

The Great White Fleet

Hopefully you will catch a few trout this spring. Have you ever thought about how those fish got there? On some streams, mother nature does a great job of growing trout. Some waters, though, don't have wild fish. To provide fishing there, the Fish and Boat Commission stocks adult, catchable-size trout. Some five million of these fish find their way to these waters. As you can guess, it's a very big job to get those fish from our 10 trout hatcheries to the waters of the state.

The Commission has 45 big trucks to do that job. These stocking trucks are like streams on wheels. Trout need to be kept healthy on their trip, and what a trip it is! Last year Commission stocking trucks made 1,900 trips and traveled more than 360,000 miles. That is one-and-a-half times more than the distance from the earth to the moon!

What do you need to keep 3,500, 10-inch trout healthy on a stocking run? First, you need a large waterproof container. Most of the trucks have fiberglass tanks on them. Some boats and race cars are made of fiberglass. It's strong, lightweight and waterproof. These tanks have six or seven compartments in them. Each compartment is about the size of two bathtubs, stacked on top of each other. The fish are loaded into each compartment. Each compartment has a lid and some have large holes. Big hoses are

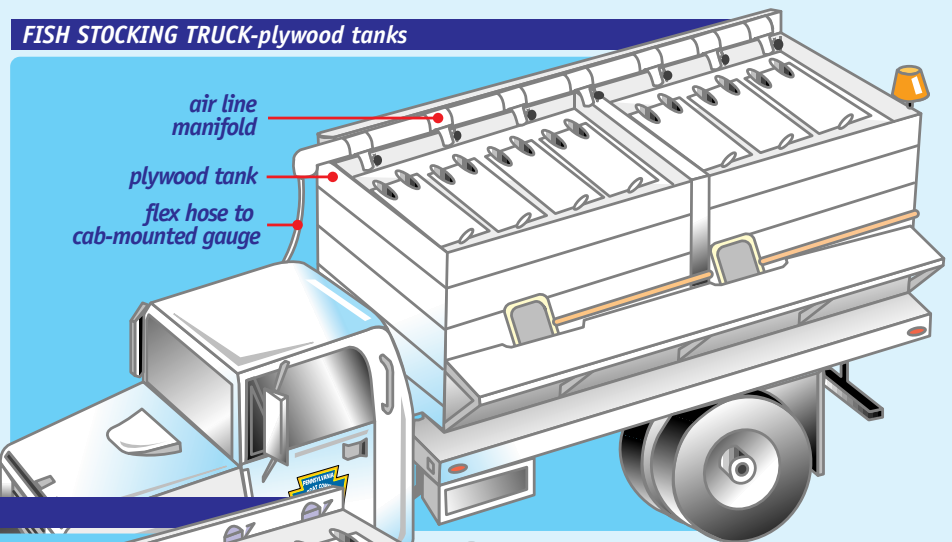
hooked to these holes and the trout go through the hose into the water!

Trout like water that is cold with lots of oxygen in it. They die if they don't get enough oxygen or if they get too hot. The trucks are loaded with cool spring water from the hatchery. To keep the water cool, we paint the tanks white. White paint reflects the sun's heat. The nickname "Great White Fleet" comes from the big white tanks.

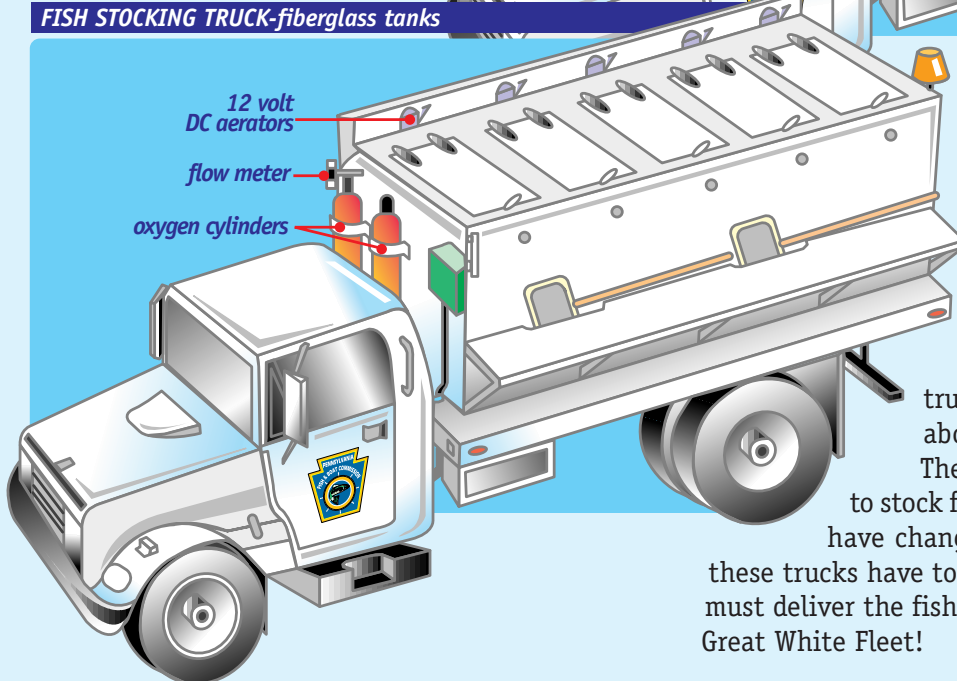
Sometimes oxygen gas goes into the water. This oxygen comes from a big tank, just like the ones doctors use in the hospital. We mount the tanks on the back of the truck. Other times an aeration pump bubbles air into the tanks. The oxygen from the air dissolves in the water.

The stocking truck drivers have a big job. They need to get each load to its destination, but the load of fish must be healthy. They check the fish once every hour. The oxygen in the water is checked

FISH STOCKING TRUCK-plywood tanks



FISH STOCKING TRUCK-fiberglass tanks



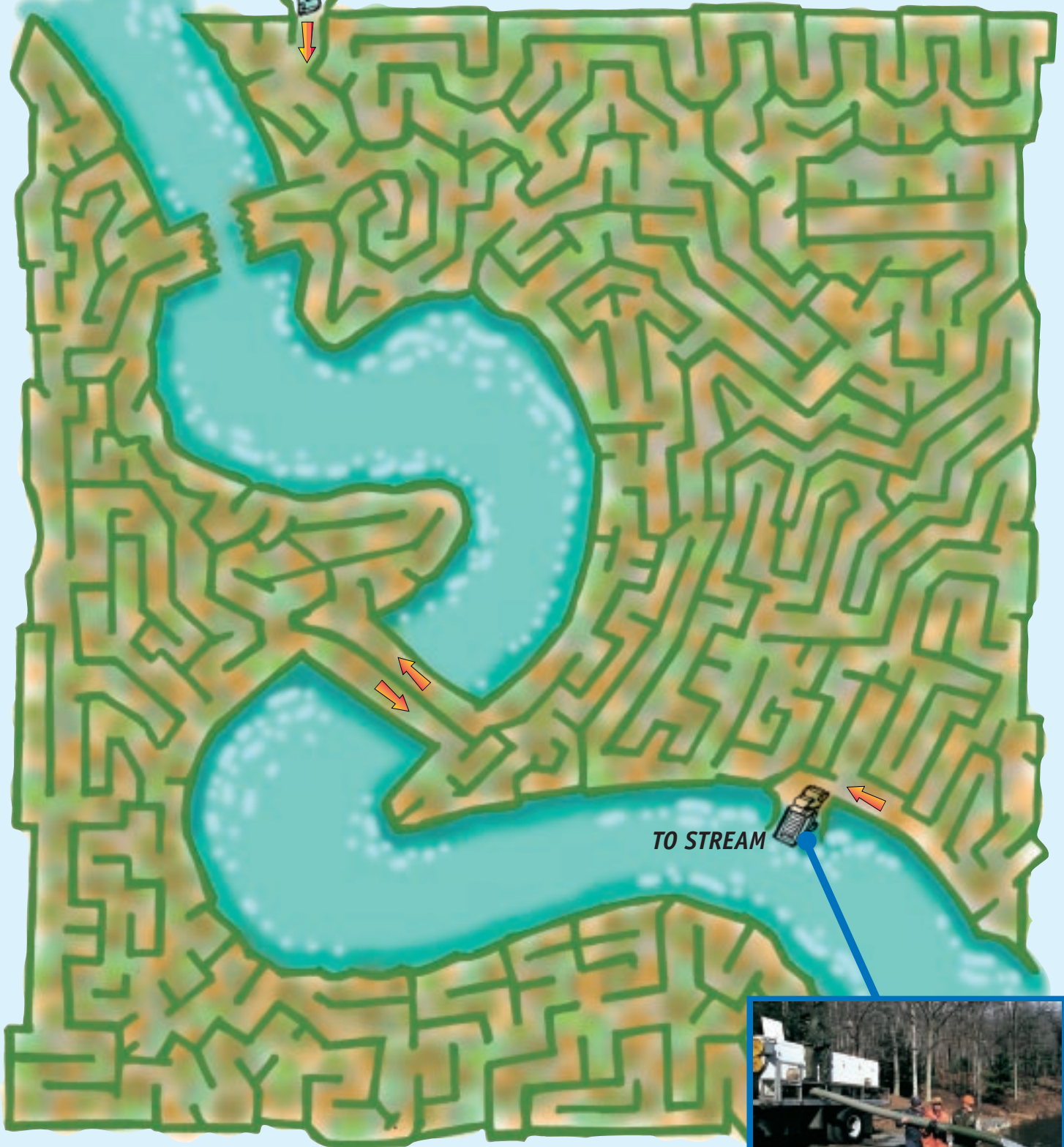
then. If the fish need more, they change how much oxygen or air goes to the fish. They need to be safe drivers, too! Each loaded truck weighs more than 23,000 pounds—that's 11 tons. They also need to take care of each truck. Each truck, completely outfitted, costs about \$50,000.

The Commission has used trucks to stock fish since the 1930s. The trucks have changed a lot since then. The job these trucks have to do hasn't changed much. We must deliver the fish healthy. That is a job for the Great White Fleet!

Stocking MAZE

*You are the driver of a trout stocking truck.
Your job is to get from the hatchery to the
stream. Be sure you do your job safely!*

FROM HATCHERY



TO STREAM

