



Moving Forward

As trout stocking for 2002 begins and a new trout season looms, the Fish & Boat Commission is moving forward to provide quality fishing and boating opportunities for Pennsylvania anglers.

In the last issue of *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater*, Delano R. Graff recounted his reflections on a career in fisheries that spanned nearly 38 years of outstanding service to Pennsylvania anglers. The Fish & Boat Commission's success in protecting the resource, providing fishing opportunities, and addressing the desires of our customers, the anglers and boaters of Pennsylvania, is the result of the uncommon dedication and focus of employees like Del Graff.

Del left some big shoes to fill as director of the Bureau of Fisheries, and the Commission has selected Rickalon ("Rick") Hoopes to fill them. The Commission's fisheries programs are in good hands under the leadership of Rick Hoopes and his division chiefs. Hoopes, who first worked for the Commission as a college student in the summer of 1968, has more than 30 years of experience in managing Pennsylvania's fisheries. In these years of service, he truly has done it all. He brings a wealth of experience in all the major fisheries program areas.

Even as our fisheries programs move forward under the leadership of the new bureau director, we continue to pursue a comprehensive review of all aspects of our trout program. We hired FishPro Consulting Engineers and Scientists, the nation's premiere aquaculture consultant, to do a comprehensive study of Pennsylvania's state hatchery system. FishPro has worked on over 400 hatchery projects in 40 states and has more than 20 years experience in matters related to hatchery design and operations.

This study will quantify hatchery fish-rearing capacity given the current infrastructure, identify problems, and develop an improvement and operation plan for the entire system based on various production levels. This study is a key component for the development of an agency plan detailing the future of the Commonwealth hatchery system.

As part of this comprehensive review, we plan to convene a "Trout Summit" in Harrisburg later this year. The summit will bring together experts from our staff, the members of the Commission and leaders of statewide sportsmen's organizations for briefings and discussions on topics related to trout fishing in Pennsylvania.

Implementing the expected recommendations of the FishPro report and upgrading our aging hatcheries will cost money. As you've read on these pages before, the Commission is pursuing efforts to raise funds to keep Pennsylvania fishing. An essential element of this effort is to provide information to, and obtain input from, Pennsylvania's anglers. In 2001, we

talked with hundreds of anglers at six sportsmen's forums across Pennsylvania and at sportsmen organization meetings and public meetings. We are now moving forward with plans for even more public forums.

We are pleased that a number of state legislators have agreed to host public sportsmen's forums during the late winter and spring of 2002. These meetings will further enhance our efforts to inform the angling public and gain support for a future fishing license fee increase. Right now, we are in the seventh year of fishing license fees with the same price and the twelfth year with the same-price trout stamp. We need additional revenue for the Fish Fund to continue to provide the programs that anglers expect and enjoy and to earmark additional money for our infrastructure needs.

Plan now to attend one of the sportsmen's forums in your area. The tentative list of planned public meetings is shown in the sidebar on this page. Check our web site (www.fish.state.pa.us) or with your local state representative or state senator for additional information about the time and place of meetings in your area.

Peter A. Colangelo

Executive Director

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Keep Pennsylvania Fishing Forums (Tentative Schedule)

Date	County/Location	Host
Mar 4	Eric	Rep. Evans
Mar 5	Cambria	Reps. Haluska, Wojnaroski and Yewcic and Senator Wozniak
Mar 14	Butler	Senator Orić/Representative Metcalfe
Mar 20	Dauphin	Senator Piccola (Sportsmen's Advisory Group Meeting)
Mar 27	Lackawanna	Rep. Staback
Mar 28	Washington	Senator Stout, Reps. Solobay and Lescovitz
Apr 3	Allegheny	Senator Murphy (Sportsmen's Night with PGC and PFBC)
Apr 4	Elk	Rep. Surra
Apr 11	Northumberland	Senator Helfrick and Rep. Phillips
Apr 17	Montgomery	Rep. Godshall
Apr 18	Berks	Rep. Sheila Miller
Apr 24	Allegheny	Rep. Levdansky
Apr 25	Bucks	Senator Conti
May 15	Lycoming	Senator Madigan