In 1980, Gary took a Civil Service test to work for the Commission and was hired during Abele's tenure.

Gary commented extensively on Abele's leadership style. Abele had a determined personality but wasn't arrogant, his style was one of consensus decision making and he valued every employee in the agency. He got to know them individually and sought out their opinions. He subscribed to a well known 1970s and 1980s management style known as 'managing by walking around' and often visited hatcheries, district offices, and construction projects (on such visits Abele would frequently invite staff back to his hotel room in the evenings for refreshments, to socialize and to discuss issues). Abele was informed on many environmental and conservation issues and was always involved with staff and Commission members on numerous issues; he was an excellent public speaker and he earned the respect of members of the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, and many state officials. He could also be a practical joker and had a good sense of humor. Gary commented that Abele had all of the traits of an effective and respected leader. Abele dealt with many issues during his tenure. Gary mentioned several of these in the interview.

Abele was a key promoter for the Commission doing the public good and having public visibility. He promoted 'resource first.' Shad restoration was an issue he inherited and for which he was a strong advocate. He promoted investigations of waterway pollution and of questionable practices in commercial fishing on Lake Erie. He also promoted the re-write of the Commonwealth's Fish and Boat Code in 1980 that resulted in the creation of the Fish and Boat Commission (from the

Fish Commission) and the first increase in fishing licensing fees since the mid-1960s. He was opposed to the merger of the Fish and Boat Commission and the Game Commission arguing that better public service could be provided if the agencies were kept separate. Abele promoted 'Operation Future,' an early 1980s initiative to scientifically distribute fish from Commission hatcheries to waterways in the Commonwealth. He was an opponent of rattlesnake 'sacking contests' or 'roundups' that continue to occur in several communities and he supported regulations to protect rattlesnakes. Abele was greatly concerned about the pollution of streams from strip mining operations and supported regulation of the strip mining industry.

Gary concluded the interview by explaining that Abele had two children, a son and daughter, and that his wife would frequently accompany him at dinners and Commission engagements. Gary also reiterated that Abele was a true professional and that Commission staff knew they were working for the public good under his leadership.

John Arway, Executive Director, PA Fish and Boat Commission

Date of Interview: 4/4/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 16 minutes.

Summary of Interview: John Arway was born in McKeesport, Pennsylvania and was raised in nearby Irwin. He began fishing, hunting, and enjoying the outdoors at a young age and developed an early interest in biology. He attended the University of Pittsburgh, initially studying pre-medicine, then graduated with a degree in biology. His first job was as a chemist with Westinghouse Corporation in the Pittsburgh area. He then took a job with the Loyalhanna Watershed Association studying acid mine drainage and its impact on the environment. Later he accepted a research assistantship at Tennessee Technical University where he studied and investigated water quality issues and, especially, water quality and its impact on fish species. In the early 1980s, he returned to Pennsylvania and accepted a seasonal position with the Pennsylvania Fish Commission at its Wellsboro office. He then became a permanent staff member as a fish biologist and was promoted to chief of the Environmental Services Division in 1987. In 2010, he assumed the position of Executive Director.

John's first memory of Ralph Abele came while he was employed as a seasonal worker. A state legislator sent his resume to Abele suggesting that he was a good candidate for full-time employment. Abele 'called-in' John to discuss the matter and was somewhat resentful that political influence was being asserted to hire John as a full-time employee. Abele already knew of John and his capabilities and would soon bring him on staff in spite of political influence. Abele, as a professional, didn't like political pressure according to John. John recalled that he always referred to Abele as "Mr. Abele" out of respect for his professionalism and reputation. John also remembered that Abele consistently supported staff and often selected staff members who had knowledge on particular subjects to attend meetings with him. Rank or title didn't matter. It was the staff's expertise that Abele relied on. For example, John recalled attending important policy and legislative meetings with Abele where high profile issues were discussed. John recalled that Abele's leadership style was generally democratic in nature, that he was an environmentalist at heart and was proud of it, and that he would seek-out opinions of staff before making important decisions.

There were numerous important issues before the Fish Commission during Abele's tenure. First, there was the permitting of coal operations in the Commonwealth. Often, coal operators could receive permits from DER on the same day they applied for them with scant regulatory oversight. The Fish Commission would often appeal permit applications particularly over issues of acid mine drainage. Abele was a strong advocate of water quality and advocated taking criminal actions against violators of water quality standards. In this interview, John recited specific examples of coal operators who were in violation of such standards and incidents when the Commission appealed permits and pursued criminal actions.

Another issue was the construction of dams and their impact on Shad restoration, particularly in the Susquehanna. In the interview, John remembered Commission lawsuits against FERC where permitting of hydroelectric dams impacted Shad and where such projects lacked fish passageways that the Commission insisted on being constructed. John also recalled Abele's opposition to the Tock's Island Dam project on the Delaware River and, similarly, the construction of the Dock Street Dam in Harrisburg.

Acid Rain was an issue of major concern during Abele's tenure. John said that Pennsylvania ranked among the worst states in the nation when it came to acid rain problems and that the Commission had a Fisheries Resource Biologist who worked on acid rain's impact on Brook Trout and other species. Abele also frequently opposed dredge and fill activities in Pennsylvania rivers, especially where there was an impact on water quality.

John said that the potential merger of the Fish Commission with the Game Commission was a topic that came-up on occasion. Abele was strongly opposed to such a merger fearing that the ability of the Commission to enforce fish laws would be abridged.

With regard to Abele's personality, John recalled that he was a true professional who could be both philosophical and very practical. He would frequently get together with the "OBs" at Station 22 to wax philosophical. Abele had a unique ability to see the 'bigger picture' of issues, especially man's impact on the environment, but at the same time, was well informed on highly technical matters. John said Abele was an intellectual, who earned state, national, and, in some cases, international respect (he was respected in Canada, for example, for his strong positions on acid rain). Abele had a dry sense of humor, could be assertive with Commissioners, especially after he had gained tenure, and was not afraid to voice his opinion on issues, even if unpopular at the time. Abele was a strong proponent of Article 1, Section 27, of the Pennsylvania Constitution (as amended in the late 1960s) that called for protection and appreciation on Pennsylvania's natural and historic environment.

John also recalled that Abele remained active in environmental organizations that went beyond Pennsylvania such as the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the Mid-Atlantic Fisheries Management Council. John told personal stories about Abele such as the time Abele gave John his tie clip that was in the shape of a fish; and John also told the story of how Ralph Abele, Jr. gave him his father's F1 badge. Both of these items, as well as other Abele memorabilia, remain in John's possession.

John concluded the interview by mentioning that he resurrected "Straight Talk" articles that Abele published in the Commission's main publication. The title was retired after Abele's retirement but John proudly brought-it-back with much support from Commission members and staff.

Cheryl Riley, Pheasants Forever

Interview 1 hour 3 minutes

Date of Interview: 4/11/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour, 3 minutes.

Summary of interview: Cheryl was born and raised in Mattoon, Illinois, and educated at the University of Missouri with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism where she also earned a graduate degree in Journalism in 1986. She worked for the Department of Conservation in Missouri for seven years. Cheryl came to Pennsylvania when the Commission hired her as head of the Bureau of Education and Information where she served from 1986 to 1991 and then went to work for the National Wildlife Federation. She then returned to Missouri and worked for a consultant on environmental issues. She served on the board of Pheasants Forever where she was later hired and has been on staff for the past six years.

At the Fish Commission, Cheryl oversaw all publications and education programs. She refers to it as "the highlight of my career." Ralph became a mentor and father figure to Cheryl. Ralph commanded enough respect to be called "Mr. Abele," but wanted to be called "Ralph." Ralph was easy to talk to, but sometimes Cheryl felt somewhat intimidated by him. She looked to him for advice on professional issues and wanted his approval. Ralph had an "in charge" aura. His motto was "Do your duty and fear no one." He was both a sentimental man and a curmudgeon. He was a complex person. Some people who worked at the Fish Commission no longer expressed their opinions since they knew that Ralph was opposed to their points of view. In many ways, he was autocratic as a leader but could be both kind and caring at the same time. Ralph had impeccable manners, was always on time – often early – for meetings, etc.

In the interview, Cheryl reflected on personal stories about Ralph. Cheryl was invited to Ralph's lodge in Elk County and has many personal memories with Ralph at the lodge. On another occasion Ralph planted autumn olive bushes at her house. Others told her that she shouldn't have them because they were invasive so Cheryl removed them. Ralph came and planted more bushes - Ralph was a prankster at times. He was influential in seeing that Cheryl got the Educator of the Year Award from the PA Federation of Sportsman. Cheryl was seated at the head table with Maurice Goddard who also received an award. Ralph had a box, the contents of which he showed to others but not to Cheryl. It turned out that there was nothing in the box; he just did it to make Cheryl anxious. Another time staff was planning his retirement party and they had frequent meetings. Ralph would show up for the meetings uninvited. She told him that she was going to put a bell on him so they would know he was coming. Later he found a bell, put it around his neck, and came to the meetings.

With regard to issues, Cheryl described that Ralph was very concerned about restoration of Shad. Clean water was another important issue that he was passionate about, as was endangered species,

such as snakes. He felt that creatures that couldn't protect themselves had to be protected. Such issues were covered in Fish Commission publications, educational publications, and Ralph's "Straight Talk" columns.

In the interview, Cheryl remembered one occasion when someone was not taking proper care of a horse, Ralph took them on about not taking care of the horse. On another occasion, Senator Lincoln's friend was arrested for violation of the Fish Code. The Senator called Ralph chastising him for the arrest. Ralph's response was, "Senator, you need to make better friends!" Ralph periodically awarded white hats to individuals who had been environmental champions. He referred to this as the "White Hat Society." Cheryl also told a Station 22 story in the interview. Cheryl wanted to have a staff retreat. Ralph recommended Station 22 to her and told her the story of how someone wanted to give the property to the Commission. Ralph went and looked at the property and decided to name it "Station 22" since it was on the 22nd of the month that he saw the property. He said, "We'll call it Station 22 because that will keep the auditors looking for the other 21!" After his death, many of his personal items, awards, etc. were placed at Station 22 by Cheryl and Peggy, Ralph's wife. There was a dedication ceremony of Station 22 in Ralph's honor after his death.

Cheryl was the last non-family member to see Ralph alive. She went to visit him at Harrisburg Hospital the night before his heart bypass surgery. They talked about going to Scotland – a trip that was planned for the summer after Ralph's surgery. Ralph appeared "scruffy" and unshaven and he was concerned about his appearance. She offered to help him shave. She held a mirror while Ralph shaved. When she went to leave, she said "love you." He responded "love you." After the surgery, he lingered for about three weeks - he was comatose as a piece of plaque had broken loose and went to his brain. Cheryl visited him once while he was in a coma and she said "it wasn't Ralph." His family decided to take him off of life support and he passed away.

Cheryl spoke at Ralph's memorial service. She was asked to speak but doesn't remember the topic or what she said specifically. She continued to go see Peggy who told her that his ashes were scattered in the garden, not in the Juniata as was the story that was commonly told.

Cheryl planned to join Ralph and his wife in Scotland the summer that Ralph died. Cheryl went to Scotland nevertheless.

Marilyn Black, Manager, Oil Region National Heritage Area

Date of Interview: 4/18/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour, 11 minutes.

Summary of interview: Marilyn was born in Sewickly, Pa. Her family moved continuously throughout the country as her father was an aircraft engineer. She then settled in Sharon, PA. She has a degree in Sociology from the University of Pennsylvania, as well as an MBA degree from Penn State University, Erie campus.

Marilyn has a varied career background. She served for one year as a Social Studies teacher and then served for 15 years as Planning Director for the Northwest Pennsylvania Training Partnership Consortium. Currently she serves in the heritage development field with the Oil Region Alliance where she has been for 16 years. She lives in Crawford County, and she has been an active boater and angler for many years.

Marilyn served as a Commissioner from February 23, 1982 through 1993 and was age 29 upon the start of that service. She was age 40 when she came off of the Commission after deciding not to seek another term. She was the first female to be named as a Fish Commissioner; the second was an at-large Boating Commissioner from Sharpsville, PA in Mercer County and served about a year or two until her death. No other women have been appointed since then. Marilyn was, thus, the youngest person to be named as a Fish Commissioner. During her tenure, she especially advocated the following issues:

- a. Increased public access and broadened public use of the PFBC properties statewide.
- b. Changed practice of burying the spent salmon bodies (after eggs and milt removed) as obtained by the hatcheries/biologists in Erie County for the PFBC into making it legal and strongly encouraging the donation of that nutritious protein to the Erie Community Food Banks. That practice continues today and averages about 6,000 pounds of fish a year.
- c. Based on a recommendation from one of the Assistant Regional Supervisors in the Law Enforcement section, she changed the period for the validity of a fishing license so that in December of year 1, one can purchase a Year 2 license and have it go into effect immediately. Why was that important? Most license locations by December have run out of Year 1 license supplies (remember, this was pre-internet-license-sales), and people traveling to our state who want to fish during the holidays/vacations honestly could not find where to obtain licenses. This seems like a little thing, but it simplified the administrative side, made angling consumers happier, made it better for vendors, and kept everyone legal.
- d. Encouraged biological research on warm water locations, which generally led to setting higher minimum lengths for harvest of various species; also led to more diversification of regulation clusters for warm water management purposes.
- e. Encouraged addressing and resolving situations involving competing user groups, especially within the angling and boating circles.

She first became aware of Ralph Abele from his writings, specifically the “Straight Talk” editorial column found at the front of each issue of the “Pennsylvania Angler” magazine. The article was the first thing she would read upon receiving the magazine by mail. She knew through the written word that he was a ‘straight shooter’ who placed high value on maintaining Pennsylvania’s water quality so that it is suitable for fishing, boating, drinking, and other human uses. For several years, he also wrote “Abele Up Front” which appeared in the Pennsylvania Wildlife magazine which she also received and read.

She first met Ralph in person in either 1976 or 1977 when she served on the Board of Directors for the Pennsylvania BASS Chapter Federation. In that capacity, she attended a number of meetings and work sessions with the management personnel of the Fish and Boat Commission. She was especially impressed by Ralph’s and the agency’s commitment to “Resource First” and how it was adopted by each of the various units within the agency and at all levels. These professional relationships continued through 1982, by which time she was the President of the Pennsylvania BASS Chapter Federation.

The nature of her relationship with Abele changed with her February, 1982 appointment and confirmation to serve as one of the 10 lay-people who are the Commissioners for the Fish and Boat Commission. In the interview, Marilyn recalled several prevalent issues before the Commission during her tenure. These issues included policy changes that shifted the harvest of fish from Lake Erie from commercial fisherman to sports anglers; the Commissioners and staff being conscious of and working to serve multiple users of the Commonwealth’s aquatic resources; a rise in competitive angling that resulted in the Commission increasing size limits; and special concern for ‘rattlesnake roundups’ and the impact on the resource.

Marilyn fondly recalled Ralph in the navy blue blazer which was and still is the formal attire for Commission personnel, chatting with attendees at a public meeting or a PA Federation of Sportsmen’s Club conference, or in his regular office attire at his Harrisburg desk with the colonial cut snake “Don’t Tread on Me” flag on the wall behind his desk chair. She recalled that she never observed Ralph fishing, though he would frequently walk along streams, especially at Fisherman’s Paradise where many meetings were conducted at the Stackhouse School.

On only two occasions did she recall Ralph orchestrating “a show of force” at PFBC meetings. One was a regular quarterly business meeting that occurred shortly after the Commission had been required to breach a dam on a small lake and the owners of the surrounding homes (who now saw mud where water had been) were especially irate. Therefore, several Waterways Conservation Officers were instructed to stand immediately outside the entry door in their green uniforms, dress hats, and obviously armed. The other occasion was a public meeting which Ralph did not attend, but for which he instructed Marilyn to meet up with a uniformed WCO several blocks away and then walk into the meeting with the armed officer. Of course, no violence happened, but the tone was set from the start that we the Commissioners would listen to the public’s concerns but that the ultimate decisions would be made by the Commissioners.

Marilyn considered Ralph to be among the top five water-related conservation leaders whom she has met in this state – those are Ralph Abele, Lenny Green, Peter Duncan, Larry Schweiger, and Maurice Goddard. She considers Ralph to have been one of her mentors. After observing him for

several years, she selected as my 'totem' a snapping turtle, an animal that typifies many of Ralph's characteristics. Found in and near water; once it grabs on to you, the only way it will release you is if you comply, or if you cut off its neck; talk about determined! He treated friend and foe respectfully, with good humor mixed in. He did not insult his opponents; he used facts and understanding to achieve the desired results. Basically, many of his principles boiled down to individual responsibility, and the importance/necessity of people speaking up on behalf of the aquatic resources of this state.

The newspaper story which she feels best captured his spirit was one written by a female reporter from the Philadelphia area that portrayed Ralph as the state's lead river keeper, long before the concept of river keeper became trendy. Among Marilyn's favorite quotes from Ralph are: "Do your duty and fear no one" and "You can take everything XX knows about YY and fit it into a thimble with plenty of room left over." Marilyn mentioned that Ralph's years as Executive Secretary of the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control and Conservation Committee are often overlooked by people. Yet it was there that he had significant impact on multiple pieces of legislation in a bipartisan fashion.

She recalled that while she was President of the PFBC (September 1985 through June 1986), she privately asked Ralph what his planned retirement date was so that the Commissioners could put together a transition plan. He adamantly refused to tell her, saying that he did not want his enemies to find out in advance his exit date and that they might be able to discern the time table if a transition plan (even informally) were prepared.

Marilyn was especially honored when Ralph asked her to deliver to its recipient one of the "White Hats." Up until then, the 'inductions' into the Order of the White Hat (the PFBC's highest award, given by the Executive Director in recognition and appreciation for unselfish contributions to the programs and goals of the PFBC) had been performed only by Ralph himself. He authorized her to present the "White Hat" to then PA Senator Roy W. Wilt so the ceremony could occur in Roy's home county of Mercer County.

Another special memory is the April 28, 1991 dedication ceremony for the Ralph W. Abele Memorial Glen at Station 22 along Penn's Creek. Howard Hardie's solitary playing of the bagpipes as he approached the cabin through the woods fit the situation and the honoree perfectly. There she met his daughter Jennifer Smith from New York and her two children. However, it was very puzzling and sad for her to realize that those two grandsons of Abele were afraid of getting dirty, afraid of bugs, were instructed by their mother to stay away from the water, and basically were not comfortable outdoors. That was not what she expected from Ralph's offspring.

She doesn't recall any funny stories about Ralph but does recall that he had a good sense of humor and could put others at ease. He was especially good at conducting meetings and respected people from all walks of life. She last recalled seeing him at his retirement or 'recognition' dinner. She communicated with him a few times from that occasion to his death.

Steve Ulsh, Information Specialist, PA Fish and Boat Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 3/3/12

Length of Interview: 48 minutes.

Summary of Interview: Steve was born in Lewistown, PA and earned a Bachelor's degree from Juniata College and a Master's degree at Penn State University. He became a school teacher and applied for summer work at the PA Fish Commission in 1968. This was around the time of the assassination of Dr. Martin Luther King and the resulting race riots. The Fish Commission, like other state agencies, was looking for ways to stem racial violence. One program offered by the Fish Commission was to engage inner-city youth in fishing. Steve took on this task in the Pittsburgh area and the program eventually grew to where he became a full-time staff member in the Commission's Education and Information Bureau where he took on other responsibilities as an Information Specialist. For example, one program he ran was called PLAY or PA League of Angling Youth. Another was to provide educational materials for teachers.

Steve recalled first meeting Ralph Abele prior to both of their employment with the Fish Commission. It was at a Game Commission outdoor event where Abele represented a Boy Scout troop. He got to know Abele better during his employment at the Fish Commission, although he was not one of Abele's direct reports. Steve didn't get involved in the larger issues in which Ralph was involved but knows that Ralph was an ardent conservationist with strong views on the environment.

Abele, according to Steve, strongly supported his employees and was a firm believer in the mission of the Commission and lived the slogan "Do Your Duty and Fear No One." He was especially encouraging to law enforcement personnel who he saw as front line defenders of habitat and resource. He was also very supportive and reliant on the Bureau Directors who knew and carried out Commission policies and programs. Steve also recalled the flag behind Abele's desk, "Don't Tread on Me." Steve remembered that Abele could be quick to anger over issues that he was especially concerned about. On most occasions Abele would enter the Commission offices through a back door in the morning and walk to his office greeting employees. Sometimes, he was more brisk in his walk and didn't engage employees; it was during those times that staff knew he was particularly concerned about a problem or issue and had to get right to work on it. Although he sometimes was quick to anger, Steve does not recall Abele being vindictive; rather, he was always a professional who chose his battles.

Steve recalled three personal stories about Abele. On one occasion Abele had taken some employees to go wild turkey hunting in north central Pennsylvania. The group hunted for a while and when it was time to quit they had to cross a creek to get back to base camp. Abele was wearing hip-waders. Some others weren't, including Steve. Abele gave Steve a 'piggyback' ride across the creek to dry land. He said that he was probably the only employee to ever receive a piggyback ride from the Executive Director!

On another occasion, Abele offered to help Steve's daughter get into a church summer camp. Abele was very active in his Presbyterian church in Millerstown that sponsored youth summer camps. Steve can't recall why, but Abele approached him about offering to help his daughter attend a camp free of charge. Steve was honored by the offer and his daughter attended for two summers. This was indicative of Abele's kindness to employees and people he knew.

Third, Steve was part of a clean-up crew of employees who volunteered to go to Abele's flooded home in Millerstown during Agnes in 1972. Steve and others cleaned up the home, removing large amounts of mud and debris. The Abele's lost most everything and Ralph was particularly upset about losing personal items such as letters he had written, trophies, etc.

Steve recalled another time when Ralph wrote an article in "Straight Talk" about overpopulation. Some people thought that such a topic was out of the Executive Director's range and criticized him for it. Why should he just be talking about Fish Commission issues? Yet, this was an example of Abele seeing the bigger picture of things which he had a natural ability to do. Abele made some comment about, "You can't be a conservationist if you are hungry." Ralph sometimes said, "It's not the fish that give us the problems, it's the people who catch them!"

Steve firmly placed Ralph Abele in a league with Maurice Goddard and the two were personal friends who often teased each other but were on the same page on environmental and conservation issues. Steve recalled the last time he saw Abele post-retirement was at a Fish Commission public event at Fort Hunter. They exchanged small talk and it was not long after that Abele received his open-heart surgery from which he never recovered. Steve did not attend the memorial service as he had another personal commitment at the time.

Ralph Abele , Jr. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Date of Interview: 4/26/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 25 minutes.

Summary of Interview: Ralph Abele, Jr., was born in Pittsburgh in 1948. As a youth he resided with his family in Mount Lebanon then graduated from Allegheny College in Meadville with a degree in biology (it was around the time that Ralph, Jr. was finishing college that his father relocated to Harrisburg to work for the Legislature). He pursued graduate work in biology at the University of Massachusetts and then did consulting work for several years before joining the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1979 where he spent over 18 years. He began employment with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1998 where he works on issues relating to the Clean Water Act and various issues relating to stream flows throughout the New England area. He also serves on the board of the Charles River Watershed Association.

Ralph's earliest memories of his father are at Christmas when Ralph Sr. would set-up a train track around the Christmas tree. On one occasion, as a young boy, Ralph, Jr. over-oiled the train tracks causing some consternation. He recalled his father's active involvement in Boy Scouts. Ralph, Sr. had attained the level of Life Scout while Ralph, Jr. earned Eagle Scout rank. Both found Scouting as a way to learn about the outdoors, the environment, and conservation. He also recalled that, although his father worked as a food broker, he spent many evenings and off-hours being involved in various environmental and conservation organizations. He attributes part of his father's interest in conservation to the fact that Ralph, Sr. grew-up on a farm on the city limits of Pittsburgh and witnessed a good deal of suburban development that damaged habitat and altered the rural environment.

Ralph, Jr. remembered his father as being very enthusiastic when it came to environmental and conservation issues. He was self-taught, had a great deal of energy, possessed a great memory, read and wrote a lot, listened to music (but didn't like Rock-n-Roll) and had the ability to converse easily on a variety of issues. He was particularly proud of his Scottish heritage and visited Scotland. He also had a good sense of humor and could add humor to many situations. He could also be very serious. On one occasion when Ralph, Jr. was a teenager he recalled that the family was riding in their car when they witnessed a group of motorcyclists disposing of beer cans along the side of the road. Ralph, Sr. stopped the car and encountered the motorcyclists lecturing them on why it was wrong to litter. It could have potentially been a dangerous situation but Ralph, Sr. showed no fear.

Ralph, Jr. realized the importance of his father's work when he, himself, became a professional involved in environmental issues. He remembered his father being a strong advocate of "resource first" and his strong support for the staff at the Fish Commission. He believed in hiring qualified people, letting them do their job, and backing-them-up if issues became controversial. He also recalled his father's saying of "Do Your Duty and Fear No One" and that it was something he

modeled and firmly believed in. On a few occasions Ralph, Jr. accompanied his father to work and remembered that he would walk through the building greeting various employees and taking a few moments to chat. Ralph, Sr. was a model of “managing by walking around” before the trend became in vogue in the 1980s. Ralph Jr., also acknowledges that his father was a mentor to many individuals, though Ralph Sr. may not have necessarily seen it that way, he was simply doing his job.

Ralph, Jr. also remembered that, politically, his father was Republican but voted for Jimmy Carter. As a Republican, however, he became dismayed with the Reagan Administration, especially, Interior Secretary James Watt. Ralph, Sr. was very concerned about the environmental policy ‘rollbacks’ sought by the Reagan Administration and was particularly critical of a task force led by Vice President George H. W. Bush to address regulatory reforms, especially those that would impact the environment (Ralph Jr. wonders what his father would think today of various efforts that are negatively impacting the environment). In general, Ralph Sr. was not a big fan of the federal government. Ralph, Jr. recalled, too, that his father had many political friends at the national level including John Heinz, Alan Simpson and John Danforth, as well as individuals in the Pennsylvania General Assembly.

During the last years of his life, after retiring from the Fish and Boat Commission, Ralph, Sr. remained active in environmental causes and organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation. He was also more active in his local school district (Abele, Sr. lived in Millerstown). He spent more time with his grandchildren and would visit Ralph, Jr. in Massachusetts. He didn’t seem to slow down much.

Ralph, Jr. concluded the interview by recalling that he was present for the last days of his father’s life when he underwent open heart surgery and never recovered. He recalled the difficult decision to remove his father from life support but knows that he would have wanted it that way. Ralph, Jr. spoke at his father’s memorial service and remembered many people being there. It was an emotional event. His father left a ‘big footprint’ said Ralph, Jr. He was rare; people like him don’t come along too often.

Tom Qualters, Western PA Regional Manager, PA Fish and Boat Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 5/4/12

Length of Interview: 51 minutes.

Summary of interview: Tom was born in McKeesport where he graduated high school. He then pursued a career as a professional baseball player playing for the Philadelphia Phillies and the Chicago White Socks. Tom was a pitcher and remained in the big leagues for 10 years until an arm injury prevented him from playing. He had an interest in being a conservation officer and took and passed a civil service test to do so. He was hired by the Fish Commission in 1962 and his first assignment was in Cambria County, and then Tom was then promoted to Somerset Regional Manager then to Regional Supervisor for Western Pennsylvania. He remained in that position until retiring in 1994.

Tom's first encounter with Ralph Abele was prior to his employment with the Fish Commission. Tom was involved in a stream improvement project in Western PA along with Ralph's Boy Scout troop. For some reason, the troop was not handling their end of the project correctly and Tom reprimanded them and Ralph. Ralph was a gentleman about it and had the troop change what they were doing.

Their interaction was more frequent when Ralph became Executive Director of the Fish Commission. Among his memories with Ralph is winter hunting camps in Tioga County. Ralph would accompany several employees to a cabin for hunting and recreation. Tom was among them. According to Tom, "Ralph fit right in with the group." He hunted along with the others, enjoyed relaxing at the camp and had a good time. Tom and Ralph became friends.

With regard to Ralph's personality, Tom stated that "I couldn't have worked for a nicer guy. He was top notch and treated everyone with respect regardless of where they were in the organization." Moreover, "he gave the employees the freedom to do their jobs and backed them up always." Tom came to Harrisburg several times a year for meetings on various issues (or, occasionally, Commission meetings). He recalled that when an issue was particularly controversial, Ralph would listen carefully to everyone's opinion, ask questions, let them reach consensus or decide the result himself in a fair manner. He said that when "Ralph cleared his throat to speak, everyone listened." Ralph always wanted to be told the truth by staff. Ralph was a conservationist at heart and was close friends with Maurice Goddard.

Ralph also was a mentor to many people in the organization though he didn't necessarily see himself that way according to Tom. He was admired by all of the employees. He also recalled that Ralph hardly ever conceded to demands from legislators on enforcement issues. For example, someone in Tom's district would be arrested for a law violation. Their legislator would call Ralph to have the arrest vacated. Tom doesn't remember one time when Ralph conceded; he was a firm believer in enforcement of the law.

Among the issues that Tom and Ralph worked on were: 1) enforcement of anti-pollution laws especially in the Three Rivers area of Pittsburgh where there were frequent violations especially from mills along the rivers; 2) dredging in the Allegheny River where the Fish Commission was especially concerned about the impact on fish habitat; and 3) public relations and staff promotion among the public to educate them about fishing, conservation, and the outdoors. Tom recalled many occasions when he and his staff would work 60 or 70 hour weeks taking Fish Commission displays to conferences, workshops, schools, etc. as part of the Commission's public outreach efforts. Tom said that the work was enjoyable even though it demanded long hours.

Walter Lyon, Deputy Secretary, DER (retired)

Date of Interview: 5/10/12

Length of Interview: 48 minutes.

Summary of interview: Walter was born in Cologne, Germany and spent his early youth in Berlin. As Jews, his father did not want to stay in Germany during the rise of Hitler. In 1938, Walter's family arrived in the United States, lived in Washington, D.C. for a while and then moved to North Carolina. Later, they moved to the Baltimore where Walter worked in a department store. With the help of his aunt, Walter attended Johns Hopkins University where he earned a B.S. and a master's degree in environmental engineering. He worked for the State of Maryland and the City of Philadelphia in water quality for short periods. From 1957 to 1979, he worked as Chief and then Director of the Bureau of Water Quality in the PA Department of Health. The position was moved to DER when the agency was created in 1970. He retired in 1983.

Walter became familiar with Ralph Abele during Abele's time in the General Assembly. On numerous occasions Walter testified before Abele's committee on water quality and enforcement related issues. He recalled that Abele's committee would conduct periodic investigations of the executive branch and its enforcement of environmental laws and regulations. In the early 1970s, when DER created the Environmental Quality Board (EQB), Abele sat on the board as Executive Director of the Fish Commission. The EQB's main job was to pass regulations on environmental regulatory issues. He recalled Abele weighing-in on many important issues before the board; Abele always voted in favor of tough regulatory standards.

In the interview Walter did not offer a lot on Abele personally or anecdotally. Walter admitted that there was a lot he could not remember. However, he remembered that Abele was a strong conservationist who was very concerned about water quality issues because water quality impacted fish habitat. He also recalled that Abele accompanied him and several state officials on a trip to China in the early 1980s (there were also trips to other countries that Abele didn't attend). The purpose of the trip was to investigate water quality issues in China and to see how the Chinese were handling water pollution. Abele was very interested in the actions of foreign nations when it came to environmental issues. He thought that there was a great deal to be learned from them.

Abele was a "straight shooter" according to Walter. He was good on his word, a complete professional, and polite. He was respected by everyone. Walter said that Abele was particularly concerned about 'rattlesnake roundups' and their impact on the species. He remembered hearing about one occasion where Abele visited a restaurant where rattlesnake was on the menu and he was furious about it. Walter also remembered that Abele was very concerned about dredging on the Allegheny River and its impact on water quality and fish habitat. Walter visited Ralph following his unsuccessful surgery. Ralph was unconscious and Walter emotionally bid Ralph farewell.

Delano Graff, Director, Bureau of Fisheries, PA Fish and Boat Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 5/9/12

Length of Interview: 59 minutes.

Summary of interview: Del Graff was born in Clarion County and raised in Elk County, Pennsylvania. He earned a bachelor's and master's degree in biology from Penn State. He began working for the Fish Commission in 1964 in the Division of Fisheries and then was promoted to Division Chief and Bureau Director. He retired in 2002.

Graff first met Ralph Abele in the 1960s when Abele's Boy Scout troop was working on a stream improvement project in Western Pennsylvania. He then encountered Abele again when he worked for the General Assembly, though Graff did not interact with him much at that point. When Abele was appointed Executive Director of the Fish Commission, Graff directly reported to him.

Among the issues that Abele was most concerned with according to Graff were as follows: First, Wild Trout Management/Resource-based Management which was a major shift in policy and part of operation FUTURE where the resource and its preservation and distribution based on science became the prime focus (previously politics played a major role in where trout and other fish were stocked). Many were not in favor of this initiative as it regulated the resource and its distribution. Graff recalled an impassioned speech by Abele before the Commission in favor of the initiative and the Commissioners then became convinced of its merits. FUTURE was initiated by policy then regulation. Second, Abele was very concerned about dredging in the Allegheny River which was a major source of aggregate for highway construction and, thus, very lucrative. Abele and the Commission staff were concerned about impacts on water quality and fish habitat. Eventually, dredgers had to comply with water quality laws and paid royalties to the Commonwealth.

Third, following Tropical Storm Agnes, Graff recalled that DER allowed contractors to bulldoze and engage in other activities that harmed streams. Abele expressed strong concerns about this and actually had his enforcement officers stop and levy fines on contractors who engaged in such activities. Abele and DER Secretary Maurice Goddard had many discussions on this topic and eventually came to a mutual agreement that the activity should be more closely regulated. Fourth, Abele was very involved in restoration of Shad especially to the Susquehanna River. And, fifth, Abele was concerned over stream pollution issues especially from industrial facilities. It was common for Abele to support enforcement officers in their regulation of these activities, including taking legal action.

Graff recalled that Abele had a 'feisty streak' in him. He was not afraid to speak his mind and, in "Straight Talk," he wrote about wide-ranging issues. He was also firm in his speech and once he made a decision he stuck to it and so did Commission staff. Graff also recalled that Abele was careful in his dealings with the General Assembly and once told him that "there are only two times when you go to the legislature: when something is very important to you or it is very important to

them.” Abele could also mimic others, including Maurice Goddard, and he would often make fun of himself and had a good sense of humor. Abele also had a big Labrador Retriever named “Clyde” who would often accompany him in the field, riding in the back seat of his state vehicle.

Abele was a real hero to the staff, according to Graff. He would do bold things and then stand behind them. He always supported staff. He had wide-ranging interests. Abele was also a smoker for many years. Graff recalled that he quit ‘cold Turkey’ after being convinced to do so by his daughter who is a nurse and his son-in-law who is a surgeon. Graff also recalled that the saying “Do your duty and fear no one” actually came from a book Abele had read called “Life with Father” written in the 1930s. He also had close relationships with John Heinz and Alan Simpson. During the Reagan Administration, Abele despised Interior Secretary James Watt and his policies. Simpson arranged a meeting between Abele and Watt. Graff remembered that Abele came away from the meeting with his opinion of Watt not being changed.

Graff recalled when the “Station 22” property came-up for sale, the Commission and state went through a process to have the property condemned thus saving it from private purchase. The Commission then purchased the property and Abele used it frequently for recreation, staff gatherings, etc. Some federal monies were used to purchase the property.

Graff interacted with Abele after Abele’s retirement. They often hunted and fished together along with other colleagues from the Fish Commission. Graff called Abele ‘Ralph’ on a day-to-day personal basis, but referred to him as “Mr. Abele” in formal public settings. Graff also remembered that on one occasion Abele took him on a Polish fishing trawler in the Atlantic Ocean to learn how the Poles did commercial fishing. It was quite a learning experience.

Graff attended Abele’s memorial service. “It was packed” he said. On the day that Abele died, Graff recalled that he and several other Commission staff took annual leave, went out and purchased beer and went to a Dauphin County natural area, drank the beer, and traded stories of Abele.

Bonita Hoke, Executive Director, PA League of Women Voters

Date of Interview: 5/10/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 15 minutes.

Summary of interview: Bonita Hoke was born in Hanover and grew up in York Springs. At a young age she began camping in state parks with her family and developed an interest in the outdoors. In the early 1980s she worked as Larry Schweiger's assistant for the National Wildlife Federation out of his home office in York County. During this time she got to know Ralph Abele, Len Green, Maurice Goddard and others involved in the environmental movement in Pennsylvania. She learned that the individuals had a large impact on environmental policy and related issues in the Commonwealth. She described these individuals as being "of high character."

She remembered that Ralph Abele was "certainly not boring" and had a command of various environmental issues. He also had a dry sense of humor and that, even though he was an individual of stature, he wasn't above serving chicken pot pie dinners at his Presbyterian church in Millerstown. He was also very personable and would inquire about individuals and their families. She recalled one occasion that Abele received the Conservationist of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen. For the award banquet she wrote a song about him and sang it. A few days later he showed up at her office in York and he gave her a purple potted mum. She said that he would do things like that and touch people personally. She remembered another occasion, following a Fish Commission meeting, he asked her to follow him to Millerstown in her car so that she could see the mountain laurel in full bloom. The drive was over mountainous roads and the views were spectacular. She referred to Abele as mentor. He made "personal investments in people" she said.

Among the issues that she recalled Abele being interested in and concerned about were: educating the public, families, and children on the benefits of environmental recreation and fishing; the quality of water in Pennsylvania streams and lakes; strict enforcement of water quality laws and regulations; the impact of 'rattlesnake roundups' on the resource; and the impact of dredging on the Allegheny River.

Bonita recalled that Abele was a member of the NRA, but in the 1970s and 1980s, he felt that the organization was going too far on gun rights issues and he didn't renew his membership as a result. She also said that he was opposed to the environmental rollbacks of the Reagan Administration and strongly opposed Interior Secretary James Watt on many issues.

She also recalled that Abele wasn't afraid to express his views on issues, even if such views might threaten his job. "He wasn't in it to win a popularity contest" she said. He frequently responded to letters sent to him by himself, seldom relying on others to do so especially if the letters were negative or questioned Fish Commission policy or decisions.

Following his retirement from the Fish Commission, Abele served on the board of the PA Federation of Sportsman's Clubs. One controversial issue was when the Federation planned to conduct a gun raffle as a fundraiser. However, state law had been changed to prohibit such organizations from raffling guns for such purposes and had particularly impacted the Federation. The organization decided to proceed with a raffle anyway, in potential violation of the law. Abele resigned his seat on the board as he couldn't condone such a decision, but he did work to have the law amended which it eventually was. The Federation was then able to proceed with its gun raffle.

She visited Abele in the hospital following his unsuccessful surgery and attended his memorial service where she remembered "a lot of people attending." Bud Hardie played the bagpipes, she remembered. In retrospect, she recognized that Abele may be a person that, today, isn't well known but that his impact was tremendous. Clean streams that people can fish in today is just one example of his long term impact. He left a "large footprint." He would be pleased with many of the policies of the Fish and Boat Commission today and with its continued enforcement of the law.

Rick Carlson, Director of Policy, DER and DCNR (retired)

Date of Interview: 3/14/12

Length of Interview: 47 minutes.

Summary of interview: Rick Carlson was born in North Carolina and, as a youth, his family moved to Germantown then to Willow Grove, PA. He attended Abington High School and Penn State University where he earned a degree in Forest Resource Management. He also graduated from an EPA course on air pollution control issues. He was drafted in Vietnam and served in the Marine Corps as a combat engineer. Following his discharge, he attended Drexel University and earned a graduate degree in Environmental Engineering. In 1972, he accepted a job in the policy and planning office of DER and eventually became Bureau Director. He also served as Chief of Staff to DER Secretary Art Davis from the mid-1980s to the mid-1990s. He retired in 2007.

Rick recalled Ralph Abele when Abele represented the Fish Commission on the Environmental Quality Board of the DER. The Board was responsible for approving environmental regulations and the Commonwealth's Environmental Master Plan. He remembered that Abele was most interested in the issue of Resource First/Operation Future which was a major step forward in stocking fish according to science rather than politics. Abele was a vocal and vociferous advocate of Resource First/Operation Future. To fund the initiative, the Fish Commission secured about \$1 million from the Federal Land and Conservation Fund appropriated by Congress to the states for environmental planning. According to Carlson, Abele was also a strong advocate for water quality and, especially following Tropical Storm Agnes, he took strong positions on stream alterations and bulldozing and its impact on environmental resources. He also recalled Abele's concern over dredging the Allegheny River and its impact on fish habitat.

In the interview, Rick remembered a great deal about Abele personally and about his style. Like Maurice Goddard, Abele was a firm leader who could be very autocratic, even militaristic in style. Rick attributes this to the fact that both Goddard and Abele served in the U.S. military. Abele was also boisterous and "ran the Commission with a firm hand." Rick recalled Abele's style often did not sit well with many of the Commissioners. Abele "did what he wanted to do, what he felt was right, and didn't worry about any repercussions." He was a firm believer in "do your duty and fear no one" and modeled this behavior. According to Rick, when Abele retired, the Commissioners specifically sought out a new Executive Director who would not be so autocratic and who would rely more on the Commissioners.

Rick commented about how such a leadership style may have been a sign of the times, but probably would not be tolerated in most state governments today. Although Rick didn't work very closely with Abele, he did with many of the Fish Commission's senior staff such as Dennis Guise, John Arway and others. Rick attended Abele's memorial service and recalled that a great deal of people were in attendance.

Dennis Guise, Chief Counsel, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

Date of Interview: 4/17/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour, 4 minutes.

Summary of interview: Dennis Guise was born in Hagerstown, Maryland and grew-up in Gettysburg. He graduated from Gettysburg College and then attended the University of Pennsylvania Law School on an ROTC scholarship. After graduating with a legal degree, he served in active duty with the U.S. Air Force from 1972 to 1978 in Colorado and Alabama. In 1978, he began working for the Commonwealth as an attorney assigned by the Attorney General's office (before this became an elected position) assigned half-time to the Dept. of Military and Veterans Affairs and half-time to the Fish Commission. He was exclusively assigned to the Fish Commission from 1990 to 2004. Thus, his tenure with Ralph Abele was part-time.

Before being hired, he interviewed with Abele in his office and recalled the "Don't Tread on Me" flag and that Ralph smoked during the interview. Abele asked Dennis about his experience in environmental law which Dennis admitted was limited. Yet the two "hit it off" and Abele agreed that he should be hired.

Among the major duties assigned to Dennis were enforcement actions, Act 70 real estate acquisitions, preparation of fish and boat regulations and policy statements, and codification of the Fish and Boat Code that was enacted in 1980. Dennis also served as Counsel to the Fish Commission on dam licensing issues before FERC where the Commission had an interest in the installation of fish ladders and passageways. Dennis also worked on license fee increases which were controversial. Data showed that fee increases often resulted in decreased utilization at least for a time, usually a year or two.

Dennis recalled that among the major issues Abele was concerned about were restoration of Shad to the Susquehanna River; development of fish passageways at dam sites; project FUTURE and Resource First; water quality; and dredging on the Allegheny where he was at odds with PennDOT on more than one occasion. In one particular instance, Dennis recalled that Abele was particularly concerned about the Borough of Quakertown's overflow and discharge of untreated sewage into a stream. Dennis and Abele visited Quakertown officials with Abele in full uniform, including his sidearm, and were stern that this must stop or enforcement action would be taken.

Dennis even videotaped the sewage discharge. Eventually, Quakertown officials fixed the problem and Dennis credited this to Abele's firm position on the issue. On another occasion, Dennis recalled a train-car derailment in Western Pennsylvania where there was a discharge of diesel fuel and other pollutants into a waterway. Here again, Abele was firm that the railroad had to pay for the clean-up. Abele was also particularly concerned about boating-under-the- influence

and strongly encouraged the enforcement staff to issue citations. Abele frequently went into the field with enforcement staff that he referred to as “the thin green line.”

With regard to Abele’s personality, Dennis recalled that he was a conservationist at heart. He could be “crusty” and liked that reputation. He didn’t take threats. He was respected by all staff and was considered as a mentor by many. He was a “man of principle.” With regard to his dealing with Commissioners, he did not want them involved in internal Commission matters such as personnel and budgeting. He kept their focus on major policy issues and had good relations with most, but sometimes difficult relationships with others. Abele also had an effective relationship with members of the General Assembly who respected his position and knowledge. Dennis went to a meeting of the “OB’s” on one or two occasions and recalled that these individuals talked and brainstormed on environmental issues. It was a unique group of individuals and a time in which the Commonwealth had several strong environmental leaders – a time that hasn’t been repeated.

Dennis was the co-coordinator of Abele’s retirement affair that was held at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center and was attended by many people including legislators such as Senator John Heinz and other officials, as well as many Commission staff members. All of the “White Hat” recipients were in attendance.

Dennis saw Abele only occasionally after his retirement. He remembered that Abele remained active in his church and served on the Greenwood School Board. He also recalled that Abele kept up a tradition of many years which was to join-up with friends for an annual New Year’s Day Walleye fishing event. Dennis attended Abele’s memorial service which was “packed” and he said that it was really a celebration of Abele’s life more than a time of mourning.

Howard “Bud” Hardie, Administrative Assistant to Ralph Abele, PA Fish and Boat Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 4/22/12

Length of Interview: 46 minutes

Bud Hardie was born in Pittsburgh and educated in area schools. He attended the University of Pittsburgh for two years majoring in business administration. He then sold industrial equipment supplies for several years eventually opening his own business doing the same. He then worked for Toledo Scale Company when Ralph Abele called him and asked Bud to come to Harrisburg to work for him as Administrative Assistant at the Fish Commission. Bud was Abele’s “right-hand man” and “watched Ralph’s back.” He started his position with the Fish Commission in 1972 and retired in 1987.

Bud knew Ralph Abele from high school, from their mutual church, Dormont Presbyterian in Pittsburgh, and from Boy Scouts where Abele served as Scoutmaster and Bud as Assistant Scoutmaster for the same troop in Western PA. They both taught a course for the Boy Scouts on conservation of natural resources. The two were very close and Bud was a personal friend of Abele.

At the Fish Commission, Bud’s main responsibility was to lobby the General Assembly. For example, he worked on legislation to codify the Fish and Boat Code and secured legislation to allow one day of free fishing per year to promote outdoor activities in PA. Bud also worked with many state agencies to promote Fish Commission interests. These agencies included DER, PennDOT, the Game Commission and others. He and Abele commuted daily from their homes in Millerstown where they engaged in conversation mostly about Fish Commission issues and Bud would update Abele on issues with the General Assembly. Bud also accompanied Abele to his camp in Potter County where they would frequently go to a stream bank to fish or just talk about conservation issues. Bud also recalled that both Jimmy Carter and Dwight Eisenhower fished in Pennsylvania streams and that he and Abele would accompany them where Abele would usually discuss conservation issues with both Presidents.

According to Bud, Abele’s main interest was the conservation of natural resources in the Commonwealth. He wanted clean streams and the availability of outdoor recreation for all citizens. He wasn’t only concerned about and interested in fish and boat-related issues, but was interested in broader conservation issues. He would frequently write about broader issues in “Straight Talk.” Bud also stated that Abele was a mentor to many individuals such as Pete Duncan and Larry Schweiger, as well as to employees of the Fish Commission. People looked up to him and respected his opinions. Bud recalled Abele’s statement “Do your Duty and Fear No One” and he remembered Abele’s flag “Don’t Tread on Me.” These were things Abele truly believed in. He didn’t just say or display them.

Abele was never afraid to speak his mind to anyone. Bud remembered one story where he and Abele had lunch with Governor Milton Shapp. A particular issue was discussed (Bud couldn't remember what it was specifically) where Abele pointed out to Shapp that the Fish Commission was independent and that he didn't report to him. Shapp retorted that maybe that was true but how would Abele like to work for a penny a year. Abele reiterated his position and the two parted ways. Abele also frequently "took on" other agencies on issues of disagreement such as with PennDOT about dredging on the Allegheny and the dumping of highway materials in or near streams.

Bud also recalled that one year the Boy Scouts held their world jamboree at Moraine State Park. Both he and Abele attended some of the events and that the Fish Commission had special legislation enacted so that the Scouts could fish for free during the jamboree.

Bud retired at about the same time as Abele. He knew he wouldn't have a similar relationship with the next Executive Director so it was time to leave the Fish Commission. The two stayed in very close contact after retirement as they lived near each other in Millerstown. Their families would frequently have dinner together and go places.

Bud played the bagpipes at Abele's memorial service and recalled that many people were emotional at the event, some had tears in their eyes.

Paul Swanson, North Central Region Manager, PA Fish and Boat Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 4/23/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 15 minutes

Summary of interview: Paul Swanson was born in Kane, PA and, from 1962 to 1966 he served in the U.S. Air Force on KC132 aircraft that refueled B-52s and other bomber aircraft that flew missions over Vietnam. While in high school, Paul earned exceptional grades and, as a result, was permitted to occasionally be excused from class to stock fish in waterways in the Allegheny National Forest. Following his Air Force service, he passed a civil service test for Fish Warden and was hired by the Fish Commission along with a class of 11 other individuals. He graduated as a Waterways Patrolman in 1968. However, he first encountered Ralph Abele prior to his employment with the Fish Commission when Abele's Boy Scout troop was doing clean-up work on the Allegheny River.

Paul's employment with the Fish Commission took him to Centre County, then Erie County, and then to Lock Haven where he was appointed Assistant Manager of the North Central Region in 1972. In 1975, he became the regional manager and served in Lamar from 1980 to 1996. His final years with the Commission were at Pleasant Gap. He retired in 2000. Paul frequently encountered Abele at regional training meetings for "the thin green line" where Abele would speak about various conservation and Commission-related issues.

Among the major issues that Abele was concerned about were the 1972 Agnes Flood, operation FUTURE, and reptiles and Amphibians. With regard to the flood, Abele worked with DER and other state agencies to prevent further stream damage by bulldozing operations. He would often meet with state legislators on-site to discuss with them the problems created by bulldozing. According to Paul, Abele was a key person who pulled state agency personnel together to address various Agnes related issues. His major concern was that streams and habitat not be degraded any further than they already had been. Paul remembered that on one occasion he accompanied Abele on a field view post-Agnes where they witnessed a bulldozer in operation in a stream. Abele stepped from his vehicle, approached the bulldozer and pulled out the key, stopping the bulldozer operator from working.

With regard to Operation FUTURE, Paul recalled that it was the Fish Commission's first scientific effort to stock fish. In Paul's first years with the Commission, it was common for his employees to stock fish in streams where fish were already abundant. Operation FUTURE changed this policy by taking some 200 streams or stream sections out of stocking activity replacing stocking to other underserved streams.

Abele had special concerns for reptiles and amphibians, especially rattlesnakes. He was very concerned that so called Rattlesnake Roundups harmed the species. During Abele's time, a number of regulations and policies were put into place to regulate such activities to ensure that

rattlesnakes were returned to their natural environment following such roundups. Further, roundup organizers had to apply for permits from the Fish Commission and had to file related reports. On more than one occasion Abele went to Rattlesnake Roundups in full uniform and talked to the organizers. He wouldn't disrupt the hunt but would stress care for the rattlesnakes.

With regard to Abele's personality, it was common for him to "look ahead to the future." He was a visionary according to Paul. He was in a league with people like Gifford Pinchot and Maurice Goddard. He served as a mentor to many people such as Pete Duncan and several Fish Commission staff members. Abele stood his ground when he firmly believed in something and was never afraid to speak his mind. His "Straight Talk" articles reflected this. He could be an "extremist" and was "occasionally misunderstood" by others who couldn't see his vision. His main concern was protection of the resource and its habitat. Paul commented that if he were alive today Abele would be concerned over unregulated Marcellus Shale drilling and would stress the importance of waterway and habitat protection.

Paul thinks he attended Abele's retirement gathering but can't clearly remember. He did attend his memorial service. Paul commented that Abele's passing came as shock to many. He and Abele had a very close working relationship and Abele had a great impact on Paul's life and career. He always referred to him as "Mr. Abele" or "Director Abele."

Jennifer Smith, Daughter of Ralph Abele

Date of Interview: 5/24/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 17 minutes

Summary of interview: Jennifer Smith is the daughter of Ralph and Peggy Abele. She was born in Mount Lebanon, PA. Jennifer earned a degree at the University of Pittsburgh in 1968, an MBA from Columbia University in 1981, as well as an MPH (1991) and Doctorate in Nursing Practice in 2005. She resides in Scarsdale, New York.

Among her earliest memories with her father is learning how to drive. He often took her to the parking lot of their church to practice. The car was a stick shift which she was learning to master. On one occasion he told her to “stop” which she didn’t do immediately. He said that when he was a tank commander and told his group to stop they did so. He ended teaching her how to drive and her brother, Ralph, Jr., took over the responsibility.

Yet, in her father’s eyes, Jennifer could do no wrong. He often referred to her as “mouse” because she was so quiet. She recalled that her father wasn’t home a great deal as he was very active with the Boy Scouts and was in the Army Reserves. She also recalled that the family belonged to the New Bethlehem Rod and Gun Club where they would spend a lot of time in the summer. Her father’s main interests were in the environment and conservation and it was through his activities in Boy Scouts that she first became aware of this. He was very active in his church in Mount Lebanon and later in Newport and Millerstown. He was a firm believer in the principles of the Presbyterian Church.

Ralph Abele frequently wrote his daughter letters, especially during major transition points in her life, such as graduations. The letters were sentimental and he was a master with words possessing a very distinctive handwriting style. She still has the letters. Jennifer says that she never recalls her parents arguing. Ralph loved his wife very much. She also tells the story of how Ralph met Jennifer’s husband to be, Dan, three days before their wedding. The two hit it off immediately. Jennifer and Dan were married in Malibu, California in 1976. She remembered that her father cried at her wedding. Also, Ralph and Peggy read books onto tapes which he sent to her children.

In the interview Jennifer tells several interesting stories about her father. One is that he never talked about his WWII experience – it just wasn’t discussed. She recalls that he was involved in the liberation of a prison camp. There, a prisoner painted a portrait of Ralph which she still has. In addition, at the outset of the Vietnam War, Ralph supported U.S. policy. Over time, however, he became very opposed to the war and, according to Jennifer, became “more liberal in his thinking and stopped voting for the Republican Party.” He was displeased with the Reagan Administration and its Interior Secretary James Watt. Another interesting story is when Jennifer first went to register to vote in Millerstown, PA. Her father accompanied her. When asked by the registrar her party affiliation, Jennifer responded “Democrat” to the consternation of the registrar.

Her father didn't object. (The Abele's first moved to Newport in 1970. Following the Agnes flood, they moved to higher ground in Millerstown). It turns out that, at that time, Jennifer was the only Democrat registered in Perry County.

Jennifer also provided important genealogical information on her father. His parents were Lilly Adamson and Harry Abele. Ralph Abele had two siblings, Harry and Jean. They lived on a farm near Pittsburgh though it is not clear what his father did for a living. Ralph married his wife Peggy in 1945. It was from Ralph's mother, Lilly, that he learned to appreciate his Scottish heritage. Maternally, Lilly's family was descended from the Macintosh clan in Scotland. Ralph and his wife visited Scotland on several occasions. He owned a kilt and bagpipes which he would frequently play and drank Scotch whiskey (trips to Scotland were among the best memories of their lives). Ralph's father was of German descent and was a second-generation American.

Ralph was of a generation where the wife/mother stayed at home. However, her mother went back to work when her children were in college. She was a 4th grade school teacher who worked in Mt. Lebanon for several years. Her salary paid for the college education of both children.

Among Ralph's hobbies was leatherworking and listening to music. He wasn't really a fisherman but took Jennifer fishing on several occasions. He particularly loved dogs and the family had several including a Cocker Spaniel named Sadie and a Black Labrador named Clyde. They often adopted "mutts." They also had a Parakeet that suffered from a disease. Jennifer recalled that her father humanely euthanized the Parakeet by holding it to the car's exhaust with the engine running.

His time at the Fish Commission was a happy time for him. He was finally doing what he had intended to do - work on conservation and environmental issues. He "saw things that had to be righted and worked to correct them." He "never compromised when he felt strongly about an issue" and he was "one of Pennsylvania's initial defenders of the environment." Jennifer remembers accompanying her father on many trips to fish hatcheries, and meeting environmental leaders such as Maurice Goddard and Pete Duncan. Jennifer seems to think that her father may have been forced to retire as a result of a mandatory retirement age of 65 (this may not be correct). She said that many people came to his retirement dinner at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center.

The last time Jennifer spent time with her father was over the Christmas holiday, 1989. He entered the hospital in late May, 1990 and had surgery on the Friday before Memorial Day from which he never recovered. He died about a month later. His memorial service was held in Harrisburg and Jennifer remembered Senator John Heinz being present, Bud Hardie playing the bagpipes, and her brother gave the eulogy. Peggy remained in Millerstown for a time and then returned to the Pittsburgh area where she died on April 8, 2008.

Ed Burns, Superintendent, Greenwood School District

Date of Interview: 6/4/12

Length of Interview: 50 minutes

Summary of interview: Ed Burns was born and raised in Scranton, PA where he graduated high school in 1974. He then attended Lock Haven University majoring in health and physical education with teacher certification, graduating in 1978. He became a health and physical education teacher in the Greenwood School District in Perry County where he also coached. He completed advanced education, earning a principal and superintendant certification from Shippensburg University. He served as school principal from 1986 to 2000 when he became superintendant. His wife was a nurse at Holy Spirit Hospital. They reside in Millerstown.

Ed first met Ralph Abele when Abele served on the Greenwood School District School Board following his retirement from the Fish Commission. Abele served on the board from about the time of his retirement in 1986 until his death. It was not a position that Abele sought-out nor did he campaign for it; rather, others in the community approached him about serving on the board and Abele agreed. During the election for the position, one had to have a party affiliation and Ed recalled that Abele was a Democrat.

Abele was a key member of the board whose main focus was to deliver a quality education to the students while maintaining fiscal responsibility to the taxpayers. The board, at that time, was progressive and student-centered and Abele fit nicely into that atmosphere. He led more by example than by forcefulness or being sure that his opinion was heard. Abele was more of a consensus builder, according to Ed. His motto was, “run a good ship, do good by the kids and parents, and be fiscally responsible.

Abele was particularly interested in broadening the horizons of students who mainly came from a rural agricultural background in Perry County. He, and the board, wanted more students to pursue an academic rather than a general studies track so that more could attend college. They also instituted an Agricultural Science curriculum to encourage academics. They were largely successful as a larger percentage of students attended college through the 1990s and beyond.

To Ed, Abele was a mentor (though Abele probably never saw it that way). Ed always referred to him as “Mr. Abele.” Abele encouraged Ed to pursue his education further to achieve a superintendant’s certification. He would frequently stop in to see Ed, usually unannounced, to talk. Abele never told Ed how to do things, but would make suggestions to “try this” or “try that” regarding a particular problem or issue. Abele had a “big picture focus” according to Ed and could frequently see things that others couldn’t. Also, Abele never talked about his personal stature or accomplishments as a conservationist in Pennsylvania, he never boasted about it or brought it up. In fact, Ed never remembers Abele mentioning anything about the Fish Commission. Ed only learned about Ralph’s reputation through others in the community. Ed remembered that Abele’s

one piece of advice to him was to let others develop their own leadership style by giving them an assignment and letting them figure out how best to accomplish it. Abele wasn't afraid of "letting others stumble because they would learn from it" according to Ed.

In the interview, Ed also described how the Ralph Abele Scholarship Program works. The program was first organized in the mid-1990s. Former Greenwood Superintendant Norm Shea was the original Greenwood representative on the Scholarship Fund Board. When he retired, Ed replaced him. Through the Fish and Boat Commission and other venues, the availability of Abele scholarships is announced each year. They are conservation scholarships for students pursuing higher education in some area of the environmental sciences. Ed receives all of the applications, typically 6-8 per year. Greenwood students have first preference, followed by Perry County students, children of employees of the Greenwood district, then students in general from across PA. Scholarships are awarded on merit by the Board. Usually an average of 6 or 7 students received scholarships each year ranging in size from \$700 to \$1,000 for each of the 4 years of their higher education. Most students go to state colleges; most to Penn State. The Scholarship fund is supported solely by contributions.

In conclusion, Ed remembered Abele as "a very sharp individual" who was well thought of in the community. He served the Millerstown Presbyterian Church in several roles and it was common to see him serving food at church suppers. Ed attended Abele's memorial service and said that "it was the first time I really realized what a larger impact Ralph had on the whole state." He was, in Ed's words, "a big deal" but he was very humble about it. Today, Pete Duncan serves on the Greenwood School Board and is similar to Abele in many ways. Ed regards Duncan as his modern-day mentor.

Larry Schweiger, President, National Wildlife Federation

Date of Interview: 6/6/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 12 minutes

Summary of interview: Larry Schweiger was born in Pittsburgh's North Hills. As a youth he was active in the outdoors with his parents and was involved in Boy Scouts where Larry attained the rank of Explorer Scout. He graduated from Penn State's Forestry School and went to work for the Pennsylvania General Assembly as a staff person for the Joint Legislative Air and Water Pollution Control Committee where Ralph Abele was Executive Director. However, he began working for the Committee not long after Abele exited to become Executive Director of the Fish Commission. Larry was actually recruited by Pete Duncan who succeeded Ralph in the position. Prior to these events, Larry first met Abele in July of 1964 when he was in Boy Scouts. He knew of Abele's stature and position in Scouting. As a scout leader, Abele was known to be outstanding. In fact, his Scout leader was John M. Phillips of Western PA who was a well known conservationist from whom Abele learned a great deal (Larry recalls that in 1973 or 1974 Abele orchestrated the National Boy Scout Jamboree at Moraine State Park where both he and Maurice Goddard were honored by the Boy Scouts of America).

Larry told many Ralph Abele stories during the interview, several were humorous. One was when he was being recruited by Pete Duncan to serve on the Legislative Committee, Pete took him to meet Abele who, of course, had already known Larry but Pete didn't know that. When they entered Abele's office, Ralph eyed him up and down and said to Pete "can't you do any better than this?!" He also said that not long after being hired Abele took him to lunch and said to him, "Larry, there are only two times when it is good to work for government: when you are young and don't give a damn and when you are old and don't give a damn. I'm in the latter category!"

According to Larry, the Fish Commission was in the "back corner" when Abele took over. Abele was key to professionalizing the agency and put issues such as clean water, resource first, protection of endangered species – such as Rattlesnakes, and tough law enforcement at the forefront of the Commission's agenda. Larry recalled one incident, not long after Abele became Executive Director, where his enforcement officers levied a fine against a coal operator for polluting a waterway. A legislator called Abele to ask that the enforcement action against his "friend" be rescinded. Abele wouldn't budge and told the legislator that he should pick better friends! Another issue of major concern to Abele was restoration of Shad to the Susquehanna River. On an annual basis Abele would be called-in by Governor Thornburgh to discuss issues relevant to the Fish Commission. Abele would dress in his full uniform and his tie that said "Don't Tread on Me!" Abele also took particular issue with Thornburgh's "You've Got a Friend in Pennsylvania" license plate even telling the Governor that it was grammatically incorrect. Thornburgh brushed it aside while Abele took it more seriously.

Abele also had an impact on a regional and national level. He served on the Mid-Atlantic Marine Fisheries Council. One issue before the Council was that certain types of fish, such as striped bass, were becoming depleted in the Chesapeake Bay. Abele led an effort to get a moratorium on taking striped bass, and as a result, they are more plentiful and better managed today.

Larry recalled that Abele was a member of the NRA until it became more right-wing. In fact, the head of the NRA in the 1970s and early 1980s was Harlan Carter who had actually been convicted of first degree murder for shooting to death a Mexican individual when he was a border guard at the US-Mexican border. The sentence, however, was vacated. At an NRA event held in Pennsylvania, Carter was the main speaker and Abele was on the dias. Carter quipped that, when it came to fishing, the way he did it was to shoot fish with his .357 magnum. Abele stood up and grabbed the microphone from Carter saying that such an action was unconscionable and that if he ever saw Carter do that in PA he would have arrested him. Abele then sat back down. The audience was somewhat stunned.

Abele was also a board member of the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) where he competed for the position against an elderly gentleman from New York. Abele won the election by a thin margin. On the NWF board Abele was particularly concerned about acid rain. So was Larry who had put out a query to the scientific community on the impact of acid rain to which the response was overwhelming that its impact was widespread and damaging. Larry published an article on the topic in "Pennsylvania Forestry" magazine; Senator John Heinz had the article published verbatim in the Congressional Record. Abele was involved in an assessment of the impact of acid rain on fish habitat where the damage was evident. The NWF and other environmental organizations lobbied Congress to pass legislation to require 'scrubbers' on coal-fired power plants. Congress passed and President Bush signed the Acid Rain Control Act of 1990 which was actually an amendment to the Clean Air Act. This law was an early iteration of so-called "Cap and Trade" legislation proposed later.

On a personal level, Larry said that Abele had an impact on thousands of people, many of whom he never met. He was a mentor to Larry and a dear friend. He remembered that Abele and Goddard would refer to each other as the other's hero. Abele had widespread knowledge and was particularly interested in the Civil War and had textbook knowledge on the Gettysburg Battlefield. In fact, Abele was among the leaders who sought to prevent the building of the battlefield tower which was later torn down. Abele got to know Civil War historian Bruce Catton who would come to Gettysburg to take Abele and some friends on a narrated tour.

To Larry, Abele was "one of a kind, very rare, the kind of person that you meet only once or twice in your lifetime." Larry was shocked at Abele's passing and attended the memorial service where he was emotional.

One last item - when Larry became head of the National Wildlife Federation, Peggy Abele called him to tell him that "Ralph would be extraordinarily proud of him."

Robert Martin, Attorney and Former Fish Commissioner (retired)

Date of Interview: 6/6/12

Length of Interview: 57 minutes

Summary of interview: Robert Martin was born in Buffalo, NY and moved to Cleveland, Ohio as a youth. He attended Ohio University Law School and then served as a law clerk for a judge in Pittsburgh. In 1970, he settled in Bellefonte and served as a public defender. He then set up a private practice followed by a career with McNees, Wallace, and Nurick.

Bob was always interested in the outdoors. He is an avid fly fisherman and was active in Trout Unlimited, Spring Creek Chapter (Centre County). Bob was nominated to serve as Commissioner for the Fish Commission and served from 1980-1986. He first met Ralph Abele in 1979.

According to Bob, Abele was one of the four or five people who had the greatest impact on his life. He referred to Abele as being “bigger than life” and remembered one particular time when Abele showed up at his home in Bellefonte and stood at the front door in full uniform. “The sun was shining in the background and Ralph had a ‘halo effect.’ It was a site I’ll never forget.”

Bob’s main involvement with Abele and the Fish Commission was with Operation Future. He recalled it as a major policy change that moved the agency to scientific management of the resource. It was controversial and particularly angered some legislators who had always had streams in their jurisdiction adequately stocked. Now, this wasn’t always going to be the case and some in Harrisburg had difficulty with that change. In fact, some Commissioners disagreed with the policy change. The Commission staff was on-board. Abele wouldn’t back down as he felt that the science was solid and, despite receiving political pressure not to do so, the Commission went ahead with Operation Future. He also recalled Abele being very concerned with water quality issues and that Commission enforcement staff went after water polluters with Abele’s strong encouragement. Another issue of concern was commercial fishing on Lake Erie and Bob remembered meetings with other state officials and commercial fishing interests. Eventually, there was an agreement reached to prevent depletion of certain types of fish in Lake Erie.

Bob got to know Abele on a personal level. They spent many hours in the car together travelling across Pennsylvania on Commission business such as visiting hatcheries and going to public meetings on various issues including Operation Future. They talked mainly about environmental issues and Bob grew to respect Abele through these discussions where it was clear that Abele’s interests were for the public good.

He remembered Abele being a practical joker. Bob recalled attending one meeting of the OBs where Abele wore a Kermit the Frog mask and had his photo taken with the OBs wearing the mask. He also introduced Bob to single malt Scotch. When Bob once ordered that the Scotch be poured over ice, Abele scolded him saying that that should never be the case with good Scotch! Abele also encouraged Bob to serve on the Atlantic States Fisheries Council (where a main issue

was enforcement of the 200 mile limitation zone) and him and Abele (and others) spent time on a Polish fishing trawler in the Atlantic Ocean where they learned what the Poles were doing to harvest Mackerel.

When Abele retired, Bob was one of a few people that he encouraged to apply for the position of Executive Director of the Fish Commission. They shared many of the same views and Abele probably viewed Bob's appointment to the Executive Director position as a continuation of his policies. However, several Commissioners and some political pressure from the legislature made it clear that they did not want someone who would follow in Abele's footsteps. Bob wasn't hired for the position. He recalls that Abele's successor (Miller) was an engineer who looked at issues from that standpoint, not necessarily from a conservation aspect. He recalled that Abele was disappointed in that but he learned to "let it go."

Bob and Abele stayed in contact after his retirement and, on occasion, visited or talked over the phone. Bob recalled that when Abele died he was shocked and that "attending his memorial service was one of the hardest things I've ever done."

Gary Alt, Wildlife Specialist, Pennsylvania Game Commission (retired)

Date of Interview: 6/12/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 4 minutes

Summary of interview: Gary Alt was born and raised in Lackawanna County. His first job was with a lumber company, but the job turned-out to be too dangerous. Gary then volunteered for the Army and later applied to Penn State's forestry school at Mont Alto where he was accepted in 1970. He then transferred to the DuBois Campus and its wildlife technician program. Gary related that his grades were so low that he was asked to leave the program but he stayed-on anyway, later transferring to Utah State University where he finished 3rd in his graduating class.

After returning to Pennsylvania, he met with Game Commission management who told him they couldn't hire him. Later in 1977, he was hired by the Commission in its wildlife management program where he used his expert skills on bears and bear trapping (there was legislative pressure put on the Game Commission to hire Gary). He served as a bear biologist for 26 years. While working for the Game Commission, Gary completed a Ph.D. in forest ecology from West Virginia University. During the course of his career, he testified often before the legislature on game and bear management issues and, on several occasions, legislators accompanied him on bear trapping ventures in the Poconos. Gary admits that he was a controversial person, very outspoken, and that he angered many people for his stance on bear and deer management issues.

Gary met Ralph Abele through the course of various meetings between Game and Fish Commission staff in the late 1970s and early 1980s. On several occasions Abele accompanied Gary to bear dens and on bear trappings. Abele quickly became a "hero for me" according to Gary. Abele was probably "the best conservationist and policymaker I ever met." He was "a diplomat with great people skills and his style was gutsy; he could be aggressive and persistent but not in a loud or boisterous way." He was also "a father figure to me" and Gary remembered thinking that "I wanted to be like Ralph Abele." On one occasion, Gary recalled being castigated by Abele for his position advocating that 3% of bear licenses be allocated to out-of-state residents. Abele thought that was too generous.

Gary remembered Abele as being very personable, a likable person who earned the respect of many people. He also recalled that Abele was a practical joker, but had a sensitive side as well. On one occasion Gary was testifying before the legislature on a bear and wildlife conservation issue, and Abele was in the audience and wrote a note saying "there is no way any of this would happen without you, Gary." He passed the note to several people who passed it on to Gary. Abele's field staff respected him tremendously, "probably unlike any other Executive Director of the Fish Commission before or since." Gary also recalled that the 1970s was a very unique era in the history of Pennsylvania's environmental movement. People like Abele and Maurice Goddard, as well as some legislators, had real prominence and were environmentalists and conservationists who made policy and law for the betterment of PA's environment such as the creation of DER.

The era hasn't been repeated and there are "few conservationists in Pennsylvania's legislature or executive branch today." "Abele is missed, admired, and remembered as a real leader by a lot of people. He was worth listening to."

Harry Bittles, Representative, Pennsylvania General Assembly (retired)

Date of Interview: 6/15/12

Length of Interview: 1 hour 10 minutes

Summary of interview: Harry Bittles was born in Pottsville. His family moved to Lebanon and then Chambersburg where he graduated from high school. He completed a degree in history and political science from Gettysburg College and graduated from Dickinson School of Law with a J.D. degree. He was a private practitioner for several years and then served as District Attorney for Franklin County. He was elected to the Pennsylvania House of Representatives in 1968 and served 8 terms where he chaired the House Conservation Committee and then the Joint House-Senate Conservation Committee for several terms. During the second Thornburgh Administration (1982-1986), Bittles served as Deputy Secretary for Environmental Protection in DER.

Harry worked with Ralph Abele when Ralph directed the Conservation Committee. The most important piece of legislation that Harry and Abele worked on was the creation of DER. They also worked on surface mining reclamation legislation. Later, in 1978, Harry was prime sponsor of the Solid Waste Management Act that became law. According to Harry, Abele was a “true conservationist; one of the most environmentally conscious people I ever met.” Harry recalled that when Abele went to the Fish Commission he pushed for legislative amendments to the Fish Code to allow Waterways Patrolmen to have broad police powers, similar to the Pennsylvania State Police. Members of the Joint Conservation Committee felt that they had broad enough legal authority and denied Abele’s request. Abele wasn’t happy about that and informed Bittles in no uncertain terms. Bittles also added that John Laudadio was Abele’s mentor in the General Assembly.

In the interview, Harry told several stories about Ralph Abele. On several occasions, while Abele was in the General Assembly, he and Bittles (and other legislators) took many trips together. Bittles recalled trips to Westmoreland and Fayette Counties to view surface mining operations: “We stood in the mouth of a dragline shovel bucket and were awestruck at its size. We also witnessed the scars on the landscape from surface mining activity. Ralph was especially upset by what he saw.” On several occasions he and Abele took canoe trips on the Youghiogheny River in western PA to assess water quality and to look at land that was under consideration for purchase by the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

Another story that Bittles related is that when Abele was at the Fish Commission he worked with members of the General Assembly, as well as people like Bittles and Pete Duncan, on developing an environmentally focused license plate. Abele pushed hard for a license plate that featured a fish and was disappointed when that didn’t happen (one alternative chosen was an Owl). Ned Smith assisted with the artistry for the plate. One representative told Abele that if he continued to push so hard for a fish they would adopt a license plate with a river otter eating a brook trout! Abele, Bittles recalled, “twitched his mustache and eyebrows and was not amused in the least!”

Bittles also related a story where an overzealous waterways patrolman in south central Pennsylvania was being too aggressive in his job. In one case he arrested a group of campers for generating too much smoke from a charcoal-fired cookout. In other cases he would arrest fisherman for what Bittles described as frivolous violations. Bittles received pressure from his constituents to stop these activities. He, in turn, pressured Abele to get the patrolman to change his tactics. At first, Abele refused. However, in time, the officer was transferred to Lawrence County.

Bittles and Abele were “good friends and professional acquaintances.” Abele was “a crusty old bastard” who “stood his ground and seldom compromised.” He was “like a bull in a china shop and had a sense of ‘rightness.’ When he twitched his eyebrows and mustache you knew that he wasn’t happy.” He would fire off letters when he didn’t agree with someone over some issue. Those letters didn’t hold him in good stead with some people, but he was respected for his knowledge, insight and sense of commitment to protecting the environment and wildlife species in Pennsylvania.

Bittles concluded the interview by commenting that the 1970s were a special time in Pennsylvania’s environmental and conservation movement. Much legislation was enacted with bipartisan and gubernatorial support. The era began to fade in the late 1970s. In fact, “some of the laws became impossible to enforce because they had such high standards.” Abele was “very much a part of this movement.”

Pete Duncan, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Game Commission and Secretary, Department of Environmental Resources (retired)

Date of Interview: 6/7/12 and 6/14/12

Length of Interviews: 3 hours and 40 minutes (two interviews combined)

Summary of interview: Pete Duncan provided the most comprehensive and thorough interview of all the interviewees on the Ralph Abele Legacy Project. He was interviewed on two separate occasions at the offices of the Fish and Boat Commission in Harrisburg. Pete and Ralph Abele not only worked together but were close personal friends as were their families. Highlights of the interview with Pete are summarized below.

Pete earned a degree in Parks and Recreation Administration from Penn State University, served time in the U.S. Army and was scheduled to go to law school. Instead, he began working for the Joint Legislative Conservation Committee in the early 1970s when Ralph Abele was Executive Director (he began his career in mid-1968 or 69). Pete thoroughly explained the history and workings of the committee; that it was formed in the aftermath of Projects 70 and 500 as a watchdog over how various state agencies utilized the funding. The Committee's responsibilities expanded as it consisted of 9 Republican and 9 Democratic members, all who worked in a bipartisan manner. This was an era, according to Pete, "that you couldn't write environmental legislation fast enough and Ralph was thoroughly behind many of the important pieces of environmental legislation that were enacted during the late 1960s and early 1970s." Abele's position was "this isn't going to last forever so let's get as much done as we can while we can." By the mid-to-late 1970s the pace of legislation and environmental reform began to slow.

Among major pieces of legislation were those governing acid mine drainage, surface mine reclamation, flood plain management, and the creation of DER, thus combining all environmental programs (scattered among various agencies) under one roof. Among the main legislators involved in such initiatives were John Laudadio, Robert Mellow, and Bud Dwyer. Other key players were Ken Sink (Trout Unlimited; he also formed the OB's in the early 1970s), Larry Schweiger (committee staffer), Dan Snyder (EPA), Commissioners Lenny Green and Frank Masland, and Tom Webster of the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. These were "competent and determined people, and they were determined to get things done and had respect for one another and for environmental causes."

Pete recalled Maurice Goddard's opposition to the creation of DER; he thought it was too big and unruly and didn't agree with combining environmental resource functions with environmental protection functions. Nevertheless, Goddard went along and became Secretary of DER (Abele was considered as one of the candidates to be secretary). Coincidentally, several other states created environmental super agencies such as New York and Connecticut. This was also an era in which Pennsylvania's Attorney General had "an environmental strike force" that worked closely with DER and its predecessor to prosecute polluters, etc. During this time, science played a greater role

in the management of air, water, land and other natural resources and in which more educated people were attracted to government, particularly in the area of environmental policy and enforcement.

Pete explained that the 1960s and 1970s was a time of “authoritative management” and “top down bureaucratic control.” People like Maurice Goddard and Ralph Abele came out of the military and were accustomed to a command and control style of management. This is very much how state government was run at the time; participatory management wasn’t in style. Goddard and Abele, who were very close, managed autocratically. They expected others to do as they were told and to obey higher authority. Loyalty was highly regarded; it “mattered a great deal to people like Goddard and Abele.” It wasn’t that they commanded loyalty, they earned it as well, by modeling leadership and being committed to environmental causes. Goddard considered his greatest accomplishments as putting a state park within 25 miles of every Pennsylvanian and professionalizing the bureaucracy by placing thousands of positions under Civil Service (both initiatives begun during the Leader Administration (1955-1959).

When Abele became Executive Director of the Fish Commission, Pete Duncan became Executive Director of the Joint Legislative Committee. In the early 1980s, Pete became Secretary of DER following Cliff Jones (Duncan was a Deputy Secretary under Jones) who Abele was always suspicious of because of his business background. Pete said “Abele often prodded DER to police and protect air, land and water resources. He never felt that what we were doing was quite good enough; that we ought to be tougher, and we were tough where we had to be.” Pete particularly remembered an earlier time when surface mining permits were issued by the old Department of Mines and Mineral Industries on the same day they were applied for. There was no scrutiny, and when Republicans were in power it was the coal industry that controlled the department (and the PA Coal Association’s lobbyist Maize Mohny); when the Democrats were in power it was the UMWA. All of this changed with DER; Goddard, Jones, and Pete didn’t let special interests control the agenda of the agency; rather science and professionalism ruled. Moreover, mining regulatory functions were decentralized under Jones and Duncan with 5 regions: one for anthracite and 4 for bituminous. Their management style was one of “pick the best and the brightest, trust them, let them do their jobs, and back them up,” a philosophy not entirely dissimilar to that practiced by Ralph Abele.

Pete recalled that during the Thornburgh Administration (1979-1987), the main power in the Governor’s Office lay in Jay Waldman, Murray Dickman, and Robin Ross. They were the individuals to whom Pete would frequently answer, and they sometimes applied political pressure on DER with regard to decisions, regulatory power, etc. They could also apply pressure on Abele at the Fish Commission, even though it was an independent agency. However, Abele would give the Governor written reports on issues before the Commission (Pete provided copies of some of these reports) and would work with the Governor’s Office, short of allowing staff to apply political pressure. Pete recalled that “during the Thornburgh Administration, DER got a lot accomplished that political pressure couldn’t undo.”

As head of the Fish Commission, Abele held a seat on the Environmental Quality Board where the main job was to enact environmental regulations. Abele and Pete once had a vehement disagreement over a regulation governing water quality. As a result, they didn't talk for months. It was their wives, Peggy and Becky, who brought them back together.

Pete became Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission in the mid-1980s. During this time he and Abele remained close. They both were members of the Northeast Fish and Wildlife Directors Association that would meet frequently to discuss related issues and provide advice to one another. Abele, in fact, played a key role in keeping this group together according to Pete. They were also active in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, a national organization where Abele was chair of the Fisheries Committee and was very influential. Both Pete and Ralph also served on various committees and were influential in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Interior, and EPA. They also were influential in the formation and operation of the Wildlife Management Institute, a renowned organization. Abele was once a candidate for president of the organization.

Abele was influenced by people like Roger Latham, a conservationist and outdoorsman who worked as head of research for the PA Game Commission from the 1930s to the 1950s. Latham was eventually fired and became an environmental writer for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. He wrote extensively on the environment and conservation issues. Abele and Latham were good friends. Abele loved the bully-pulpit and not only used it verbally, but did so through his writings in "Straight Talk." Abele was "a big man in a big field." Abele "was like a man on a white horse, very much in the tradition of Theodore Roosevelt who was one of Ralph's heroes."

Pete and Ralph were very close. Abele was godfather to Pete and Becky Duncan's first son Matthew and he treated both Matthew and Andy Duncan (their second child) as an uncle would his nephews. In fact, in personal notes he would frequently write to them, he would sign "Uncle Ralph." Abele always remembered their birthdays with cards and gifts as he did on special occasions such as graduations. Becky Duncan and Peggy Abele were also very close friends. During the interview, Pete recalled stories of the families having dinners together and sharing special occasions like birthdays and holidays. Both lived in Millerstown, near to each other, and on occasion Pete and Ralph would commute to Harrisburg as their schedules permitted.

"With regard to his personality, Abele could be very tough and uncompromising when he strongly believed in something. "He could be both a tyrant and very charming and he took a genuine interest in people and was a mentor to many, including myself," Pete said. It was not unlike Abele to send personal notes to people to congratulate them on an accomplishment or to chastise them when he disagreed with them. Abele suffered from a hyperactive thyroid condition that impacted his behavior, he could be hyperactive and high-strung though he took medication to control the condition. However, he remained very energetic. Peggy Abele, according to Pete, "was the rock in the relationship because, remember, Ralph was very busy and active and didn't have a lot of time to spend at home."

In the interview Pete recalled issues during his tenure at the Game Commission such as deer management when the Commission reduced the population to less than 30 per square mile. However, hunters were seeing less deer and started to complain. Also, there was a situation at the Commission where a few individuals received unauthorized pay raises. Issues such as these led to Pete's firing. After taking some time off, he went to work for the New York Department of Environmental Conservation.

Attachment B

Finding Aid

FF denotes File Folder

Box 1 – Bell/Holmes Study- 1960; SRAFC

FF1 – SRAFC (Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Committee), 1981 - Correspondence, information, newspaper articles, and related material on activities of SRAFC. Copy of report: “Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility Operation, April through May, 1972.”

FF2 - SRAFC, 1982 - Correspondence, information, newspaper articles, and related material on activities of SRAFC. Information on reorganization of Committee, Copy of: “Tidewater Fisheries Analysis of American Shad Fisheries in Maryland Waters.”

FF3 – SRAFC, 1980 - Correspondence, information, newspaper articles, and related material on activities of SRAFC; FERC order for issuing license to PECO and Susquehanna Power Company for Conowingo Dam. Copy of reports: “Susquehanna River Fish Kill of July 8, 1980” by Maryland Department of Natural Resources and “Progress Report on American Shad Investigation Conducted at Lamar Fish Cultural Development Center, 1977-79. Information on Susquehanna River Basin Commission’s views on relicensing of Safe Harbor hydroelectric project.

FF4 – SRAFC, 1981 – Voluminous correspondence, information, newspaper articles, and related material on activities of SRAFC. Copy of report: “Summary of the Conowingo Dam Fish Collection Facility During Spring, 1979” and 1979 SRAFC Operations Plan and 1980 Annual Work Plan. Copy of: “Report of the State Commissioners of Fisheries, 1892-1894.”

FF5 – SRAFC, 1980 (second file) - Voluminous correspondence, information, newspaper articles, and related material on activities of SRAFC. Copy of report: “An Economic Evaluation of potential Benefits to the Susquehanna River Basing through Restoration of Diadromous Fisheries” by Fish Commission staff, 1980. Copy of report: “Study Plan for Safe Harbor Hydroelectric Project #1025” by Roy F. Weston for Safe Harbor Power Corp; Coy of Susquehanna River Basin Commission’s study “Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Study of Lower Susquehanna River, August, 9 and 10, 1979.”

Box 2 – Executive Director

FF1 – Susquehanna Survey – Various reports by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers such as ‘Fish Passageways at Cushman #2 Hydro-Electric Plant and ‘Fish Passage Through Turbines,’ early 1960s. Photos of various dams across state featuring fish passageways.

FF2 – Susquehanna Survey – Early 1960s information and correspondence on Shad surveys and restoration along Susquehanna; Correspondence to/from other state and federal agencies on

subject; and information on fish passage ways at Holtwood and Conowingo dams. Financial estimates of 'Total Cost of Combining Fish Passage Facilities' at Holtwood and Conowingo dams.

FF3 – SRAFC, 1986 – Voluminous correspondence and information on Chesapeake Bay Foundation efforts to clean-up bay. Correspondence between PA and Maryland agencies on issue. Various information on Shad restoration along Susquehanna; information, meeting agendas, minutes of SRAFC meetings; and newspaper articles on Shad restoration issues.

FF4 – SRAFC, 1986 (continued from FF4) – Voluminous correspondence and information on Shad restoration issues. Copy of 1986 annual work plan of SRAFC and meeting agendas and minutes. Copy of "Susquehanna River Settlement Agreement: Holtwood Hydroelectric Stations" between PP&L and Fish Commission. Copy of "Plan to Assess and Improve Downstream Migration of Juvenile American Shad in Susquehanna River" by SRAFC, 1985. Copies of legal briefs by PECO on Conowingo passageway issues.

FF5 – SRAFC, 1985 – Voluminous correspondence and information on work of SRAFC. Copy of multi-agency settlement agreement with PP&L and Safe Harbor Water Power Corp. and York Haven Power Company on construction of fish passageways and other actions to restore Shad. Copies of SRAFC progress reports. Information on efforts of other states to restore Shad, such as Connecticut and New York. Copy of "Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Committee Proposed Study Plan for Juvenile Shad Outmigration Assessment," June, 1984.

FF6 – SRAFC, 1983 – Correspondence, reports and information related to Shad restoration. Copy of 'Restoration of American Shad to the Susquehanna River – Annual Progress Report, 1983' by SRAFC.

FF7 – SRAFC, 1981 – Copy of 1981 settlement agreement between PP&L, Fish Commission and SRB Commission on fish passageways at Holtwood and Safe Harbor dams. Correspondence between Fish Commission officials and interest groups on work of SRAFC. Copy of 'Susquehanna River Anadromous Fish Restoration Cooperative Agreement and Work Plan, 1981' by SRAFC. Copy of "The Susquehanna Fishing Study, 1957-1960: A Report of a Study on the Desirability and Feasibility of Passing Fish at Conowingo dam" by Maryland Dept. of Research and Susquehanna Electric Company and copy of 1985 "American Shad Hatchery Operations by Fish Commission and copies of reports on Research and Education and Susquehanna Electric Company; and copy of 1985 'American Shad Hatchery Operations' by Fish Commission.

Box 3 – Executive Director

FF1 – DER 1980 – Memo of Understanding between DER and Fish Commission relating to enforcement of surface coal mining under provisions of federal Surface Mining Control Act of 1877. Correspondence relating to subject. Press releases on DER and EPA efforts to impose fines on coal companies not in compliance with federal requirements. Copy of report from U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, "National Site Classification System."

FF2 – DER 1981 – Correspondence between DER Secretary Pete Duncan and Abele on various issues such as 1980 MOU, monitoring of West Creek Mining Company’s activities on Patterson Creek, Armstrong County. Copy of EQB Environmental Master Plan, 1981. Correspondence between DER and Commission on water quality issues relating to gas and oil drilling and brine water discharges into streams.

FF3 – DER MOU’s – MOU’s between DER and Commission on protection of several conservation districts.

FF4 – DER 1982 – Correspondence between Abele and DER staff on various water quality issues (example: Loyalsock Creek, Sullivan County) and over concern of public discharging of swimming pool water into PA streams; copy of DER Title 25, Chapter 193, regulating public bathing places. Information and correspondence between Abele and DER officials on ‘Small Operators Assistance Program,’ where Commission is provided with federal funding to review coal mining operations. Copies of Surface Mining and Reclamation Act, 1980, as amended, and Bituminous Mine Subsidence and Land Conservation Act, 1981.

FF5 – DER 1983 – Voluminous correspondence and information between Commission and DER staff on water quality issues, Gypsy moth assessments and mitigation, information and meeting minutes from interagency coal mining advisory committee. Copies of reports such as “Assessment of Agricultural Source Pollution in Selected High Priority Watersheds in Pennsylvania” and “Regulation and Operating Planes Relating to the Restoration, Maintenance, and/or Improvement of Water Quality and Fisheries on State Forest Lands” Press statement by Maurice Goddard on Gov. Thornburgh’s ‘mishandling’ of staff changes and in DER leadership in which Goddard claims a politically motivated ‘purge.’

FF6 – DER 1984 – Voluminous correspondence between Abele and DER staff on numerous issues such as fish passageways at dams, erosion and sediment control and impact on fisheries, coal mining operations, and permitting issues. Newspaper articles on various coal mining regulatory issues. Notice and copy of proposed rulemaking before IRRC on water quality standards and Report on Heritage Park proposals in PA.

FF7- DER 1985 – Information and editorial on Thornburgh’s cutbacks in state government agencies. Voluminous correspondence between Abele and DER staff on numerous issues such as water quality, wetland protection, discharging of salt water brine from gas well sites, sewage treatment, mining operations, and other environmental issues. Copy of DER reports “Assessment and Issues for PA Forest Resources” and “Water Quality Standards Review Issues” and copy of “Sand and Gravel Agreement between DER and Erie Sand Steamship Co.”

FF8 – DER 1986 – Voluminous correspondence and information between DER staff and Abele on numerous issues such as those cited in FF7 with the addition of PA Conservation Corps projects, fish tissue contaminants, and coal mining and water quality at Harmar Mine Complex in Allegheny County and Ernst Mining Complex in Indiana County. Copy of DER “Forest Resource Plan,

1986” and Abele response to it especially on issue of Acid Rain. Copy of 1986-1990 PA Recreation Plan.

Box 4 - Unlabeled

FF1 – Three Mile Island – Correspondence, newspaper articles, daily ‘situation reports’ from PEMA, various information from state and federal agencies, members of Congress, and the Pennsylvania legislature on nuclear accident at TMI, 1979. Information and correspondence on release of decontaminated water into Susquehanna River in 1981-82. Correspondence in which Abele expresses policy of Fish and Boat Commission that it is not opposed to release of water so long as federal and state standards are met. File also contains pre-1979 information on TMI construction and environmental impact studies. Photo of fisherman with TMI cooling towers in background.

FF2 – FERC Testimony – Abele testimony before FERC, 1981, on why fish passageways are necessary along the Susquehanna River. General information on fish passageways along Susquehanna.

FF3 – FERC – Information and correspondence between FERC and Fish and Boat Commission on fish passageways along Susquehanna. Legal petitions to intervene in Safe Harbor Water Power Corp. filing for amendment to licenses from FERC. Orders by FERC to various power companies to allow for fish passageways along Susquehanna. Information on Conowingo Fish Collection Facility including architectural drawings, maps, and reports.

Box 5 – Unlabeled (as are some file folders)

Unfiled material and correspondence between Philadelphia Electric Company, Fish Commission, and Susquehanna River Basin Commission on FERC licensing of Conowingo Dam, 1981.

FF1 – U.S. Steel Project – Interagency correspondence on permitting by DER of U.S. Steel mill discharges for proposed steel mill at Conneaut. Information from U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on permitting of U.S. Steel Mill. Correspondence from National Wildlife Federation and other advocacy groups on subject. EPA meeting minutes, April, 1977, on subject.

FF2 – Correspondence, reports and related information on regulatory relief efforts by Reagan Administration Committee on Regulatory Reform specifically regarding amendments to U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 10/404 permitting program (relating to dredge and fill activities under the Clean Water Act. Correspondence from regional and national environmental groups in opposition to proposed regulatory relief. Correspondence to Vice President George H.W. Bush from Abele in opposition to proposed regulatory relief.

FF3 – 404 – Correspondence from various state agencies including agencies from Maryland and New York on proposed regulatory relief, Section 10/404. Information on DER efforts to protect wetlands, 1988.

FF4 – 404 Permitting – Correspondence between and among multi-state agencies on proposed regulatory relief from Section 404 of Clean Water Act, including letter from Senator John Heinz to Abele assuring Abele of his opposition to amendments to the Clean Water Act. Correspondence from Abele to Pennsylvania Congressional delegation expressing opposition to regulatory relief. Copy of “Complaint for Declaratory and Injunctive Relief” filed in U.S. District Court for Washington, D.C. by various national and regional advocacy groups relating to regulatory relief.

FF5 – Clean Water Act, Section 404 – Correspondence, information, newspaper articles and related information on Reagan Administration proposed regulatory relief from Section 404.

Box 6 – Coal Mining Regulations; Lake Erie Regulations and, Budget, 90-91

FF1 – Coal Mining Regulations – Voluminous information relating to PA coal mining regulations. Copies of lawsuit and preliminary objections filed by Pennsylvania Coal Association against DER regulations on mine drainage, 1990. Copies of “Surface Mining Conservation and Reclamation Act of 1945, as amended.” Copies of various reports and technical studies on areas deemed unsuitable for mining. Minutes of EQB meetings in 1988. Copies of DER regulations covering surface and subsurface mining and proposed amendments to such regulations. Handwritten notes on subject by Fish Commission staff.

FF2 – Budget/Fiscal 1987-88 – 1987-88 year-end budget reports and operating cost summaries. Report on “Analysis of Fiscal Condition of Fish Fund and Boat Fund” submitted to Abele by internal Budget Review and Financial Planning Committee. Copy of report “PA Fish Commission: Past, Present and Future,” 1987. Copy of Commission report “Funding Needs and Legislative Priorities 1998 and Beyond” and “Title 30 – Fish and Boat Code.” Copies of proposed legislative amendments to Title 30, 1988.

FF3 – Lake Erie Regulations – Copies of public testimony and official transcript at Commission hearing on proposed 1982 regulations governing fishing activities on Lake Erie. Copy of proposed regulations, 1984 governing “Suspension, Denial or Revocation of Fishing Licenses.” Agenda and meeting minutes from “FUTURE” task force meetings, early-mid 1980s.

FF4 – Lake Erie Regulations – Voluminous correspondence and information relating to permits issued for experimental fishing for white bass, 1982. Copies of Commission notices on limits for various fish catches on Lake Erie. Proposed changes to regulations governing Lake Erie commercial fishing activities. Copy of report “Summary of Commercial Fisheries Catches on Lake Erie,” 1980. Various internal memos and staff handwritten notes on subject. Correspondence to/from legislators on subject. Transcript from public hearing on proposed regulations, 1981 (as in FF3). Internal correspondence on 1978 fee increases for commercial

fishing licenses. Copy of “Fish and Boat Fund Balance Sheet and Related Financial Statements,” June, 1981.

Box 7 – Executive Director

FF1 – Luzerne Coal – Report on application for mine drainage permit for Luzerne Coal, Cumberland Twp., Greene County.

FF2 – Low Flow – Correspondence between Abele and DER and Maryland Dept. of Natural Resources on low flow issues at Conowingo dam.

FF3 – License Questionnaire – 1975 report on angler survey or “Fisherman Preference Survey.”

FF4 – Leetsdale Access, Allegheny County – Information on construction of access area on Ohio River.

FF5 – Jacobsburg State Park Lake – Correspondence, information and maps relating to Jacobsburg State Park Dam, Northampton County.

FF6 – Ingram Springs, Bucks County – Information on project 70 acquisition of Ingram Springs.

FF7 – Inventory and Classification – Report: “Inventory and Classification of Stocked Trout Streams in Pennsylvania,” 1980; Public correspondence on topic.

FF8 – Huntsdale State Forest Hatchery, Cumberland County – Information on “Construction and Replacement of Trout Production Units” at hatchery, 1971. Various information on hatchery including maps and General State Authority documents.

FF9 – Hurgya, John – Information on Commissioner Hurgya, 4th district, including various correspondences between Hurgya and Abele.

FF10 – Hankins Pond, Wayne County – Correspondence and information on acquisition of Hankins Pond.

FF11- Harman Creek, Washington County – Copy of “Watershed Workplan No. 1” early 1970s. Correspondence between West Virginia environmental agency and Fish Commission on issues relating to subject. Information from Washington County Planning Commission on subject.

FF12 – Harris Pond, Luzerne County – Various information from 1967 through 1979 on acquisition and maintenance of pond.

FF13 – Hammermill Landfill, Erie County – Public correspondence in opposition to Hammermill Landfill.

FF14 – Hammermill Paper – Correspondence and information on permitting of Hammermill plant in Lock Haven, and disposition on fly ash and impact on wetlands.

FF15 – Lake Erie Offshore Drilling - Voluminous correspondence and information relating to subject. 1969 study by Ontario Petroleum Institute, “Potential Oil Pollution from Gas and Oil Well Activities in Lake Erie” by International Lake Erie Water Pollution Board. Other related reports. Draft of oil and gas lease on Lake Erie by Dept. of Forests and Waters. Public and legislative correspondence in opposition to drilling.

FF16 – Kimmetts Lock Project, Lehigh County – Copy of executed Application and Permit for project.

FF17 – Kiskiminetas River – Correspondence and information on river water quality, mostly from 1960s.

FF18 – Jacobs Creek Watershed – Correspondence and information on watershed, especially its protection from mining operations. Copy of report, “Workplan for Jacobs Creek Watershed” by Fayette and Westmoreland County governments.

FF19 – Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area – Correspondence between Abele and federal and state officials on “Master Plan for Delaware Watergap National Recreation Area.”

FF20 – Delaware River Policy Committee – Meeting minutes of Policy Committee and subcommittees of which Abele and Fish Commission staff were a part. Copy of “Proposal for Delaware River Fisheries Management Cooperative.”

Box 8 – Unlabeled

FF1 – Personnel Committee – Various information, internal correspondence to/from job applicants, and promotion and reassignment activities from Commission internal personnel committee.

FF2 – Curwensville Reservoir – Correspondence from Abele to sportsmen’s clubs and DER on stocking of reservoir.

FF3 – Damascus – Information on Project 70 acquisition of Damascus Access Area, Wayne County.

FF4 – Conservation Award – Information on Commission Conservation Award, 1975.

FF5 – Committees within Commission – information on staff assignments to various internal committees on budget, personnel, legislation, access and property maintenance and reports to Abele on committee activities.

FF6 – Cloe and Kyle Reservoir – Information on Project 70 public access to fishing site on reservoir in Jefferson County.

FF7 – City of Monongahela - information on construction of boat launch facility on the Mon River, Washington County.

FF8 – Camp Blue Jay - Information on Commission interest in acquiring camp located in Forest County.

FF9 – Cornell, Bryce – Information on grievances and civil action by Waterways Patrolman Bryce on issues relating to promotion and reassignment.

FF10 - Buffalo Township – Information on Project 70 Commission acquisition of 4 acres of land at Montgomery Ferry, Perry County.

FF11 – Dunlap Creek – Information on Project 70 acquisition of Dunlap Creek Watershed.

FF12 – Chester Municipal Authority – Correspondence, information, and newspaper articles on operation and maintenance of Strable Lake, Chester County.

FF13 – EPA (misabeled?) – Correspondence, information, newspaper articles, budget reports, and annual reports regarding Chesapeake Bay Agreement.

FF14 – Donegal Lake – internal information on leasing of dwelling at Donegal Lake, Westmoreland County.

FF15 – E. Bangor Dam – Correspondence, information and photos relating to East Bangor Dam and lake, especially on concerns over water quality. Information on public meeting on subject and on physical improvements.

FF16 – Great Lakes Fishery Commission - Information on Great Lakes Fishery Commission including meeting minutes, committee reports, various other reports such as “Water Level Changes” and “Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between U.S. and Canada, 1978.”

FF17- Lake Erie Commercial and Sport Fishing – Correspondence (especially from public and advocacy groups to Abele), meeting minutes, newspaper articles, reports, and related information on Committee on subject.

Box 9 - Unlabeled

FF1 – Endangered Species, 1973-75 – Correspondence with state and federal agencies, information and reports on endangered species in Pennsylvania waterways. Correspondence and information relating to Endangered Species Act of 1973 and federal grants-in-aid to Pennsylvania for endangered species protection.

FF2 – Presidential Fishing Trip, 1978 – Information, correspondence, newspaper articles and photos relating to President Carter’s fly fishing trip to Pennsylvania in 1978.

FF3 – Gibbs, Walter – Correspondence between Commission Gibbs and Abele on various subjects such as fish stocking and on legal and regulatory matters.

FF4 – Jones & Laughlin Steel Corp. – Information and correspondence on early 1980s consent order and agreement on J & L to mitigate water pollution at Aliquippa and Pittsburgh facilities. Information on penalties assessed by Commonwealth on J & L.

FF5 – Juniata River – Water quality surveys and information on Juniata River seminar and ‘float’ in November 1982.

FF6 - Project FUTURE – Meeting agendas and minutes, reports, correspondence, and other material relating to Project FUTURE. Correspondence from public on project FUTURE. Copies of special regulatory proposals for Fly Fishing, Catch and Release, and Limestone Springs Wild Trout Program.

FF8 – Project FUTURE – Additional information on project FUTURE including committee reports and meeting minutes, and letter from Abele explaining project to members of the General Assembly. Report on Management of Trout Fisheries in PA Waters by F & B Commission, 1986. Information on ‘electro-shocking’ of streams to enhance counts of various fish species.

Box 10 - Unlabeled (most information in box is pre-Abele)

FF1 – Project 70 – Information and agreement on French Creek Access Area, Crawford County.

FF2 – Project 70 – Information on access to west bank of Allegheny River in Venango County.

FF3 – Project 70 – Information and agreement on acquisition of Ford’s Lake, Lackawanna County.

FF4 – Project 70 – Chronological report, correspondence, and information on acquisition of Four Mile Run in Westmoreland County.

FF5 – FERC/PENELEC – Information and correspondence on FERC licensing of PENELEC facilities in Commonwealth.

FF6 – Raystown – Information on construction of Raystown Lake and Commission fish stocking activities, early 1970s.

FF7 – Warrior Ridge Dam – Correspondence and information on Warrior Ridge Dam along Juniata and impact on fish species.

FF8 – Raystown – Correspondence, information and orders from FERC on Raystown hydroelectric project.

FF9 – Oakland Hydroelectric Dam – Correspondence and information on PA Electric Company’s abandonment of Oakland Hydroelectric Station on Susquehanna River, Susquehanna County.

FF10 – Newbold Island – Correspondence with Atomic Energy Commission and information on construction of Newbold Island Nuclear Generation Station in Salem, N.J. and Limerick facility in Pottstown.

FF11 – Limerick – Newspaper articles, internal Fish Commission correspondence and with Atomic Energy Commission, and information on Limerick Nuclear Generating Station.

FF12 – Berwick Project – Correspondence with state and federal agencies on construction of Susquehanna Steam Electric Station along Susquehanna River, Luzerne County.

FF13 – Peach Bottom – Copy of letter and report of Ichthyological Association on fish species near Peach Bottom, York County.

FF14 – Proposed Natural Gas Installation - Correspondence between Abele and Federal Power Commission on Consolidated Gas Company's proposed natural gas pipeline from Louden County, Virginia to Clinton County, PA.

FF 15 – Allegheny River Reservoir – Correspondence, information, reports, and meeting minutes on Federal Power Commission's licensing on PA Electric Company's Allegheny Dam, Allegheny River, Warren County.

FF16 – Muddy Run – Correspondence, reports, meeting minutes of advisory group, and related material on Phila. Electric Company's Muddy Run pumped storage projects.

FF17 – Lake Wallenpaupack – Correspondence, reports, and related information on Wallenpaupack Hydroelectric Station in the Pocono region.

FF18 – Mountain Springs – Information on federal financial aid relating to Commission's work at Mountain Springs, Luzerne County.

FF19 – Clarion River – Correspondence and information on Piney Hydroelectric Station, Clarion River, Clarion County.

FF20 – Peach Bottom – Voluminous correspondence between state and federal agencies and legal documents relating to construction and operation of Peach Bottom. Also includes maps and FERC orders requiring construction of fish passageways.

Box 11 - Unlabeled

FF 1 – Fly Fishing Areas - Various correspondence on fly fishing issues, information on 'Fly Fish Only' designated areas and pros and cons of such areas.

FF2 – Flood Restoration Post Agnes Disaster, 1972 – Enforcement of cease and desist orders for waterway obstructions; various inter-agency correspondence on post-Agnes recovery especially

with DER; booklet, “Guidelines for Stream Restoration Following Flood Emergencies;” and correspondence on emergency flood clean-up programs without permit issuance by DER.

FF3 – Fish for Fun- Correspondence and information on “Fish for Fun” program.

FF4 – Fish Diseases – Correspondence with state and federal agencies on fish diseases; letters to members of U.S. Congress on fish diseases in support of federal legislation to prevent such diseases; report of National Fish Disease Workshop, August 14-18, 1972.

FF5 – First Fork of Sinnemahoning Creek, Potter County – Designation of First Fork Branch of Creek as a high pressure area not supported by Abele; correspondence with Dept. of Highways on nearby road construction; pre-Abele information on same subject.

FF6 – Proposed Revisions to Fish Laws, 1974 – Correspondence regarding proposed revisions to fish code between Abele, legislators, internal staff, and interest groups; correspondence regarding enforcement of proposed code; information on 1981 legislation to create Fish and Boat Code, Title 30, Pa. C.S. H.B. 1574.

FF7 – Linesville State Fish Hatchery – Interagency correspondence on Linesville State Fish Hatchery; numerous photos of construction of Hatch House at Linesville.

FF8 – Little Schuylkill River Watershed – Correspondence and information indicating that watershed was originally proposed in 1958 with most improvements complete by 1974; similar correspondence with U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service. Most information pre-dates Abele.

FF9 – Pennypack Creek – Information on stocking of Pennypack Creek in 1983; correspondence related to pollution in Pennypack Creek.

FF10 – Perkiomen Creek, 1966-67 – Report “Biological Survey of Perkiomen Creek” by Institute of Research at Lehigh University.

FF11 – Little Loyalsock Creek – Correspondence regarding enforcement issues along creek; correspondence on various issues affecting creek, 1965-66, pre-Abele.

FF12 – Little Sandy Creek, 1964-66 – Correspondence on plans for Little Sandy Creek Watershed pursuant to Project 70.

Box 12 - Unlabeled

FF1 – H.B. 1713 - Information on 1981-82 legislation H.B. 1713 to offer free licenses to Veterans, increase resident fishing fees, and create a salmon stamp; letters to legislators regarding H.B. 1713; information from various state agencies on H.B. 1713; information on financial status of Fish Commission; information from other states on license fees; correspondence and information on

“Mellow Amendment” to H.B. 1713 that would politicize appointments to Fish Commission including Executive Director.

FF2 – Pesticides – Correspondence, information and press releases on PCBs, contaminants, and pollution in fisheries, creeks, streams, and lakes; reports on PCBs by DER; related newspaper clippings; correspondence with Maurice Goddard and Ralph Abele on subject; information on Gypsy Moth infestation.

FF3 - Pesticides, Pre-Abele - Information on development of pesticide regulations in 1960s; federal hearings before Senator Hugh Scott; correspondence with Dept. of Highways on spraying of pesticides; information from other states on pesticide use and results such as Michigan, New York, and Wisconsin; report of ‘Special Senate Committee to Study the Use of Pesticides in PA,’ 1969.

FF4- PIER Program/PSU – 1984/85 ‘Public Involvement and Education on Radiation’ program in collaboration with PSU and state agencies; Appalachian States Low-Level Radioactive Waste Compact signed by Gov. Thornburgh 12/85; TMI information; study in issue by State House of Reps; similar studies from other states.

FF5 – Marsh Creek Watershed – 1968/71 pre-Abele information; acquisition of watershed via Project 70; work plan for Marsh Creek Watershed.

FF6 – Salmon Carcasses – Correspondence on providing salmon to Erie area food bank, Dept. of Veterans Affairs, and various schools for biological dissection,

Box 13 - Unlabeled (most files relate to access areas)

FF1 – Marsh Creek - Miscellaneous information on Marsh Creek access areas.

FF2 – Schrader Creek – Miscellaneous information on fly fishing on creek.

FF3 – Roaring Run – Pre-Abele, information on construction of dam on Roaring Creek, Somerset County.

FF4 – Martin’s Creek – Information on public access to creek in Northampton County; correspondence on pollution of Martin’s Creek.

FF5 – Commissioner Robert L. Martin – Correspondence and information on Commissioner Martin including letter of resignation.

FF6 – Stream Improvement – Correspondence, internal memoranda, and related information on stream improvement issues.

FF7 – Tidioute Access Area – Correspondence, internal memoranda, and related information on Tidioute Access Area.

FF8 – Sylvan Lake – Land acquisition information on Sylvan Lake, Luzerne County. Most information is pre-Abele.

FF9 - Sweet Arrow Lake – Land acquisition information on Sweet Arrow Lake, Schuylkill County. Most information is pre-Abele.

FF10 – Susquehanna Fishery Investigation – Biological studies of Susquehanna River; selected correspondence, all pre-Abele.

FF11 – Mauch Chunk Creek Watershed – Correspondence on issues relating to acquisition and maintenance of this watershed in Schuylkill and Carbon Counties; Supplement Watershed Workplan Agreement copy; most information is pre-Abele.

FF12 – McKeesport Access – Correspondence and information on issues relating to access to Monongahela and Youghigeny Rivers via McKeesport; some information is pre-Abele.

FF13 – Memo of Understanding - Between Dept. of Highways, Game and Fish Commissions, 1968; pre-Abele.

FF14 - Memo of Understanding – On channel changes between Dept. of Highways, Game and Fish Commissions, 1963-64, pre-Abele.

FF15 – Memo of Understanding – Between Elk County Soil and Water Conservation District, State Soil and Water Conservation Commission, and Fish Commission.

FF16 – Middle Creek – Correspondence regarding Middle Creek Supplemental Watershed Work Plan Agreement, Snyder County; Agreement included.

FF17 – Martin’s Creek – Correspondence and information on Martin’s Creek, East Branch, Northampton County.

FF18 – Martin’s Creek – Correspondence and information on Martin’s Creek Dam Site.

FF19 – Martin’s Creek – Information relating to Martin’s Creek Watershed.

FF20 – Young Adult Conservation Corps. – Correspondence and information relating to this program.

FF21 – Zane Grey Inn – Correspondence regarding acquisition of Zane Grey Inn, Pike County, pre-Abele. Includes correspondence with Historical and Museum Commission on historical significance of Zane Grey Inn.

FF22 – Susquehanna River Access, Woodward Twp., Lycoming County – Correspondence and memoranda regarding acquisition/access to 6 acres of land adjacent to Susquehanna in Lycoming County, pre-Abele.

FF23 – Sunshine Law – Information and memoranda on Pennsylvania’s “Sunshine Law” of 1974.

Box 14 - Unlabeled

FF1 – Penn Central Railroad, Enola – Correspondence and information on oil pollution on Susquehanna River at Enola.

FF2 – Wilts Track – Information on acquisition of Wilts Track of land, Penns Creek; correspondence with Maurice Goddard on the subject.

FF3 – 1986 Commission Camera Inventory – Related internal survey and report.

FF4 – PG & W – Agreement with PG & W to permit panfish salvage on a trial basis on bodies of water owned by PG & W.

FF5 – PA Oil and Gas Association – Remarks/speech by Abele to association seminar, 9/15/82; miscellaneous correspondence between Abele and officials of Association.

FF6 – Susquehanna Fishery Investigation – Early to mid-1960s information on investigation; see FF 10, Box 6 and Box 13, FF10.

FF7 – Headquarters Construction – Correspondence and building plans for construction of Fish and Game Commission headquarters on Elmerton Avenue, 1970s.

FF8 – Mill Run Watershed – Correspondence and information on issues of acquisition of and access to Tamarack Lake, Fayette County, most pre-Abele.

FF9 – Mill Creek Watershed – 1959-1967 information on this watershed; Work plan for watershed; various correspondence on watershed issues, pre-Abele.

FF10 – Mill Run Watershed – Limited information on watershed, pre-Abele.

FF11 – Mill Creek, Clarion – Correspondence on excessive silt load on Mill Creek due to coal mining activity and on issue of dam construction on Mill Creek (1968).

FF12 – Mill Creek, Lippincott, Lycoming County – Correspondence on development of Mill Creek Lake site, most pre-Abele.

FF13- Surveys, Streams and Lakes – Correspondence and internal memoranda on surveys of streams and lakes in Pennsylvania; survey schedules, 1980s.

FF14 – Not Labeled - Correspondence and reports on pollution in Spring Creek, Centre County.

Box 15 - Unlabeled

Unfiled bound copy of Minutes of Fish Commission Meetings, January 1968 to September, 1970.

FF1 – Heritage Recreation – Correspondence and agreements with Heritage Recreation and Conservation Service.

FF2 – Great Lakes Winter Navigation – Commission correspondence in opposition to increased winter navigation and shipping on Great Lakes.

FF3- Penn’s Creek – Information on Fingerling stocking; Penn’s Creek watershed issues; correspondence in opposition to “Fish for Fun” on Penn’s Creek; information on Commission acquisition of land along Penn’s Creek.

FF4 – PA League of Angling Youth – Copies of Young Anglers News; information and correspondence on program.

FF5 – Mountain Creek Watershed – Correspondence on various issues relating to watershed in Cumberland County.

FF6 – Neshannock Creek – Information on acquisition of land along creek in Lawrence County in August 1971; correspondence on stocking creek.

FF7 – National Fish Hatchery – Correspondence with federal and state officials on creation of National Fish Hatchery in Northeastern, PA in 1974.

FF8 – North Fork, Red Bank Creek – Correspondence and internal memoranda on poor water quality along creek resulting from mine drainage in Jefferson County.

FF9 - Fred Johnson – Correspondence to, from and about Fred Johnson, Water Resource Coordinator; report: “Angling and Boating use and Angler Harvest of Lake Erie and Presque Isle Bay.”

Box 23- Unlabeled (all is post-Abele)

FF1 – Information on Environmental Quality Board (EQB) meeting, 10/17/89.

FF2 – Information on EQB meeting, 11/21/89, especially on amendments to PA coal mining regulations.

FF3 – Information on EQB meeting, 12/19/89, especially on DER protection of wetlands and proposed regulation “Pollution Control and Prevention from Agricultural Operations.”

FF4 – Information on EQB public hearing on revisions to coal mining regulations.

FF5 – Information on EQB meeting, 5/16/89, including information on proposed DER regulations on “Air Pollution Episodes.”

FF6 – Information on EQB meeting, 7/18/89.

FF7 – Information on EQB meeting, 2/21/89.

FF8 – Information on EQB meeting, 2/14/89.

Box 24 - Unlabeled

FF1 - WCO Claude Neifert – Investigation of Neifert for potential misconduct, 1988.

FF2 – Species of Special Concern – Correspondence on species of special concern and copy of booklet “Species of Special Concern, 1985.”

FF 3 – Henderson Group – Copy of report: “The Hotel at the Airport Business Center,” about a hotel to be built along the Delaware River, Tinicum Twp.; Fish Commission raises concerns that infill of river will create problems for fish species, Post-Abele, 1988.

FF4 – DER 1988 – Correspondence between DER and Fish Commission officials on damming streams on Pine Creek at Cammel in Northern Tier. Fish Commission opposes due to potential impact on trout fishing. Post-Abele.

FF5 - DER 1989 – Correspondence between DER and Fish Commission officials regarding Buck Mountain Creek, Rosetown Creek, Laughlintown Run, and Mill Creek; other selected correspondence, Post-Abele.

FF6 - Commissioner Joan R. Plumly – Correspondence and information on Commissioner Plumly, 1988, post-Abele.

FF7 - Green, L.A. – Correspondence and information on Leonard Green, Commissioner and Director, National Wildlife Federation.

FF8 - DER 1987 – Correspondence between DER and Fish Commission officials on various environmental issues.

Box 25 - Unlabeled (as are most filed folders)

FF1 – Correspondence on Chesapeake Bay issues between Fish Commission and Susquehanna River Basin Commission officials; report “American Shad Restoration in the Northeast, 1987;” copy of settlement agreement with FERC and PECO to provide minimum flow and fish passage at Conowingo Dam.

FF2 – Enforcement of Act 175 of 1980 requiring power companies to allow for minimum flows at dams; information on Shad restoration.

FF3 – Correspondence and information on Fish Commission and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission especially on issues of damming and hydropower projects.

FF4 - Correspondence between Fish Commission and FERC officials on Patterson Dam hydroelectric project along Beaver River at Beaver Falls.

FF5 – Information on Mud Pond, Wyoming County (pre-Abele).

FF6 - Correspondence between Fish Commission and FERC officials on Holtwood Dam project; newspaper articles on construction of “fishway” at Holtwood.

FF7 – Correspondence between Fish Commission, DER, and FERC officials on York Haven Dam on fish passage at York Haven.

FF8 - Correspondence between Fish Commission, DER, and FERC officials on fish passage at Flatrock Dam hydroelectric state, Schuylkill River, Philadelphia County.

FF9 – Correspondence between Fish Commission, DER, and FERC officials on fish passage at Chain Dam in Easton.

FF10 - Correspondence between Fish Commission and DER officials on maintenance of dredging on Walnut Creek; various correspondence on Walnut Creek issues.

Box 26 - Unlabeled

FF1 – Legal Opinions – Various legal opinions and interpretations from the Dept. of Justice (Attorney General) regarding related laws, regulations, and amendments to laws. Some pre-date Abele; copy of publication “Defining Fishing Rights on PA Waters;” newspaper articles on Fish Commission legal and enforcement actions; copy of article “Clean Streams Movement Enters Darkest Period in PA.”

FF2 – Fish Commission Procurement Study – Correspondence between OA, Fish Commission, and Dept. of General Services on Fish Commission procurement issues; copy of OA study “PA Fish Commission Procurement Study” and Appendix, June, 1975.

FF3 – Low Head Hydro Dams – Correspondence on various issues relating to low head hydroelectric dams; statement of policy for “Requirements for Fish Passage Facilities, Low-Head Hydroelectric Installations.”

FF4 – Merger, Fish and Game Commissions – Copy of Legislative Budget and Finance Committee report on “Feasibility and Potential Impacts of a Merger of the PA Fish Commission and the PA Game Commission,” April 1975; various correspondence on issue of merger.

FF5 – Merger, Fish and Game Commissions – Correspondence, newspaper articles, resolutions, and legislative correspondence on potential merger, mid 1970s.

FF6 – Merger, Fish and Game Commissions – Correspondence with Governor’s Office on potential merger and on internal improvements in operations of Fish Commission, and report on

“Governor’s Review of Management,” 1972; Joint State Government Commission “Report on Fish and Game Commissions” dated 1947 and report on “Funding the Game and Fish Commissions” June, 1976.

FF7 – F.E. Masland 1976-1985 – Various and extensive correspondence between Masland and Abele on a variety of issues; copies of letters to editors of various newspapers written by Masland; copies of letters to members of Congress and U.S. Presidents written by Masland; correspondence between Masland and Fish Commission Executive Director Robert Bielo.

Box 27 - Unlabeled (as are most file folders)

FF1 – Correspondence between Abele and Commissioner Calvin Kern on a variety of issues such as Shad restoration on Lehigh and Delaware Rivers.

FF2 – Correspondence between Fish Commission officials and Stroud Water Research Center of the Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, on testing of several small streams for ‘ecosystem response to toxic stress.

FF3 – Information and internal correspondence on ‘Agency Shop’ legislation and agreement between public employee unions and Casey Administration.

FF4 – Information on Adult Trout Stocking Study Group, 1987. Copy of report: “Adult Trout Stocking Study Group, 1986.”

FF5 – Information on Allegheny National Forest General Management Review and correspondence relating to Abele’s participation in this project.

FF6 – Information on American Fisheries Society 1990 Conference in Pittsburgh.

FF7 – Copy of “Anadromous Fishery Study” by the Delaware River Basin Commission; correspondence between Fish Commission, Fish and Wildlife Service, DER and DRBC on cooperative agreement for Shad restoration.

FF8 – Correspondence and information on H.B. 1107 of 1991 to change the name of the PA Fish Commission to the PA Fish and Boat Commission and to increase boat registration fees for the first time since 1963.

Box 31 - Allegheny Dredging

FF1 – HB 685, Allegheny Dredging – Correspondence from Abele to members of the General Assembly expressing policy and technical concerns over HB 685 of 1973. Copy of Master’s thesis “A Study Determining the Effect of Silt, Originating from River Dredging on the Allegheny River on Macro-organisms” by Indiana University of PA student James H. Kennedy, 1973. Various internal studies, interagency memos, newspaper articles and general information on dredging.

FF2 – unlabeled - Information on Beck v. Commonwealth, 1985, seeking recovery of \$21,000 from Fish Commission for sale of two 19 foot boats. Issues over boat quality. Commonwealth-filed counter claim. Handwritten notes from Commission counsel on subject.

FF3 – Pleading – Additional information on Beck v. Commonwealth. Requests from plaintiff’s attorney requesting documents from the Commonwealth.

FF4 – Mr. H.T. Hardie - (file appears to be mislabeled) Information and study from Tech Labs, Inc., 1972, on “Turbidity and Suspended Solids in Allegheny River Water.”

FF5 – HB 685 Allegheny Dredging – Interagency correspondence, newspaper articles, press releases, copy of HB 685 and amendments.

FF6 – Beck Marine – Copies of defendant’s interrogatories in case of Beck v. Commonwealth; copies of Commonwealth purchase orders from Beck Marine.

FF7 – Thesis, J. Kennedy – Copy of thesis by James Kennedy, as in FF1.

FF8 – Dredging, Allegheny River – Objections by Fish Commission staff to DER over dredging of ‘pool 6’ of Allegheny River. Correspondence, newspaper articles and related information on dredging issues especially by Davison Sand and Gravel, Inc. Call memoranda from Governor’s Office to Abele ordering DER to issue permit to Davison; reports from Davison on dredging activities.

FF9 – Dredging, Allegheny River – Interagency correspondence on dredging activities. Copies of testimony before DER committee by Fish Commission staff outlining dredging concerns. Correspondence in which DER and Fish Commission staff disagree over certain dredging policy issues. Copies of newspaper articles on dredging.

FF10 – Dredging, Allegheny River – Copies of audit by Auditor General Robert P. Casey’s office on royalty payments from companies engaged in dredging. Legal briefs by the Commonwealth and Commission before the Environmental Hearing Board on permitting of dredging activities.

FF11 - Allegheny River – Internal correspondence between state agencies on dredging issues. Fish Commission report “Why Does Pool 6 Warrant Special Protection from Commercial Dredging.” Information from public hearings on dredging activities, and newspaper articles on subject.

FF12 – Beck Marine – Legal filings, briefs, purchase orders, and related material on subject of Beck V. Commonwealth.

Box 33 – Unlabeled (most information is post-Abele)

FF1 – Elk Creek Acquisition - Information on acquisition of creek in Erie County.

FF2 – Big Spring – Prelitigation correspondence, e-mails, and relating information relating to Big Spring Hatchery and protection of it.

FF3 – Cedar Springs Property – Correspondence, information and copies of deeds for disposition of Cedar Springs property in Clinton County.

FF4 – Commission Regulations – Copies of various regulations and public correspondence.

FF5 – Fee Report – Information, proposed legislation, revenue projections and detailed fee inventories relating to 1991 proposed fee increase for boat registrations.

FF6 – Fishing License Section Depository Fund Reconciliation – Accounting information relating to subject.

FF7 – Revenue Projection, 1993 – Accounting information and various reports including revenue projections from Commission fees.

FF8 – Revenue Projections, 1988 -1990 - Accounting information and various reports including revenue projections from Commission fees.

FF9 – Revenue Projections, 1990 - Accounting information and various reports including revenue projections from Commission fees.

FF10 - Fishing License Fees, 1982-1983 – Accounting information including ledger sheets and projections relating to proposed fee increase.

FF11 – License Information – Correspondence and information relating to Commission license fees, early 1990s; 1992 report on “Sales and Trends” and information on Act 1992-7 impacting senior and lifetime licenses.

FF12 – Funding Initiative Team Report – Report from internal team on Commission funding status, initiatives, and options, 1995.

Biography of Project Consultant

Kenneth C. Wolensky holds a doctorate in Education with a concentration in History from the Pennsylvania State University, a Masters Degree in Public Administration from the University of Delaware, and a B.A. in History from Misericordia University. He served 25 years in state government in various policy positions in the Governor's Policy Office and the Departments of Health and Insurance. Following completion of his doctorate in 1996, he became a historian with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission until his retirement in July, 2011. He has authored over 25 articles and five books on Pennsylvania history including his most recent work which is a biography of former Pennsylvania Governor George M. Leader entitled, "*The Life of Governor George M. Leader: Challenging Complacency*" published by Lehigh University Press in 2011.