

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Graduation

by Spring Gearhart



Photo: Doni Lawver

Pictured are (left to right) Jeremy Ney, Michael Rieker, Robin Brant, Andrew Snyder, Brian Miller, David Schreck, Edward Guthrie, Maurice Williams, Gerald Weaver, Matthew Raetsch, Matthew Markle and Robert Himmelreich.

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer Class 2012

The 12 officers of the 2012 Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer (DWCO) class graduated Sunday, October 14, during a ceremony held at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission's H.R. Stackhouse School of Fishery Conservation and Watercraft Safety in Bellefonte. DWCOs are volunteers who assist the Commission's Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) in protecting Pennsylvania's aquatic resources and their users.

To become a DWCO, an application and lethal weapons training (Act 235) or equivalent must be completed. Successful applicants are also required to participate in "ride-alongs" with a WCO before formal training at the H.R. Stackhouse School of Fishery Conservation and Watercraft Safety.

The 2012 DWCO class completed 16 days of formal training (four, four-day weekends). Graduates completed courses in constitutional law, fish identification, armed and unarmed self-defense training, tactical firearms, boat accident response investigation protocol and patrol boat/

trailer use and maintenance. Courses in hazardous materials, CPR and first aid were also part of the training.

DWCO training continues and many courses require recertification. Meetings for DWCOs are held throughout the year and include a variety of training topics including traffic control, defensive driving and more. Officers may also participate in optional training such as ice rescue, water rescue and other courses.

The 2012 DWCO graduating class is currently on probationary status and must successfully complete 150 hours with a WCO within one year to become a full-fledged DWCO.

These graduates join about 115 DWCOs across Pennsylvania. For more information on becoming a DWCO, contact one of the Commission's regional law enforcement headquarters. A complete listing of regional headquarters is available at www.fishandboat.com/dir_regions.htm. ☐