

# Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission Report

John A. Arway, Executive Director

www.fishandboat.com



## Yep, There's an App for That!

Like many of you, I have been enjoying On Target for years. When I first started reading it, there was no such thing as the Internet and the only thing smart about my phone was when it changed from a rotary dial to a touch tone.

Readers of On Target all know that times are changing rapidly, and tools we use to connect with each other and the resources we love are changing even more quickly.

One thing that has not changed in our fast-paced, instantaneous world is the old real estate adage that "location is everything."

The same mantra applies to fishing. Anglers want to know in what streams trout have been stocked, how to get to those locations easily, and what other access areas are near their current fishing spot.

As I write this article, our staff is hard at work putting the finishing touches on our agency's latest entry into the world of real-time digital communication as we prepare to launch our first app for smartphone users and allow anglers to connect with the resource like never before.

By the time you read this, the "FishBoatPA" app will have been available for several weeks for free on both Google's Play Store and Apple's App Store as an exciting new tool that meets the needs of anglers who are increasingly using smartphones.

We want to make it

as easy as possible to access our stocking information and purchase a fishing license. As we all know, the use of smartphones has skyrocketed, and our anglers and boaters should expect to find apps that make fishing and boating easier so that they spend less time looking for information and more time fishing and boating! Now we can provide instant access to the most popular information.

Anglers use our agency's stocking page more than any other, generating in excess of 1.2 million visits each year. So when they open the FishBoatPA app, the first item they see is real-time "Upcoming Trout Stocking."

Users sort stocking schedules by county. The app is tied directly into our online stocking schedule, so anglers can see past and upcoming stockings and the type of trout placed in a water. GIS coordinates allow users to access maps and get turn-by-turn directions to their favorite stocking site.

In addition to stocking schedules, the other prominent feature on the app home page is the link "Get a license today!" This enables allows users to find an issuing agent near them and to see pricing options for licenses.

The app also links to a

"Fish ID" guide with color pictures; a "Learn" section with links to helpful information like tying knots and learning how to properly handle fish; and to PFBC rules and regulations.

Another option is a "My Trophies" section where anglers can post pictures to share with others using the app. Users can add a title, fish

weight and length, the date they landed the fish and their comments, like the type of lure they used. They can then share their trophies by email, text message or through social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest and Twitter.

We plan to add additional content and enhancements in the coming months to make the app even more appealing to anglers and boaters. Now that the app is up and running, I leave those of you with a grandchild with a challenge. If your grandchild has a smartphone, the next time you see him or her, ask them to let you show them something really cool on their phone. Download the app on their phone and show them just how easy it is to find a place to go fishing close by. If your grandchild does not have a smartphone, show them how cool you are and let them play with the app on your phone.

I can almost guarantee that you'll surprise them with your technological expertise and also find a fishing buddy in the process.

