

WCO Diary by WCO Dave Kaneski, Northern Wayne County



photos courtesy of the 18th WCO Class

A few hearings were scheduled for the beginning of the month. The first was a preliminary hearing for the six counts of Pollution of Waters against a contractor for allowing sediment to enter our waters. Two days before the hearing date, an out-of-court settlement was reached in lieu of prosecution.

We also spent a few days stocking trout as usual. One of the lakes we stock with fingerling trout is a put, grow and take area. This simply means that the lake is suitable for trout to live in and grow, but it doesn't provide the proper habitat for natural reproduction. Every year we have a few anglers who show up and are prepared to fish, only to learn that the information they received was only partially correct.

I also spent a day at the Bloomsburg Fair. This year we displayed some of the snakes found in Pennsylvania, including timber rattlesnakes and copperheads. We heard many stories of giant serpents, such as 18-foot-long black snakes! I'm not quite sure what was really encountered, but the two species of black snakes in the Commonwealth grow to a maximum length of less than half that, and they are our biggest snakes.

This is also the time of the year when we serve arrest warrants that accumulate over the course of the busy season. Warrants are issued by district justices for several reasons—

usually, failure to make payments or failure to respond to the citation. This process begins with a records check. These records are used to confirm locations, other possible warrants that may exist and, most importantly, to let us know if there is a history of violence. These checks are a valuable tool, and on more than one occasion they have alerted us to a potential hazard.



For example, when neighboring WCOs Walt Buckman and Kurt Tereschak had a warrant for a man, the records check revealed that a man with the same name and description was wanted for murder in Texas. Another incident occurred at an arraignment with the Scranton Police Department and WCO Buckman. The summary warrant we possessed was trumped by WCO Buckman's warrant for assault on an infant.

Warrant service is at a minimum a two-officer job, and if a records check reveals a violent past, serving a warrant may require more officers.

A call or visit to the local or state police is a must. Usually, one of those officers accompanies us for the warrant's serving. For serving at least half the warrants, we have to go to places where most citizens wouldn't dare go. For the second time this year I had to pull in behind a trailer that someone called home. In itself, that's fine, but it was in great disarray and we found a 12-gauge shotgun in plain view.

Once we locate the person, the process becomes quite simple. Either we receive the monetary amount listed on the warrant as collateral, or the person is taken into custody, handcuffed, searched and transported to meet the judge. Depending on the circumstances of the case, incarceration in the county jail may be the outcome. ☐

