



PROTECT CONSERVE ENHANCE

Keeping Fishing and Boating for Generations



Last week I purchased my first Pennsylvania Resident Annual Fishing License and Trout/Salmon Stamp after buying tourist licenses during past visits to this beautiful state. As did many of you, I paid my \$22.50 and then started thinking about where my trips would take me over the year and the trout, bass and other fish that I'd be chasing. Hopefully, I'll learn to fish the waters of Pennsylvania successfully and enhance my skills by fishing with some of the many fine anglers in this state.

Although by no means do I consider myself to be a skilled angler, I have had the chance to fish waters from Florida to Alaska with much time spent on the New River in Virginia and West Virginia and the many streams of Wyoming and the Black Hills of South Dakota. My first fish were white bass in the Upper Missouri River and later, on that same family vacation, cutthroat trout in Yellowstone National Park. I must have been about 8 years old at the time and was fishing with my dad and older brother.

These are wonderful memories and I greatly look forward to sharing similar experiences with my two children as they grow up and become my fishing partners. I also hope to tell them that the fishing licenses they eventually will purchase are a big part of the reason why they will still enjoy those fishing opportunities.

To many of us, it seems that the fishing license we purchase is simply a certificate mandated by the state that permits us to fish legally. While this is true, there is much more to the rest of the story. Since 1919, Pennsylvania has sold non-resident licenses, and since 1922, we have sold resident licenses. Those first ones were sold for \$1 each. When I turned 16 in 1975, a Pennsylvania Resident Annual Fishing License would have cost me \$7.50, equivalent to about \$26 today based on U.S. Department of Labor cost-of-living statistics.

Any way you look at it, though, it is still one of the most inexpensive parts of most people's fishing trips. On my most

recent trip to Green Spring Creek in Cumberland County (I did catch a few nice brown trout there), I stopped by a fly-fishing shop to pick up a few items. Needless to say, just a few flies and a small plastic fly box alone cost well over \$20. Later this spring, I'll register my canoe so that I can use Commission boat launch areas and paddle in a state park lake. This fee will set me back all of \$10.

Yet, what do you get for your money? For that \$10, over the next two years I'll have access to over 250 launch sites and dozens of lakes. My kids and I will be able to fish for about any species of freshwater fish and some of the best trout waters in the nation. We will know that there are more than 400 professional staff and hundreds of volunteers working to protect the aquatic resources, maintain access sites, improve the fisheries, teach boating safety, and provide technical assistance to literally hundreds of fishing clubs, watershed groups, lake owner associations, individual anglers and boaters, and much more. Even with the proposed new license fees, including \$20 for a resident license, a fishing license will remain one of the best deals in recreation.

In addition to a new package of fishing license and boat registration fees proposed in House Bill 2155, a new \$2 license is proposed for youths aged 12 to 15. Is this a new idea? No. In May 1977, Commission Executive Director Ralph Abele wrote in this spot about a proposed \$3 youth license and an even earlier proposal for a \$2 youth license back in 1973.*

A youth license would be an important change for us and for Pennsylvania. We anticipate selling about 100,000 of these licenses, and each one that we sell will bring in an additional \$3.50 in federal funds from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. If you do the math, this results in about \$550,000 that we can use to enhance our programs, including expanding youth fishing opportunities and increasing educational efforts.

Will \$2 be an obstacle for kids to fish? Will this license prevent young people

from taking up fishing? I think that such worries are unfounded. Throughout the state, we work with local clubs and civic organizations to support hundreds of youth fishing days, most of which are and will continue to be exempt from the license requirement. We also establish free fishing days (set this year for May 29 and June 5) to make sure that everyone can get out to fish without any license cost. Another way to look at this is that the license is equivalent to the cost of downloading two songs from most web sites, far less than the cost of a movie theater ticket, half the cost to rent a new video release, and it won't even get you near the gate of any amusement park.

Might there be cases where \$2 is a problem? Possibly, but we can work out ways to get those kids out on the stream or lake through our own programs or through local fishing clubs. You should also know that our excellent corps of waterways conservation officers will not be writing tickets to kids who decide to fish without a license. This is one of those cases in which talk and education will be the order of the day.

Let's not underestimate our youth. They are smart and willing to play a role in helping to protect, conserve and enhance our fish, fishing and the environment. A youth license gets them thinking about and participating in this process much earlier, it brings in new funds that will help other youth experience fishing, and it will enhance fishing opportunities for youth, which they will share, someday, with their own kids. It really is a good deal for Pennsylvania.

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Executive Director

** To view these documents, on the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us, click on "Funding - HB 2155, Growing Greener II," and on the left side of that page find the article links under "HB 2155 PAGES."*

Commission Bans Unsafe Boating Practice Known as "Teak Surfing"

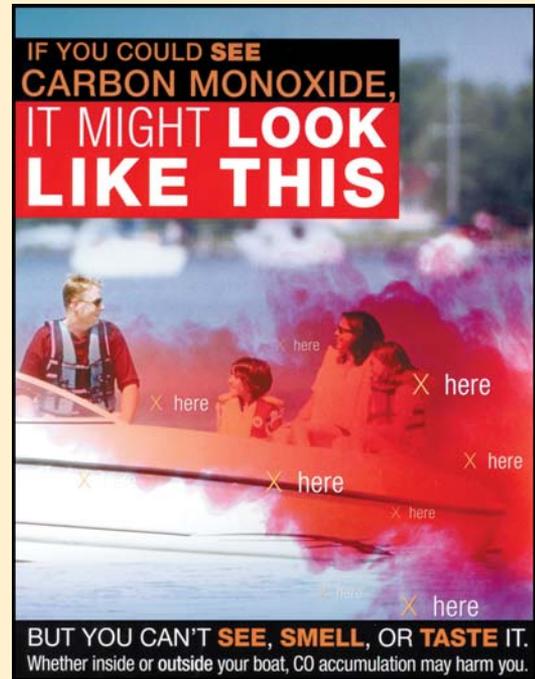
The Fish & Boat Commission took action at its spring quarterly meeting **April 19 and 20 to ban teak surfing, an unsafe boating practice.** Teak surfing, sometimes called "drag surfing," is an emerging and highly dangerous fad. The practice involves an individual's holding onto an accelerating boat's swim platform and letting go to "surf" the wake. In addition to the inherent danger of the individual losing his or her grasp of the swim platform and being hit by a moving boat propeller, teak surfers face injury and death from carbon monoxide poisoning.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a colorless, odorless, tasteless and highly toxic gas. It is produced when a carbon-based fuel, such as gasoline, propane, charcoal or oil, burns. CO is often emitted through a boat's engine or generator exhaust outlets. As a result, CO can accumulate almost anywhere in or around a boat, including around or under swim platforms and a boat's stern.

In conjunction with banning teak surfing, the Commission adopted language prohibiting the use of a tow line of less than 20 feet. Passengers towed on water skis or other devices by a short line also run risks from carbon monoxide poisoning.

In other action during the meeting, the Commission:

- set public meetings on a request to allow the use of bait during the "harvest period" on waters



managed as part of the Delayed-Harvest, Artificial-Lures-Only program. **The meetings will be held from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. on May 12 in Monroeville and on May 13 in Leesport.**

- expanded the slow, no-wake zone for boating on the Lehigh River in the area of the Route 33 Access in Northampton County.

- voted to seek public comment on proposed changes to regulations establishing the minimum age of operation for certain boats. It is proposed that a person 11 years old or younger may not operate a personal watercraft or a boat propelled by a motor greater than 25 horsepower and that effective January 1, 2008, a person 15 years old or younger may not operate a personal watercraft.

For complete details on Commission action during this meeting, visit the Commission's web site, www.fish.state.pa.us.