

PA Fish & Boat Commission FY 22-23 Operational Plan

* Note - Ongoing goals and sub-goals are highlighted with color corresponding to the associated strategic priority

Strategic Priority	Third Year Due Dates	Third Year Goals July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023	Status	Notes
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	1. By June 30, 2023, achieve no net loss of public fishing access.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	1.c. By June 30, 2023, actively promote access to lakes owned by water companies.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	2. By June 30, 2023, coordinate with other public landowners on fisheries habitat management and access on publicly-owned lakes and streams.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	3. Continue to rear and stock fish to re-establish populations in lakes and provide angling opportunities per fisheries management plans.	Green	Fish species are being reared at hatcheries according to management plans and stocking requests. Fall trout stocking started on Oct. 1, 2020, and the information is provided on the PFBC website as "week of" stocking dates and locations.
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	3.a. By June 30, 2023, partner with cooperative nurseries to ensure trout are most effectively raised and used in locations and practices consistent with fisheries management plans.	Green	The Cooperative Nursery Unit staff completed a thorough evaluation of all 165 Cooperative Nurseries in PA on October 1, 2020. One part of that evaluation was to gather the data needed to calculate carrying capacities for all the nurseries.

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Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	3.c. By June 30, 2023, develop an additional early spawn-specific, pathogen-free brood system to supply hatcheries with Brown Trout eggs.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	3.d. By June 30, 2023, perform a study to determine the efficacy of vaccination programs in hatcheries to reduce specific pathogens.	Green	The Fish Health Unit conducted and gathered data on the efficacy of vaccines against several bacterial pathogens, including <i>Aeromonas salmonicida</i> , <i>Flavobacterium columnare</i> , and <i>Flavobacterium psychrophilum</i> . They will continue to evaluate the efficacy of vaccines against other bacterial pathogens like <i>Yersinia ruckeri</i> .
Sport Fish Management	June 30, 2023	4. By June 30, 2023, conduct a statewide survey to estimate angler use, catch, harvest, opinions, and economic impact of angling on Pennsylvania's warm-water, cool-water, and cold-water fisheries to determine angler preferences and inform the Commission on how and where to manage fisheries.	Green	Staff are in the initial stages of designing a statewide survey.
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	5. Continue scientific aquatic resource assessments, monitoring, and reporting at levels needed to provide effective management.	Green	

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Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	5.a. Conduct mandated annual sampling and long-term monitoring of anadromous species populations in the Delaware River in accordance with the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and Mid-Atlantic Fishery Management Council, which provide legal sport fishing opportunities to anglers.	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized regulations requiring anglers fishing for Striped Bass in the tidal Delaware River Estuary and tidal portions of tributaries to use circle hooks while bait fishing and to follow new slot length limits. • Participated in the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) American Eel Technical Committee data workshop and presented American Eel sampling data. • Began preparing the 2020 ASMFC annual Striped Bass compliance report and estimating ages of Striped Bass. • Compiled 2020 Delaware River Striped Bass tagging data for reporting to the USFWS. • Began updating the PFBC American Shad Management Plan.
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	5.b. Participate in Lake Erie and Great Lakes Fishery Commission management committees.	Green	The PFBC continues to participate in the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC) and GLFC's Lake Erie Committee process at all levels through monthly tele-meetings.

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Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	5.c. Participate in interstate fisheries management with neighboring states (DE, MD, NJ, NY, OH, and WV) and other wildlife management organizations (e.g., Mississippi Interstate Cooperative Resource Association).	Green	The PFBC continues to participate in the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC) and GLFC's Lake Erie Committee process at all levels through monthly tele-meetings. Dates and format for the 03/21 Lake Committee Meetings are being finalized. The meetings will be virtual.
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	6. Continue to review, update, and implement management plans for sport fish species.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	December 31, 2022	6.e. By December 31, 2022, complete and implement an update of the <i>Catfish Fisheries Management Plan</i> .	Green	Staff are compiling data on current catfish management techniques to address stocking practices in updated plan.
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	7. Continue to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources through modern conservation law enforcement practices.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	7.a. Conduct overt and covert patrols to address fishing violations.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	7.b. Conduct specialized fisheries details to address complaint areas for over-harvesting and poaching.	Green	
Sport Fish Management	Ongoing	7.c. Establish routine presence at known fish markets to address commercial fishing regulations for both indigenous and imported species.	Green	

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	12. Annually propagate and stock mussels following the <i>Freshwater Mussel Propagation Plan for Union City State Fish Hatchery</i> .	Green	Mussel propagation systems are in place at the Union City State Fish Hatchery and staff are fine-tuning protocols and methods for host fish infestation and rearing of transformed juveniles.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	14. Annually survey at least 500 priority unassessed streams for wild trout as part of the unassessed waters initiative.	Green	Numbers may be limited by reductions in sampling due to COVID-19.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15. By June 30, 2023, provide leadership and coordination for AIS in Pennsylvania among federal, state, local, and other organizations.	Green	PFBC's AIS Coordinator is now involved with the following federal, state, local, and other organizations: The Pennsylvania Governor's Invasive Species Council (PISC); the PISC List Subcommittee; PISC Rapid Response Subcommittee; PISC Round Goby Work Group; Pennsylvania Controlled and Noxious Weed Committee; Mid-Atlantic Panel for Aquatic Invasive Species; PA Lake Society; and the Mississippi River Basin Panel on Aquatic Invasive Species.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15.a. Participate in and implement the <i>Pennsylvania Invasive Species Council Aquatic Invasive Species Management Plan</i> .	Green	PFBC's AIS Coordinator is familiar with the <i>PISC AIS Plan</i> and is involved in numerous efforts with partners to achieve the plan's objectives through the priority goals and actions outlined within the plan.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15.b. Develop specific control plans for each prioritized AIS species identified through a risk assessment and response approach and an up-to-date Pennsylvania AIS inventory.	Green	PFBC control plans for VHS and Water Chestnut have been updated. Control Plan updates for Didymo, Asian Carp, and Golden Algae are in progress. PFBC is involved in the selection/development of invasive species risk assessment/ranking tools through PISC. Once finalized, this tool will be used to evaluate and prioritize AIS threats in PA for the development of specific control plans.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15.c. Identify and recommend appropriate regulations to control species introduction and distribution.	Green	PFBC's AIS Coordinator is involved in discussions regarding the proposed Chapter 71 regulatory revisions. Additionally, invasive species ranking tools are in development by PISC with PFBC's involvement. Once finalized, these tools will be used to prioritize AIS for regulatory recommendation. The AIS Coordinator is participating in Pennsylvania's Controlled Plant and Noxious Weed Committee, which evaluates the listing of invasive plants in PA.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15.d. Develop a comprehensive AIS communications outreach plan to prevent the spread of AIS.	Green	PFBC's AIS Coordinator is developing educational signage and presentations for the public on AIS spread prevention. PFBC will also continue work with our partners at PA Sea Grant on AIS education/outreach, and with Wildlife Forever regarding an AIS prevention campaign partnership.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	15.e. Install boat cleaning stations at PFBC facilities with known AIS occurrences (e.g., Lake Erie marinas).	Green	PFBC's AIS Coordinator is currently compiling a data file of PFBC lakes with known AIS occurrences. Plans to design and construct a boat cleaning station at the Walnut Creek Marina in Erie were recently included in an AIS management plan grant proposal in partnership with PA Sea Grant. PFBC has also been involved in the coordination of a proposed boat cleaning station at Lily Lake, and will be investigating/initiating discussion about a station at the North East Marina in Erie.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	17. Continue to work with partner organizations to coordinate and implement connectivity plans that improve fish passage.	Green	Although the PFBC's Fish Passage Biologist position is currently vacant, staff continue advancing fish passage improvement plans by working with partner organizations. PFBC staff also are helping to organize and participate in the PA Aquatic Connectivity Team activities.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	17.a. Maintain the PFBC's position as a national leader in small dam removal.	Green	The PFBC's Fish Passage Biologist position is currently vacant, but PFBC staff continue to work with partner organizations to continue making progress on small dam removal projects.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	17.b. Identify and prioritize culvert replacement opportunities.	Green	The PFBC's Fish Passage Biologist position is currently vacant, but PFBC staff continue to work with partner organizations to identify and prioritize culvert replacement projects.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	17.c. Identify and prioritize water quality improvements to eliminate chemical or pollution blockages to fish movement.	Green	Limestone sand dosing projects are ongoing.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	18.a. Continue to coordinate and implement habitat management for species of greatest conservation need per the <i>Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan</i> to include Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, and Bog Turtle.	Green	PFBC staff are coordinating drone imagery work at an endangered reptile site to document conditions before and after a future habitat management project.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	18.b. For PFBC properties, develop and/or implement one management plan per year.	Green	PFBC staff are coordinating with partners to implement riparian forested buffers on four PFBC access areas.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	18.c. For other public lands, develop and/or implement one management plan per year.	Green	PFBC continues to coordinate with DCNR and PGC to design and implement habitat improvement projects on their properties.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	19. By June 30, 2023, initiate, facilitate, and complete population assessments for 29 listed species or species of greatest conservation need.	Green	Progress on population assessments was made regarding Bog Turtle, Northern Red-bellied Cooter, Timber Rattlesnake, Cisco, Brook Floater, Eastern Lampmussel, Tidewater Mucket, Salamander Mussel, Rayed Bean, Digger's Crayfish, Devils Crayfish, and Acuminate Crayfish.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	20. Continue to implement climate change adaptation strategies outlined in the <i>Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan</i> .	Green	The PFBC participates in a Northeast Climate Working Group, which fosters climate change relevant communications among state, federal, and non-governmental organizations.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	21. By June 30, 2023, complete or develop 13 non-game species action plans.	Green	Non-game species action plans are being updated and developed as identified in the notes to goals 21.a. and 21.b. below.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	21.a. By June 30, 2023, update seven existing species action plans.	Green	The following species action plans are in the process of being updated: Bog Turtle, Timber Rattlesnake, Eastern Spadefoot, Eastern Massasauga, Eastern Pearlshell, Salamander Mussel, and Chesapeake Logperch.
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	June 30, 2023	21.b. By June 30, 2023, develop six species action plans for endangered and threatened species.	Green	New species action plans are being developed for the Southeastern Mud Turtle, Northern Red-bellied Cooter, Pistolgrip, Round Hickorynut, Longnose Sucker, and inland Burbot.

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Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	23. Continue to support the PFBC pollution response and investigation responsibilities.	Green	
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	December 31, 2022	23.b. By December 31, 2022, review and update procedures for coordinating response efforts during a pollution event/investigation.	Green	
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	23.c. Regularly conduct pollution investigation refresher training for field staff.	Green	
Non-Game Species, Aquatic Resources & Habitat Conservation	Ongoing	24. Continue to implement restoration/recovery plans for Dunkard Creek, Sinnemahoning Creek, and Texas Eastern pollution events.	Green	The PFBC continues to collect broodstock (Plain Pocketbook, Kidneyshell, Creeper, Wavy-Rayed mussels) for propagation in the Union City State Fish Hatchery (UCFSH). The PFBC acquired a State Wildlife Grant to further support mussel propagation efforts at UCFH.

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Recreational Boating	Ongoing	26. Continue to standardize boat operation and enforcement training by using the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) nationally recognized programs.	Green	
Recreational Boating	Ongoing	27. Maintain the PFBC's status as the national leader in water rescue to benefit all Pennsylvanians.	Green	
Recreational Boating	Ongoing	27.a. Continue to implement and improve training for first responders, all WCOs, the PA-Helicopter Aquatic Rescue Team (PA-HART), and Swiftwater Emergency Response Team (SWERT).	Green	Most training is on hold due to COVID.
Recreational Boating	Ongoing	27.b. Continue to facilitate quarterly training exercises to ensure readiness and ability to work with other Commonwealth agencies.	Green	Most training is on hold due to COVID.

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Recreational Boating	Ongoing	28. Continue to facilitate water trail development and promotion in conjunction with partner organizations to accommodate the increased interest in non-powered boating.	Green	
Recreational Boating	Ongoing	30. Continue to improve boating opportunities and convenience in the Commonwealth.	Green	
Recreational Boating	Ongoing	30.a. Continue to implement the renewed Boating Facilities Grants program to allow partners to update and maintain public boating access.	Green	
Recreational Boating	June 30, 2023	31. By June 30, 2023, align the PFBC's boating offerings to accommodate the needs and expectations of both powered and non-powered boaters.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	32. By June 30, 2023, implement PFBC training academy program to ensure employees have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to safely and effectively perform their jobs.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	33. By June 30, 2023, implement PFBC leadership development program to prepare next generation of agency management roles.	Green	

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Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	33.b. By June 30, 2023, facilitate professional development seminars for management staff to increase their leadership skills and abilities.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	34. By June 30, 2023, implement employee development program to provide essential knowledge, skills, and abilities to all PFBC employees regardless of job function.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	34.c. By June 30, 2023, implement internal mentoring program to assist employees with their professional development and help prepare future leaders within the agency.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	Ongoing	38. Regularly distribute job postings and routinely collaborate with the Governor's Advisory Commissions (African American Affairs, Asian American Affairs, Latino Affairs, and LGBTQ Affairs) to help the PFBC with its diversity and inclusion efforts.	Green	
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	June 30, 2023	40. By June 30, 2023, increase employee safety through targeted employee training, investment in safety equipment (e.g., viral personal protective equipment), and improving general safety awareness among both employees and management.	Green	

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Employee Investments and Agency Organization	Ongoing	40.a. Ensure the PFBC Safety Committee is comprised of at least 50% union-covered employees.	Green	In late 2019/early 2020, the safety committee was reinvigorated and AFSCME actively participated in our efforts. This will continue.
Employee Investments and Agency Organization	Ongoing	42. Regularly review, update, and maintain the PFBC's Continuity of Operations Plans (COOPs), division operational plans, Standard Operation Procedures (SOPs), directories, and other reference materials.	Green	
Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	51. By June 30, 2023, based upon an evaluation of all the PFBC's outreach and education programs, direct staff, funding, and volunteer efforts toward those programs that effectively and efficiently meet R3 goals and objectives.	Green	
Communications and Marketing	Ongoing	52. Continue to increase recruitment, reactivation, and retention of under-represented populations by expanding high-demand programs that target diverse audiences.	Green	In September, an R3 Specialist was identified among existing staff. An IT contractor will be chosen to assist the R3 Specialist with data gathering and evaluation.

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Communications and Marketing	Ongoing	53. Optimize Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program to increase conservation awareness and the recruitment of new anglers and/or boaters.	Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An R3 Grant Program award will fund 35 more TIC kits for classrooms in PA. • Staff developed <i>TIC Weekly</i>, a weekly email of PFBC resources to assist teachers with remote learning opportunities on TIC-related topics (e.g., watersheds, non-point source pollution, mussels, stream order, fish health, types of trout, etc.). Weekly emails are sent to all registered TIC teachers and program partners. Emails include printable publications, lessons, videos, and Trout In the Office update videos. Emails began on 10/5/20 and will continue through the school year. Videos developed for <i>TIC Weekly</i> also appear on the PFBC's social media platforms. • Egg distribution for TIC is delayed until 2/9/21 due to COVID impacts on school schedules. Staff are confirming teachers able to receive trout eggs in 02/21. • The TIC Summit Planning Committee is planning a virtual TIC Summit for 07/21.

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Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	53.a. By June 30, 2023, increase the total TIC participation in fishing, conservation, and/or boating activities by 25% over 2018-2019 school year levels.	Yellow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to COVID, many TIC schools in the 2019-2020 school year were unable to conduct in-person TIC release days, fishing programs and/or conservation projects. This may also be the case for the 2020-2021 school year, which could result in a decrease in the number of classrooms reporting fishing and conservation/boating programs for their students over the this timeframe. • Staff continue to promote the PFBC's new Activities & Education Portal, which includes resources for teachers to teach fishing, boating, and conservation remotely. Staff plan to promote all upcoming fishing opportunities (Mentored Youth Trout days, opening days for fishing seasons etc.), as well as boating safety and conservation in the spring months of 2021.

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Communications and Marketing	Ongoing	54. Continue to increase fishing and paddling skills via in-person training and education.	Green	In-person programming is reduced because of limitations imposed by COVID-19 exposure guidance. Staff scheduled 63 programs during the quarter, 40 of which were conducted and served 232 participants.
Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	55. By June 30, 2023, develop and provide alternative learning opportunities online to increase knowledge and skills for fishing and boating (e.g., internet tools, instructional/experience-based videos, and educational series).	Green	Staff developed new digital resources and created video playlists on agency social media sites. Staff are piloting programs that are completely online, along with hybrid programs that include both online and in-person components.
Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	57. By June 30, 2023, improve the use of visitors centers to better share the PFBC's message and increase public engagement.	Green	
Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	57.b. By June 30, 2023, based upon prioritized listing, make improvements to existing visitors centers that convey updated content, branding, and messaging that is relevant to today's public	Green	
Communications and Marketing	June 30, 2023	57.c. By June 30, 2023, evaluate the potential to develop visitors centers at additional PFBC facilities.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	December 31, 2022	59. By December 31, 2022, initiate upgrades of hatchery facilities based on priority needs.	Green	

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Infrastructure and Equipment	December 31, 2022	59.c. By December 31, 2022, initiate design of projects and obtain permitting documents for hatchery facilities upgrades.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	60. Continue to improve the condition of the PFBC's access facilities.	Green	Projects at Freeport, Gouldsboro, Liverpool, and Long Pine Reservoir were completed since the last Quarterly Report.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	60.c. By June 30, 2023, develop a new regular inspection program that uses an index-based condition rating system to accurately rate the condition of PFBC-owned and maintained access areas and begin remediation of the top 10 deficient access areas identified through this inspection program.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	61. Continue to repair and improve the PFBC's dams to protect public safety and provide fishing and boating opportunities.	Green	Design consultants are selected for next 10 hazardous dam projects and proposals for design work are under review for Harris Pond, Stevens Lake, Rose Valley Lake, Fords Lake, and Hunters Lake.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	61.b. By June 30, 2023, complete construction of seven high hazard dam projects.	Green	Construction at Lake Somerset is 73% complete and Meadow Grounds Lake is 99% complete.

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Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	62. Continue to implement the PFBC's 5-year strategic project list to replace aging vehicles and equipment.	Green	Five new stocking trucks and separate tanks were delivered in October. Staff currently are mounting the tanks and preparing the trucks for use.
Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	67. Continue to evaluate IT infrastructure needs of all PFBC employees and facilities.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	68. Continue to ensure the FishBoatPA app is current, relevant, regularly updated, and promoted.	Green	Staff are working with the PALS 2.0 development team to discuss changes/updates to app.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	68.c. By June 30, 2023, double the number of FishBoatPA app users.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	Ongoing	68.d. Continue to analyze FishBoatPA app usage data to determine opportunities and optimization.	Green	The app was updated to reflect new URL for e-commerce. Other modifications planned for 2021 include seasonal images and seasonally-relevant content on landing page.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	69. By June 30, 2023, investigate the ability to harness GIS technology and improve user interface.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	69.a. By June 30, 2023, allow the public to view multiple layers of data on one web page instead of needing to access multiple pages within the map galleries on the PFBC website.	Green	

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Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	69.b. By June 30, 2023, leverage GIS applications and data to provide accurate and precise analyses to improve service and product delivery.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	69.c. By June 30, 2023, increase promotion of existing PFBC mapping and locational tools available to the public, including development of online tutorials that help the public maximize the capabilities of the PFBC's online tools.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	73. By June 30, 2023, improve the efficiency of permit issuance and administration (e.g., scientific collectors' permit and special activities permit).	Green	Electronic permit needs, permit transaction volumes, and capacity needs information is being gathered for this project.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	73.e. By June 30, 2023, develop a web-based application and reporting system for amphibian and reptile rehabilitation and education/outreach possession programs.	Green	The amphibian and reptile applications for rehabilitation and education/outreach possession are currently under review.
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	73.f. By June 30, 2023, develop and implement an online application form for Special Activity Permits.	Green	
Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	73.g. By June 30, 2023, develop and implement an online application form for certifications, inspections, and licenses associated with the PFBC's Passenger for Hire program.	Green	

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Infrastructure and Equipment	June 30, 2023	73.h. By June 30, 2023, develop and implement an online application form for Aid to Navigation (ATON) permits.	Green	