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BOAT

Pennsylvania



The Keystone State's Official Boating Magazine

Viewpoint

THE BOAT FUND



Gene Spori
Assistant Executive Director
Bureau of Waterways
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

Where does the money come from, and where does it go?

We are often asked these questions, so for subscribers enclosed with this issue of *Boat Pennsylvania* is our complete financial statement and Annual Report.

The Pennsylvania Fish Commission is a dedicated fund agency. That is, no money is received out of general tax revenues. Our existence depends on the income provided by you, our clients. For this reason, we have to operate on sound business principles. We maintain a healthy unreserved balance, each expenditure is scrutinized, and each project and program is strictly supervised for accountability. All the time one eye is kept on the budget, because if we overspend there's no place to go for help.

The Boat Fund has been in existence for about 20 years. The Motorboat Law, enacted in 1963, prescribed registration fees at \$4 per year for boats less than 16 feet in length and \$6 for boats 16 feet and over in length. These fees are the same today—a remarkable feat.

It would be nice to think that we could make that original fee stretch through 20 years of inflation, but it just isn't so. When the days of the Boat Fund looked bleakest, some new source would come along to bail it out. In 1970 it was the transfer of the marine fuels tax to the Boat Fund, the infusion that got the Fish Commission's boating program in high gear. In the mid-1970s the old Coast Guard grant program made its appearance. When it expired, the Biaggi Fund took its place, and now that the Biaggi Fund is gone, a source for the future will be there—the Wallop-Breaux Fund.

Another important source of income to the Boat Fund is interest income. It points out the value of maintaining a healthy unreserved balance. Here's a good way to look at it. If there were no money to invest, the cost of each boat registration would have to be raised at least \$2 to make up for lost income.

Where does the money go? It's returned to you in the form of services and facilities.

Much of the money goes to law enforcement, but "law enforcement" is a misnomer. A more accurate description would be "field operations." The 71 salaried field officers, 450 part-time deputies, and 12 supervisors spend much of their time in conservation and water safety education activities, public relations, water pollution investigations, in-service training, and many other assorted tasks associated with Fish Commission activities. The Boat Fund picks up about 30 percent of the law enforcement tab with the Fish Fund taking the remainder.

Pennsylvania's boating education program is the envy of the nation. Free correspondence courses, public adult education, the van program, support of the school district water safety course, water rescue training, and professional training of our field officers and the personnel of other agencies involved in water safety keep our small staff of educators busy. These programs are paying off—over the past 10 years the number of boating accidents has gone down while the number of boats on Commonwealth waters has more than doubled.

Still, we recognize the boater's expectations of seeing something tangible for the money. That's where our engineers come into the picture. The Fish Commission owns or controls about 200 boating access areas, and some 35 sites are awaiting development. These access areas are built with both Fish Fund and Boat Fund money, so you have to look at our whole budget to realize the enormity of these engineering efforts.

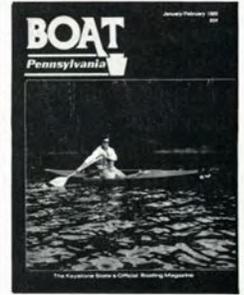
Most Pennsylvania boaters are pleased with our programs and accomplishments, and we'll continue to ensure that Commonwealth boaters get their money's worth.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gene Spori". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in the bottom right corner of the page.

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The art of soloing is a special joy for paddlers. This issue's front cover, photographed by Cliff Jacobson, can whet your appetite for soloing, and for more enticement, see page 7. The back cover, photographed by Don Carey, is a portrait of a competing crew. Sailors interested in competing will want to check out page 26.



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What's New in

