

# Back to the Future

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# StraightTALK



I have been dreaming about writing this article for almost 30 years. Some of you will notice that the title of the article has changed from *PCE* back to *Straight Talk*. For those of you who don't remember, former Executive Director Mr. Ralph Abele penned his column as *Straight Talk*. Since he was a mentor and role model of mine, I thought it would be a tribute to him to use that column title again. I also believe in straight talk, and you should expect it from me as your Director. I will also expect it from you. Throughout my 30-year career with the Commission, I have worked for five executive directors. They all had different leadership styles and personalities. I bring you my own style, somewhat different from those who have served before me, that has been influenced by the actions of former executive directors. I have found that you have to look to the past to prepare for the future. I closely watched the performance of others as I grew in the agency. I will be applying much of the good that I have learned from them, and I will try my best not to repeat their mistakes. I appreciate the faith and confidence that our Board of Commissioners have placed in me to lead the agency into the future. I know you will tell me what we can do better to fulfill our mission—protecting, conserving and enhancing the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and providing fishing and boating opportunities. I expect that from you. I have an excellent staff, and I am proud to be their and your director. It is absolutely important for us to communicate what we are doing for you and our aquatic resources whenever we can. That is what this column is all about.

I have three priorities that I will be talking to you about in future columns. They are to insure a contract for our Waterways Conservation Officers in the very near future, improve employee morale and public support and find a source of alternative funding to secure a future for generations to come and us. You will be hearing more about how I plan to do this in future columns.

Mr. Abele would occasionally write "You are our hope for the future" on the bottom of internal notes that he would send me as well as others in the agency as motivation to do a good job. I can't do this alone, and it is truly a team effort. I need the help of a well functioning board, a capable and dedicated staff and you, the anglers, boaters and conservationists of the Commonwealth. I can promise you that the future is now, but we have a lot of work ahead of us. Let's get started. See you on the water.

Your Director,  
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