

Introductory MESSAGE

by **Timothy D. Schaeffer**

*Executive Director
Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission*

It is great to be back. As a bit of background, I worked at the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) from April 2008 until December 2017 before leaving to serve at the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP). When people asked why I went to work at PA DEP and why I returned to PFBC, the answer is the same—to make the biggest difference possible in the conservation of Pennsylvania’s natural resources.

That is my reason for getting into this field in the first place, and the chance to serve the Commonwealth in my current capacity is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to join a team of talented, dedicated professionals and volunteers who believe in the agency’s mission to protect, conserve, and enhance aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

Some of the hallmarks of a good mission statement are that it is concise, easy to remember and captures the essence of the agency. Ours certainly meets those criteria, and we implement it while keeping the Resource First. Thank you to the Board of Commissioners for entrusting me with the implementation of that mission.

During the interview process, I was asked about my vision for the future of PFBC. I will repeat what I told the Commissioners. It can be broken down into complementary categories: one is related to its employees and another is connected to how the agency serves the resources and people with whom it interacts.

The ultimate success of PFBC—and of any organization—lies in the strength of its workforce. My vision is of PFBC staff members who possess expertise in their respective fields, are equipped with the financial resources and tools to carry out their jobs, have a clear direction about the priorities of the organization, and who feel they are valued



photo: Spring Ganhart

*Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Executive Director
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by the agency. I envision and am committed to a culture in which they feel motivated to come to work every day.

Thank you to PFBC’s staff for everything they do and for the opportunity to become a member of their team. They work diligently both in the public eye and behind the scenes, and it is a real honor and privilege to be working alongside them to identify and advance the agency’s conservation, recreation and public safety priorities on behalf of Pennsylvania’s anglers, boaters and aquatic resources.

On the outside, I see other agencies, legislators, sportsmen’s and conservation groups, citizens, and businesses looking to PFBC as a trusted source for science-based data about the aquatic resources it serves. I envision fish, reptiles and amphibians being protected by data-driven decisions and first-rate Waterways Conservation Officers and Deputy Waterways Conservation Officers who enforce natural resource laws and continue to be leaders in aquatic resource conservation, water rescue and boating safety. I see anglers and boaters relying on and recognizing the role of PFBC in providing quality recreational experiences that are supported by nationally recognized fishing and boating opportunities and well-maintained infrastructure.

These visions are connected and will result in the continuation of an independent PFBC that is relevant, respected and sustainable.

As part of the application process, I was also asked about my leadership style. I told the Commissioners

that one of the guiding principles I use at work and in life is to assume good intentions. In an era of increasing cynicism, people often default to negative assumptions about why someone is or is not doing



The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission is to protect, conserve and enhance the Commonwealth’s aquatic resources, and provide fishing and boating opportunities.



I took this photo of my sons Erik and Kurt a few summers ago. The smiles on their faces and the beauty of the surroundings sum up why many of us want to make the biggest difference possible in the conservation of Pennsylvania's natural resources.

something. This should not be confused with being naïve; rather, it means starting from a position of understanding why another person may be taking a course of action and working toward a mutually beneficial solution. With that underlying assumption as a backdrop, I will work as hard and as diligently as possible each day to advance PFBC's mission.

To close this introductory message, please accept this sincere thank you to you and every other angler, boater

and person who cares about Pennsylvania's incredible outdoor world and for being a part of what we do. You and your passion for the resource sustain the momentum for conservation at a time when competing activities and demands distract many away from what makes Pennsylvania such a special place. It is a real pleasure to be back with the agency and to have the chance to work with you.

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

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