

PENNSYLVANIA FEDERATION OF SPORTSMEN'S CLUBS, INC.



The **ONLY** Sportsmen's Organization
Representing **SPORTSMEN** on Capitol Hill

2017 Great Outdoor Picnic



On Target

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Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs

September/October 2017



n Target

PFSC On Target September/October 2017

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More on pages 18-21.

Photos by Chuck Musitano & Mark Nale



The mission of the Pennsylvania Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Inc. is to provide a statewide, united voice for the concerns of all sportsmen and conservationists; to insure that their rights and interests are protected; and to protect and enhance the environment and our natural resources.

The Politics of Science or the Science of Politics

by John Arway
Executive Director, PFBC

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Part 1:

When I first became executive director of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in 2010, a friend of mine, who was a member of the Pennsylvania General Assembly at the time, told me that I had just become a politician. I immediately took exception to his comment, which began an interesting debate about politics and science.

I learned that anyone who uses his or her position to influence public policy decisions is a politician. Reluctantly, I had to admit that I just might have become a politician, since influencing public policy was the very reason I applied for the director position in the first place.

I felt somewhat more comfortable with the new title of “politician” after consulting my principal online research tool, Wikipedia.com, and finding that some politicians are actually experienced in the art or science of government. After all, as a fisheries biologist who had practiced the profession for over 30 years, I certainly had the training to command the science of government. How hard could it be to learn the art of government? Little did I know!

Our debate turned next to the discussion of partisanship. He advised that I take a bipartisan approach to finding common ground for the issues that I would be advocating. However, the more I thought about it, the more I realized that I wouldn’t be just dealing with the two political parties in our legislature.

Now as director of a public service agency, I had just accepted the responsibility of administering the programs and directing staff to protect, conserve, and enhance our Commonwealth’s aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities—the very mission of the PFBC.

This Resource First philosophy would require me to work with a diverse group of people to fulfill the mission. Wilson (1887)

noted that the political controlled the administrative. But popular will and efficient administration could be subverted if politics became too partisan. Waldo (1980) suggested that “no problem is more central to public administration than . . . the relationship of politics and administration.” Wilson (1887) further noted that democratic politics could benefit from politically neutral public service only under the constraints of political responsibility and the scientific method (Rabin and Bowman 1984).

Properly applying the scientific method and telling the truth have been key factors for my success, so the path I chose seemed to be the right one at the right time (Arway 2010).

The scientific method is defined as the “principles and procedures for the systematic pursuit of knowledge involving the recognition and formulation of a problem, the collection of data through observation and experiment, and the formulation and testing of hypotheses” (Merriam-Webster 2016).

Use of the scientific method is the bond that unifies scientists in all professions. It is often ironic to hear non-scientists say, “We will follow the science” as they discuss public policy decisions when, more often than not, it is not the science that prevails in public policy or political debates. Frequently, political, social and economic variables dominate the discussion while science takes a back-seat in decision-making (Arway 2011).

However, can the scientific method also be used in political science? The elements include observation, gathering facts, and testing hypotheses through repeated experimentation to produce a set of results with a certain level of confidence that can be replicated. I have often found myself following all of the steps but becoming frustrated with the repeatability test, es-

pecially with different administrations and legislative agendas. Might that explain the wide variance associated with the results?

My greatest leadership challenge has been to find a way to inform and engage the public in public policy discussions (Arway 2015). “The public” may appear to be a third party to some, but anglers, boaters, and conservationists fluctuate from supporter to critic depending upon the issue.

The 2010 U.S. Census estimated that we have over 12.7 million people in the Commonwealth, which include 1.2 million anglers (U.S. Department of the Interior 2006) and 3 million boaters (U.S. Coast Guard 2012). I concluded that in order to be effective in my role as a public administrator, I needed to be an “apolitical” politician.

For much of my early career as a PFBC fisheries biologist, I believed that I was going to change the world by producing good science. I learned, after many hours of testifying as an expert witness in administrative, civil, and criminal courts, that judges never expect absolute certainty (100 percent) but only an opinion to “a reasonable degree of scientific certainty.” That perspective quickly changed when I became involved in public policy and regulatory decisions.

Yes, I discovered that our laws require and our courts apply far more subjective standards of proof. In civil courts, the standard of proof is “preponderance of evidence” (more likely than not). Although the standard of proof is much greater in criminal courts—“beyond a reasonable doubt” (no reason to believe otherwise), it’s a much lower standard than scientists hold for ourselves with our own experiments.

What standard of proof is used for political science decisions?

To Be Continued in the November On Target....

Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report

John A. Arway, Executive Director

www.fishandboat.com



The Last Cast from a Government Business

As the Pennsylvania General Assembly was busy trying to meet its June 30 state budget deadline, you may have seen an op-ed piece from me that appeared in a number of media outlets.

Entitled “The Last Cast,” I used examples of the important public safety work of our law enforcement staff to drive home the need for the legislature to act on a revenue increase before we are forced to dramatically curtail the goods and services we offer to anglers and boaters across Pennsylvania. Among the things in the article that drew the most attention was the reality that we may need to reduce the number of fish we stock unless we see enhanced revenue to help us meet ever-increasing health care and retirement obligations for current and former staff.

Our plan to keep spending below revenues has allowed us to meet public expectations without major programmatic cuts. We have cut spending in large part by reducing staff from a high of 432 to 370. At the same time, the value of a fishing license adjusted for inflation has dropped to about \$16.25, while fish production costs have climbed dramatically. The true cost of today’s fishing license adjusted for inflation would be \$37.18. At \$22.90, today’s license value is a real bargain for PA anglers!

Unfortunately, but predictably, annual operating and personnel costs are now expected to exceed annual revenues. Without a revenue increase, the PFBC must plan to significantly cut programs by fiscal year 2018–19 to meet balanced budget objectives and avoid insolvency.

Faced with this fiscal reality, an increasingly competitive environment for discretionary leisure time, and trends impacting our ability to meet current and future objectives, I asked Professor Judd Michael from Penn State’s Department

of Agricultural and Biological Engineering and a team of MBA students from the Smeal College of Business to write a “business plan” document that could help us prepare for our next strategic planning cycle. The following text is from the Executive Summary of the report that Dr. Michael presented to our Board of Commissioners on July 10.

Summary:

We observed that the agency is well run with a dedicated staff who have expertise in their focal areas and care about their constituents. However, staff are oftentimes limited in their abilities to achieve objectives due to availability of funds. The agency faces more than \$100 million in infrastructure needs while encountering financial headwinds in the form of increasing mandated expenditures and declining revenue streams. Leadership currently maintains a reserve fund of monies but that balance is in danger of being depleted.

Threats facing the agency include changing demographics and leisure time activities, current and future obligations being projected to overcome annual revenues, and general difficulty in being able to “change” the organization due to external stakeholders. Taken together all these trends form a significant hurdle that hinder PFBC from achieving long term economic sustainability.

We examined opportunities for expense reduction within the agency and found the following:

- *Most of the easily-achieved expense reduction opportunities have already been identified and many have been put in place.*
- *External forces such as stakeholders constrain PFBC’s ability to go after larger cost-reduction strategies.*
- *Internal factors like mandated and fixed expenses also constrain the ability to*



Mark Nale Photo

significantly cut costs.

• *Specific options for cutting expenses that should be considered include:*

- *Cutting back on fish production appears to be possible and warranted as a cost reduction measure*
- *Conducting cost-benefit analyses of fish species is a tool to help guide possible cutbacks*
- *Reducing number of hatcheries*
- *Outsourcing of various functions*
- *Improved production planning related to fish production and stocking*

We also looked for opportunities to increase revenue generation and suggest the following:

- *Increasing license fees for fishing and boating*
- *New and revised licensing options*
- *Capturing more revenue from unlicensed anglers and boaters*
- *Obtaining revenue from a consumptive water use fee*
- *Mandatory unpowered boat licenses*
- *Negotiate reimbursement for services provided to other government agencies*
- *Continue pursuing revenue from state sales tax on fishing and boating equipment*
- *Improve marketing and communications as a tool to reduce “churn” of anglers and attract new anglers and boaters*

The marketing function within the agency is one that needs more emphasis, and investment, since it should



be seen as the main driver of increased revenues. We discuss Outreach and Marketing needs from multiple fronts, with an overall suggestion that increased investment will be necessary to counter trends that would otherwise reduce revenues. Marketing-related recommendations for the agency include improved branding guidelines and messaging, with more engagement opportunities for all PFBC communications, and an emphasis on female and youth anglers and those in urban areas. Proper use of social media could play a major role in marketing efforts.

A key suggestion is that the agency strive to build the PFBC “brand” as a provider of recreation opportunities and conservation benefits to the Commonwealth. We observed that PFBC is not currently recognized by many constituents as a vital manager of our aquatic resources or for the public services its people and programs provide.

E-commerce strategies should be more focused, with an emphasis on such areas as email reactivation campaigns, insight generation, and better on-line sales capabilities.

Related areas of discussion include:

- Digital licenses that can be emailed to anglers
- Obtain more emails from customers and use those for strategic communications
- Improve cross-selling with the on-line platform
- Use search engine optimization techniques to create “buzz” around fishing and boating in Pennsylvania

Other general suggestions for the agency include:

- New methods of engaging channel members such as retailer partners
- Improved project management techniques
- Scaling Outreach and Marketing to reach under-served and non-traditional

populations

- Take advantage of favorable trends such as more unpowered boating
- Simplify fishing regulations and communicate those to customers
- Manage stakeholder influence on the agency
- Improve data analysis capabilities, especially as it relates to knowledge about the customer
- Improve management of the organization with specific emphasis on business-related functions
- Clarify roles of the Commissioners and educate them about their governance functions

We also note that the agency’s reserve fund can be seen as a “strategic strength” and should be maintained as a type of rainy day fund for unforeseen needs. It would weaken the agency if leadership is forced to deplete the reserve fund; we fear this is possible without changes as suggested in the report.

The Fish and Boat Commission provides a plethora of opportunities and benefits to the Commonwealth and its citizens. The agency depends primarily on license and fee revenue to provide these “common goods”, many of which are not reimbursed or directly paid for. This business model has worked in the past but is at risk given the many factors impacting revenues and expenses. We urge the agency to make the difficult decisions and changes necessary in order to maintain its role as a conservation and recreation leader.

In our business, it is said that the time has come to fish or cut bait – to act or not act. In the General Assembly, it is said that the time has come to call the question.

In our last cast for support, I continue to urge all Federation members and your fellow Pennsylvanians who fish or boat to contact their representatives in the House and demand action on a revenue increase

to allow this government business to stay in business.

PFBC



To All Those Who Continue to Support PFSC Through Donations, Fund-Raisers & Memberships!

Life Members

Christopher Blasko

Contributing Members

Kory Enck

Barry Wealand

Edward Mertz

Donations

Jay Challingsworth \$300

Ken Hess \$525

PFSC Membership Numbers

196 Clubs

5 Statewide organizations

303 Individual members

310 E-Members

16 Contributing members

324 Life Members

182 Next Generation Members

Representing 70,000 sportsmen and women

A Day of Fishing-Make it an Adventure

A day of fishing is many things. It's a day of discovery and laughter for youth. For adults, it's a chance to rediscover the world. Prepare to leave the path, hide behind trees, find **salamanders** or build snow people.



Henry Lille excited about target casting.

Fishing trip tips

Before your trip

- **Play:** Practice casting to fun targets.
- **Plan:** Use a Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC) online fishing map. Talk about locations to fish. Choose a spot and date to fish.
- **Pack:** Help pack what you need and what you would like to take on your trip.

What to pack in addition to fishing gear

Item	Winter/Spring	Summer/Fall
First Aid Kit	Yes	Yes
Lunch or Dinner	Thermos of soup	Sandwich/wrap
Drink	Thermos of cocoa/tea	Water/juice
Snacks	Yes	Yes
Clothing	Extra layer of clothes, one extra set of clothes and gloves	One extra set of clothes and a towel
Other items	Hand warmers	Bug spray
	Extra warm hat and gloves	Sunscreen
	Garbage bag	Garbage bag

Remember to pack out what you pack in. Keep your fishing spot cleaner than how you found it.



A 3-in-1 tool is a piece of equipment that can be used to help enhance your fishing experiences.

- **Transform your fishing experience**
- **Access** to fishing areas is important for good experiences.
- Find ADA-compliant fishing access piers or areas near you by using PFBC's online maps at www.fishandboat.com.
- Don't allow a physical disability to stand in your way. Fishing is a great way to enjoy the outdoors.

Need some extra help? There are many types of adaptive equipment to assist you.

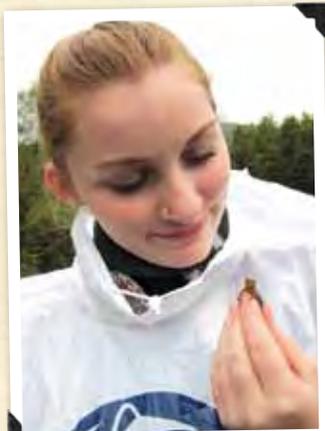
During your trip

- Split time between fishing and exploring.
- Have a picnic.
- Use your senses. What do you see, hear, smell or feel?
- Take photos.



After your trip

- Share your favorite part of the trip. Was it catching **fish**? Was it finding a salamander?
- Draw a picture or write about your trip.
- Look through trip photos. Choose what you like. Share them with others.
- Based on this trip, begin planning your next **adventure**.



Spring into fishing

If you have never gone fishing, you may want to go to a fishing program and learn the basics. Find a PFBC program near you at www.GoneFishingPA.com.

Cannot attend a program? Watch a video on YouTube at www.youtube.com/user/PAfishandboat.

Like to read? The PFBC website has lots of information on "Fishing Fundamentals" at www.fishandboat.com.

Family Fishing Programs

- Free programs
- Instruction, equipment and bait are provided
- No fishing experience or license needed



Families having fun at fishing programs taught by Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Fishing Skills Instructors.

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Youth anglers must obtain a Mentored Youth Fishing Permit or Voluntary Youth Fishing License from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and be accompanied by an adult licensed angler in order to participate.



Where to fish

Children fishing areas, **lakes** or **ponds** are great places to start.

Look for locations that have:

- Easy and safe access to the water
- Restrooms and shelter
- A place to enjoy a picnic
- A town nearby for emergencies



Use PFBC's mobile app to find a location near you at www.pfbc.pa.gov/mobile.htm.