

Pennsylvania Tackle

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Pennsylvania Angler & Boater readers know better than anyone about the incredible fishing and boating opportunities that abound in Pennsylvania in every month of the year.

What most people probably do not know is that Pennsylvania is also home to a number of businesses who produce many of the items in their tackle boxes and fishing vests. After a visit to Felmlee Lures, Lewistown, last summer, it immediately became clear that there is a story to tell about what is going on at facilities across Pennsylvania.

Throughout 2020, we will be featuring articles about the following Pennsylvania-based companies and introducing readers to the stories behind the products they sell. The line up will include the following:

- Jan/Feb: Felmlee Lures
- Mar/Apr: Thomas Spinning Lures, Inc.
- May/Jun: Hopkins Fishing Gear, Inc.
- Jul/Aug: Renosky Lures
- Sept/Oct: Grandma Lures
- Nov/Dec: Bay Rat Lures

As you enjoy the articles, it is important to keep in mind that businesses do even more for recreation and conservation than providing equipment to help people catch fish.

“No one cares more about clean water and healthy fisheries than the recreational fishing community, as evidenced by the financial contributions we make to these efforts through excise taxes, license fees and donations,” said Mike Leonard, Vice President of Government Affairs for the American Sportfishing Association (ASA). “Since its inception in 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration program has



See page 22 to read the “Felmlee Lures—A Local Advantage” article.

provided billions of dollars to fund fisheries conservation and public access to aquatic resources, providing opportunities for the nation’s 49 million recreational fishermen to enjoy time on the water.”

In 1950, the Sport Fish Restoration Act (Dingell-Johnson Act) was enacted to provide federal funding to states for the restoration, conservation, management and enhancement of sport fishing opportunities. The Act was expanded in 1984 with the Wallop-Breaux Amendment to provide further funding by including excise taxes on a wider range of fishing tackle and equipment, motorboat fuel, and duties on imported boats and fishing tackle.

Revenues from excise taxes paid by companies like those we will be highlighting are placed in the Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service administers the Trust Fund and distributes funding to state fish and wildlife agencies for fish management, species and habitat restoration, habitat protection, land acquisition, scientific study, population monitoring, aquatic education, and access for fishing and boating.

Through this “user pays, user benefits” model, anglers and boaters purchase equipment manufactured by the companies that pay the excise tax, and they receive direct benefits like abundant, sustainable fish populations and safe, accessible boating facilities.

The Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Trust Fund requires reauthorization every 5 years through the federal transportation bill. The Angling and Boating Alliance, chaired by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies’ Government Affairs Director Jen Mock Schaeffer (no relation), is leading this reauthorization effort for the angling and boating community. Other members of the Alliance include ASA, Association of Marina Industries, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, Boat Owners Association of the United States, Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation, National Association of State Boating Law Administrators, National Marine Manufacturers Association and States Organization for Boating Access.

The bipartisan Sport Fish Restoration and Boating Safety Act of 2019 (HR 4828) would reauthorize and extend the Trust Fund into 2024. This is likely one of several stand-alone pieces of legislation that will be amalgamated into a comprehensive transportation package and is expected to move through the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure in early 2020.

With this in mind, we hope you have an even greater appreciation of how important our Pennsylvania-based businesses are to the future of fishing and boating in Pennsylvania.

