



# NOTES *from the Streams*

## Lessons learned

As I prepare for upcoming trout stocking seasons, I often reflect on past stockings.

One such memory was during my first year in the district, fresh out of the training school.

It had been a long winter with ice remaining into March.

As I approached the first stop on Big Wapwallopen Creek, Luzerne County, I saw the majority of the creek was still iced over, adding an additional challenge to the already long day of stocking ahead of me.

As I got closer, I could see the ice was thick in spots but was open several yards downstream as it approached some riffles. However, that section was too shallow to effectively stock trout.

I decided to walk onto the ice to determine the best spot to stock fish and whether stocking would require the use of an auger to drill a hole.

I remember telling myself, "I should probably put on some cleats before heading out." However, I then thought, "only going a few feet, I should be okay."

There were about 24 people present that day to help stock fish, and it was very cold.

I stepped on the ice, lost my footing, and slid down the frozen creek approximately 25 feet before ending up in open water.

After verifying the only thing injured was my pride, I rose to a crowd of onlookers obviously amused at the rookie mistake and laughing at the now soaking wet Waterways Conservation Officer (WCO) standing before them. Thankfully, I had a change of clothes in my patrol vehicle.

I am periodically reminded of that day from some of my regular stocking volunteers. We have a good chuckle, and I can only shake my head. Lesson learned.

I now wear cleats every time I step onto the ice.—WCO Aaron B. Lupacchini, Southern Luzerne and Columbia counties.

## Caught on camera

One day, I was patrolling a section of Tobyhanna Lake, Monroe County. Tobyhanna Lake in Tobyhanna State Park notoriously gets ice early, typically by the middle of December. However, it is not usually safe to ice fish that early. When I pulled into the park, I noticed a vehicle in the lot and an individual standing about 30 yards offshore of the lake. I found this odd, as I did not think there could be any more than about 2- to 3-inches of ice. The individual walked over to my truck to make sure it was okay to fish here. As he walked over, I noticed he was talking to himself. When he got closer, I could see a camera mounted to his hat. It became apparent that he was making a video of his fishing trip. I never saw this individual before, and he was not from the area, so I did not think much of it. We talked for a few minutes, and we determined that the ice was safe before going back to his day of fishing.

A few months later, I received a message

from a fellow WCO with a link to a video. I opened the link and quickly remembered what I was watching. It did not take long for me to notice that the interaction I had with this gentleman made his homemade fishing trip video, which was posted online.

Working in law enforcement, it is not uncommon to be filmed, but this was a nice variation to being caught on camera.—WCO Matthew B. Deitrich, Southern Wallenpaupack.

## Who is counting?

Finally, some good ice for fishing. It had been a while in the southwest part of Pennsylvania. I loaded up the ice fishing equipment, and my daughter and I headed to the lake. We found our spot, unpacked all the equipment, set up our shelter, and drilled some holes. The bite was slow at first. Then, the fish started cooperating. We practice catch and release, so I was not counting who was catching what fish. But, guess who was counting? And, guess who had to hear about who caught the most fish all the way home? Yep, she outfished me again!—WCO Jeremiah D. Allen, Beaver County.

