

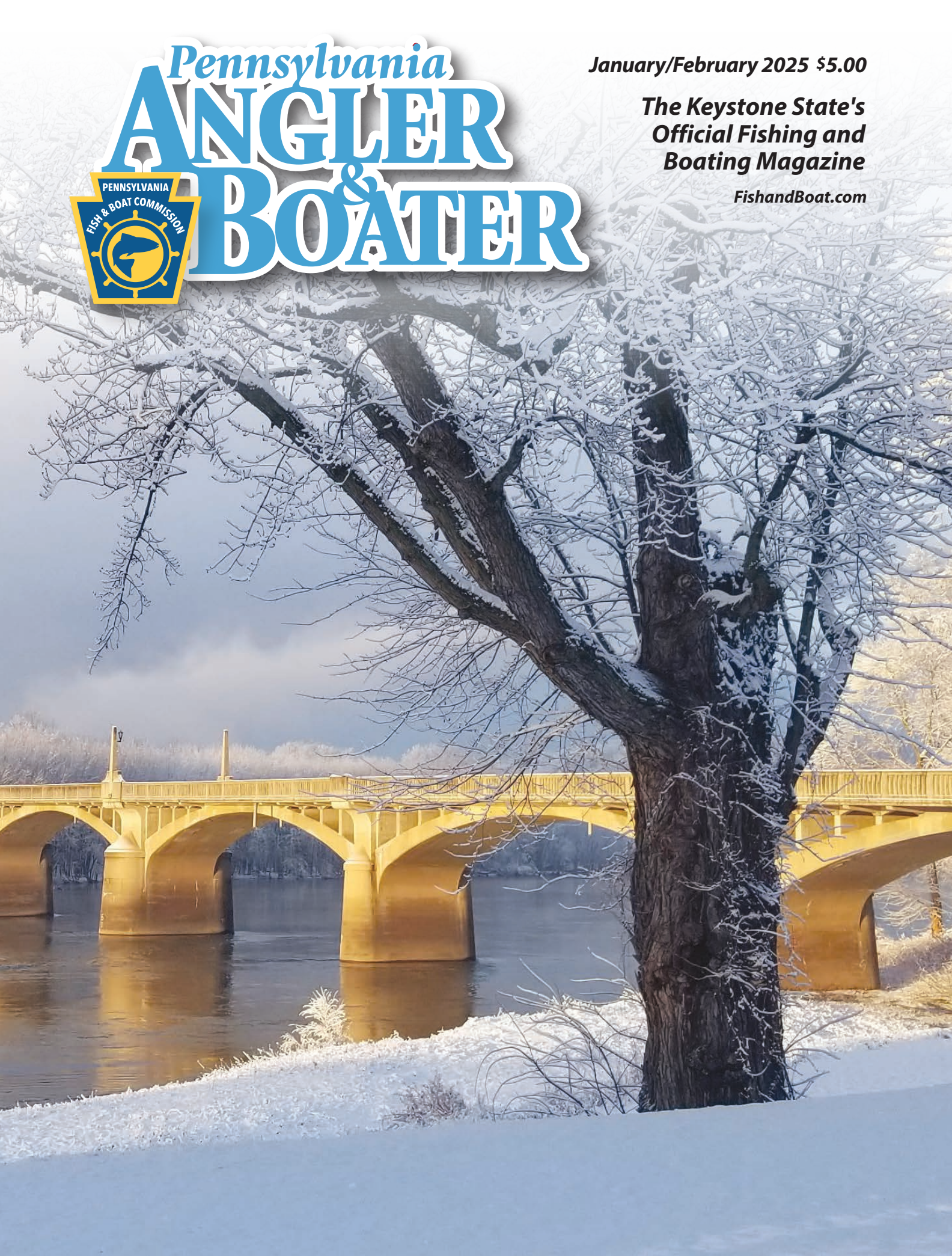
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*The Keystone State's
Official Fishing and
Boating Magazine*

FishandBoat.com



Pennsylvania **ANGLER & BOATER**



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Volume 94 Number 1

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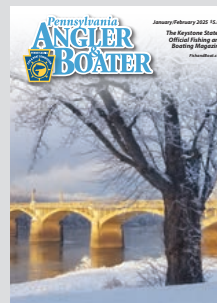


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Pennsylvania Angler & Boater adheres to the American Fisheries Society's style guide and the *Common and Scientific Names of Fishes from the United States, Canada and Mexico* in keeping with the capitalization of the English common names of fishes as well as singular and plural fish name usage. In addition, *Pennsylvania Angler & Boater* recognizes the standards established by the Society for the Study of Amphibians and Reptiles.

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Cover



Fresh fallen snow and Watsontown River Bridge illuminated by the morning sunlight, Northumberland County. The West Branch Susquehanna River flows under this historic bridge, which was built in 1927.

Photo by Jen Guisewite



Subscription Inquiries

717-705-7835 • E-mail: ra-pfbcmagazine@pa.gov

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

INTRODUCING PFBC ON THE JOB

The year may be new, but the core of what we do at the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission is unyieldingly consistent. Every day our staff, partners and volunteers give their best to ensure that Pennsylvania's aquatic resources are cared for by exemplary stewards and that we provide opportunities to safely enjoy fishing and boating. I appreciate every chance I get to see up close the work of our amazing staff, and we are excited that you now have the opportunity to get to know a little about some of our dedicated employees and the work they do in the

new feature "PFBC on the Job". Below and on page 29, get a glimpse at the work of our fisheries biologists and Waterways Conservation Officers. Moving forward, tune in each edition for highlights of the talented people whose work comprises our agency. Someday, you may recognize them out on the water in action—at work or play—and you will see they love the water as much as you do! ☑

Timothy D. Schaeffer, Executive Director

PFBC ON THE JOB

Jason Detar
Area Fisheries Manager

One of my favorite waters to fish for wild trout is Spring Creek, Centre County. Spring Creek is a productive, spring-fed stream that supports a robust wild Brown Trout population and some wild Rainbow Trout. It's managed under catch and release regulations and considered one of the best wild trout fisheries in the eastern United States.

I love fishing Spring Creek with my kids. It's a great fishery for learning and advancing fishing skills. We fish it throughout the year, especially in the spring during the sulphur hatch.

While Spring Creek supports an excellent fishery, it's important to recognize that challenges exist. The area's population is substantially growing, and the watershed is undergoing rapid changes in land use from forests and agricultural lands to development. Increased stormwater, reduced groundwater recharge and increased water use have impacted the watershed. Fortunately, local communities recognize Spring Creek as an outstanding resource and the lifeblood of the region, providing drinking water, recreation and wastewater disposal. The Commission and conservation partners are maintaining and improving instream and riparian habitats through tree planting, instream habitat enhancement, bank stabilization, fish passage and floodplain connectivity projects.

I'm optimistic that this fishery will continue to flourish. Anglers are encouraged to become engaged in conservation and reach out to me at jdetar@pa.gov for ways they can help advance efforts on Spring Creek and other central Pennsylvania waters. ☑

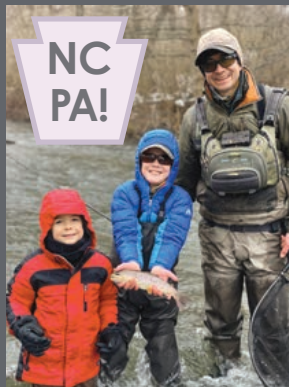


photo-courtesy of Jason Detar

Interactive Maps:



Graphic Key

These icons represent specific topics.



Amphibians and Reptiles



Boating



Catch and Release



Conservation



Family Fishing



Fly Fishing



Ice Fishing



Lakes



Paddling



Rivers



State Parks



Streams



Tackle



5 ICE FISHING HACKS

by Ross Robertson photos by the author

Save money and reduce problems while ice fishing. Ice fishing can be hard on gear, and the cold intensifies problems. Here are five simple hacks to fix or eliminate ice fishing gear challenges.

1. Ice Shanty Holes

A hole in an ice shanty from a heater accident or mice is no need to panic. Get a patch piece from the shanty's manufacturer and some spray adhesive. For better long-term durability, attach a patch on both sides of the hole.

2. No Freeze Minnow Bucket

Minnow bucket lids quickly freeze from water sloshing during travel. Instead of a lid, use a plastic bag inside a 5-gallon bucket. Fasten a chip clip or similar clip to the bag to keep the water contained while moving. Add a foam liner to the bucket in extreme cold.

3. Dollar Gloves

Basic jersey gloves that cost less than a dollar are great for keeping your skin free from wind exposure. Wearing them under oversized mittens offers quick dexterity when the mitt is removed. They can also be easily changed out when they get wet.

4. Good Gas

Modern gas loses octane quickly and can harm engines of ice augers or all-terrain vehicles. Start with recreational fuel that has no ethanol. Next, treat it with a product that acts as a stabilizer and one to keep fuel lines from freezing. Products that are highly concentrated are better choices.

When gas is left over in an engine with carburation, it's wise to remove it with a fuel pump designed for gasoline and put it in your vehicle or dispose of it properly.

5. Battery Heat

The extreme cold quickly depletes devices like cell phones and cameras that run on batteries. A soft sided cooler insulates these devices and helps hold their charges. Put a rag in the bag to eliminate dead space or a disposable hand warmer that can also be used in cold temperatures. ☐





ARTIFICIAL BAIT FOR ICE FISHING

by Jeff Woleslagle

photos by the author

It started like any other day on the ice. A friend and fishing companion laid down a challenge that he could out fish me with his new micro soft plastic baits. I could use standard live baits including waxworms and spikes. My immediate response was “challenge accepted”, and I expected an easy victory. It didn’t take long, though, before I started to sweat despite the blustery conditions on the ice. He quickly jumped out to a four fish lead with three nice Bluegills and a big Yellow Perch before I caught my first fish of the morning. By the time we were packing up for the day, he had outpaced me by a nearly 3:1 margin. I couldn’t wait to experiment with the baits myself, and it wasn’t long before I became a believer in their versatility and effectiveness.

Often, the secret to catching fish through the ice, especially panfish like Bluegills, crappies and Yellow Perch, is fishing on the micro level. Under the ice, fish feed on different types of bloodworms, nymphs, fry, scuds and plankton. In the last few years, a new array of soft plastic baits hit the market that some ice anglers prefer to live bait. The beauty of soft plastic baits for ice fishing is that you never have to worry about storage or keeping the bait fresh and alive. Today’s micro level soft plastic baits do an excellent job mimicking a variety of microinvertebrates as well as small minnows. Many come with the addition of scent. When fished on a small teardrop jig, they are almost indistinguishable from the real thing. No longer will a day be spoiled, because the local bait shop was sold out of live bait. The new soft plastic baits look lively in the water and can last for years when packaged and stored properly.

Sometimes, baits in natural colors can be a great starting point, but bright colors like red, pink, orange and gold are often great choices, too. Experiment with color, size and body design until you find what the fish want that day. Some jig heads and baits glow and can be great at drawing attention from fish in the dark environs under the ice. Fish the baits on a 1/16- to 1/64-ounce tungsten jig



head using 1- to 4-pound-test fluorocarbon line. Start by fishing the baits near the bottom, especially in areas where you can locate aquatic vegetation and move up the water column until you locate fish. As always, any type of underwater feature such as artificial fish structures, submerged trees, immersed brush and rock piles are prime target areas. The most successful ice anglers I know are the ones most willing to move around to find active fish. Some anglers won’t give an area more than 15 minutes to produce fish before moving on.

Many new soft plastic baits have small appendages that quiver enticingly with the slightest movement of the rod tip, so you usually don’t have to work them aggressively to draw strikes. The baits that mimic tiny baitfish have proven themselves deadly for catching Largemouth Bass and large crappies through the ice, and they don’t require the heft of a minnow bucket or the need for aeration—a convenience well worth giving artificial baits a try. ☐



A variety of artificial and extremely lifelike baits will catch fish through the ice.



A nice Bluegill that took a soft plastic bait through the ice.




This Largemouth Bass went for an artificial minnow bait.



CHOOSING THE RIGHT ICE REEL

by Donald Kelly

photos by the author



An ice reel has one basic function—to help an angler pull a fish through a small hole in the ice. So, why the need for so many different options for purchase? It's pretty simple. Consider these options when choosing an ice reel.

Spinning Reels

Spinning reels in smaller sizes pair perfectly with ice fishing. They function in any water depth, for any species of fish. Whether jigging or using a deadstick, spinning reels offer good drag systems, simplicity and familiarity at a variety of price points. Plus, they're ambidextrously designed to match any angler's retrieve preference. Their design, however, can lead to line twist and spinning jigs as the line coils off the top of the spool.

Inline Reels

Inline reels can eliminate the twisting problem by allowing the line to fall straight off the spool.

For shallow water fishing, simple 1:1 gear ratio reels, similar to most fly reels excel. The line does not come off on its own, and the angler pulls off the necessary line to get down to the fish. When fishing in a few feet of water, it's a great option, but in deeper water, a freefall reel helps quickly drop baits to fish.

Freefall inline reels use a button or trigger to release the line. Spool tension knobs help maintain the drop speed of the lure and prevent backlashing. This design works best for panfish applications in any water depth. Higher gear ratios quicken line retrieve more comparable to a spinning reel. These reels are often sold in right hand or left hand retrieve models and many cannot be changed. Choose the model that matches the hand you prefer to crank with when fishing. ☐

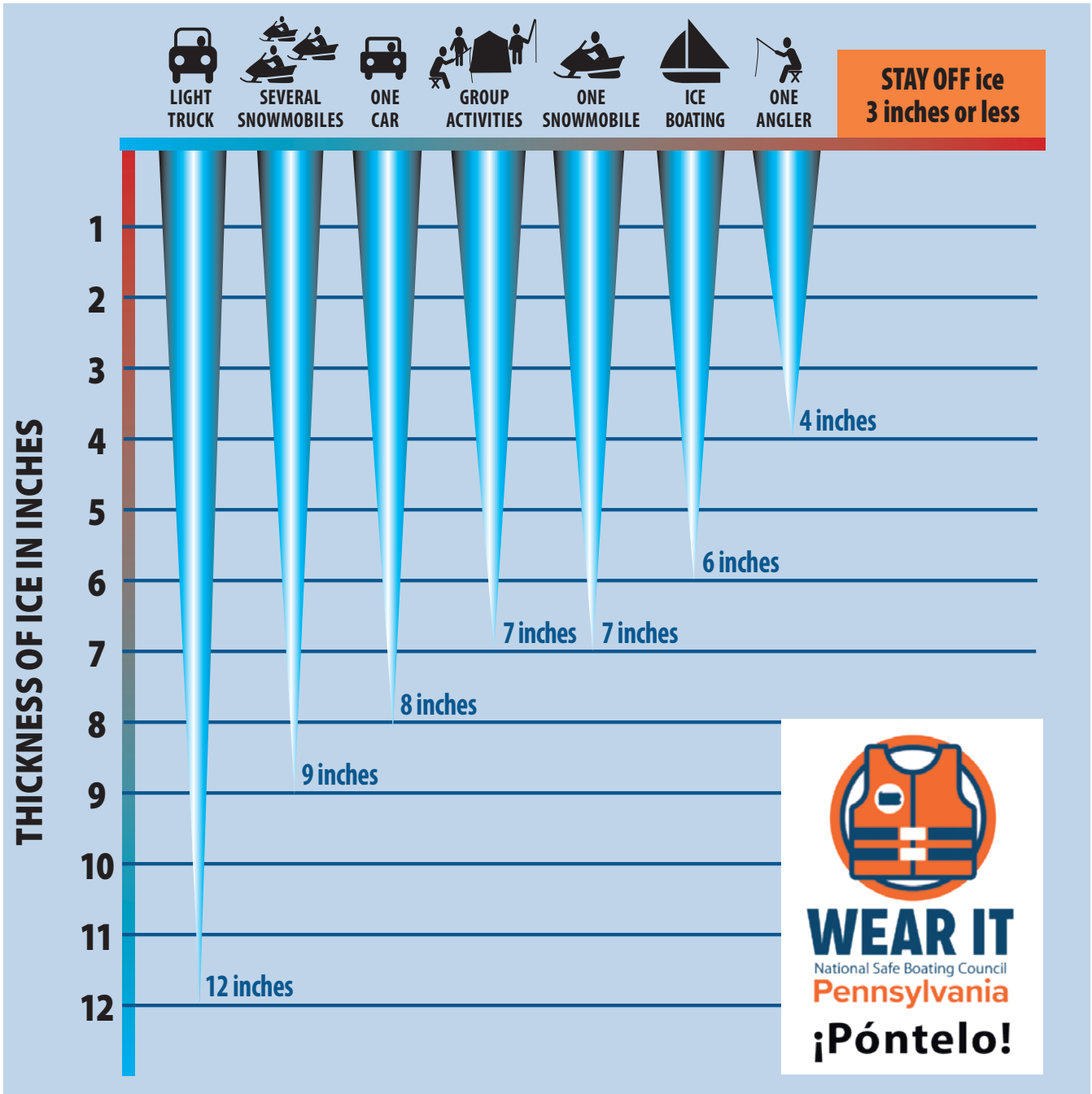
Having the right tool for the job translates to more fish on the ice. Find a reel that meets your needs and put it to work this winter.

LAKE ICE SAFETY GUIDE

Stay off moving water.

Ice is never 100% safe.

Minimum ice thickness guidelines for new, clear ice.



There are many factors that influence ice strength including water chemistry, wind and sunlight. Please note: these are general ice thickness guidelines. Carefully check ice conditions before venturing onto the ice.



ANGLERS AND FISH APPRECIATE TREES

by David R. Thompson

photos by the author

Trees are significant in my fishing memories, starting one summer afternoon in 1948 when an Adams County creek provided my first sunfish, where a tall hardwood tree stood at a bend. Beneath its shadow, my red and white bobber floated in the still water, and a panfish grabbed my worm and tugged the rod tip down as I reeled it to the bank.

Upon further reflection, another tree comes to mind—this one standing along Conodoguinet Creek, Cumberland County. Its green, leafy branches extended above the water, providing shade for fish on a warm day. I was elated when an 18-inch Smallmouth Bass smashed a silver spinner as it flashed beneath the lowest limb.

Closer to home is a large sycamore tree looming above Shermans Creek, Perry County, where a Chain Pickerel and two Smallmouth Bass took my lure at the same dark spot. The tree's shadows hid the fish, and its underwater roots made a dark lair close to the bank.

Many anglers have fond memories of fishing at places with particular trees that typically are large and impressive. They provide shade that fish seek in summer and leaves from which insects drop into the water for fish to eat. Their roots provide underwater shelter and anchor the soil to reduce sediment that pollutes water. Trees, particularly along the shore, benefit both fish and the environment, which is why there's a continuing effort in Pennsylvania to plant and preserve trees near waterways.

Last April, for example, members of the Conodoguinet Creek Watershed Association planted trees near the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's (PFBC's) Good Hope Access, Cumberland County. One purpose of the



This stretch of Shermans Creek, Perry County, has a natural forest buffer on both sides that anchors the soil and reduces erosion near farmland.



When a large tree growing along the bank of a creek falls, its entire root system is pulled up and creates a hole for fish.



A young angler caught this Smallmouth Bass in Perry County. The plants growing along the shore behind the boy are a key part of his fishing spot.

project is to protect the Conodoguinet Creek from flooding, which helps protect the Susquehanna River and Chesapeake Bay downstream from sediment caused by soil erosion. Any action that reduces soil erosion improves water quality for fish and other aquatic life. It's no wonder that anglers appreciate trees.

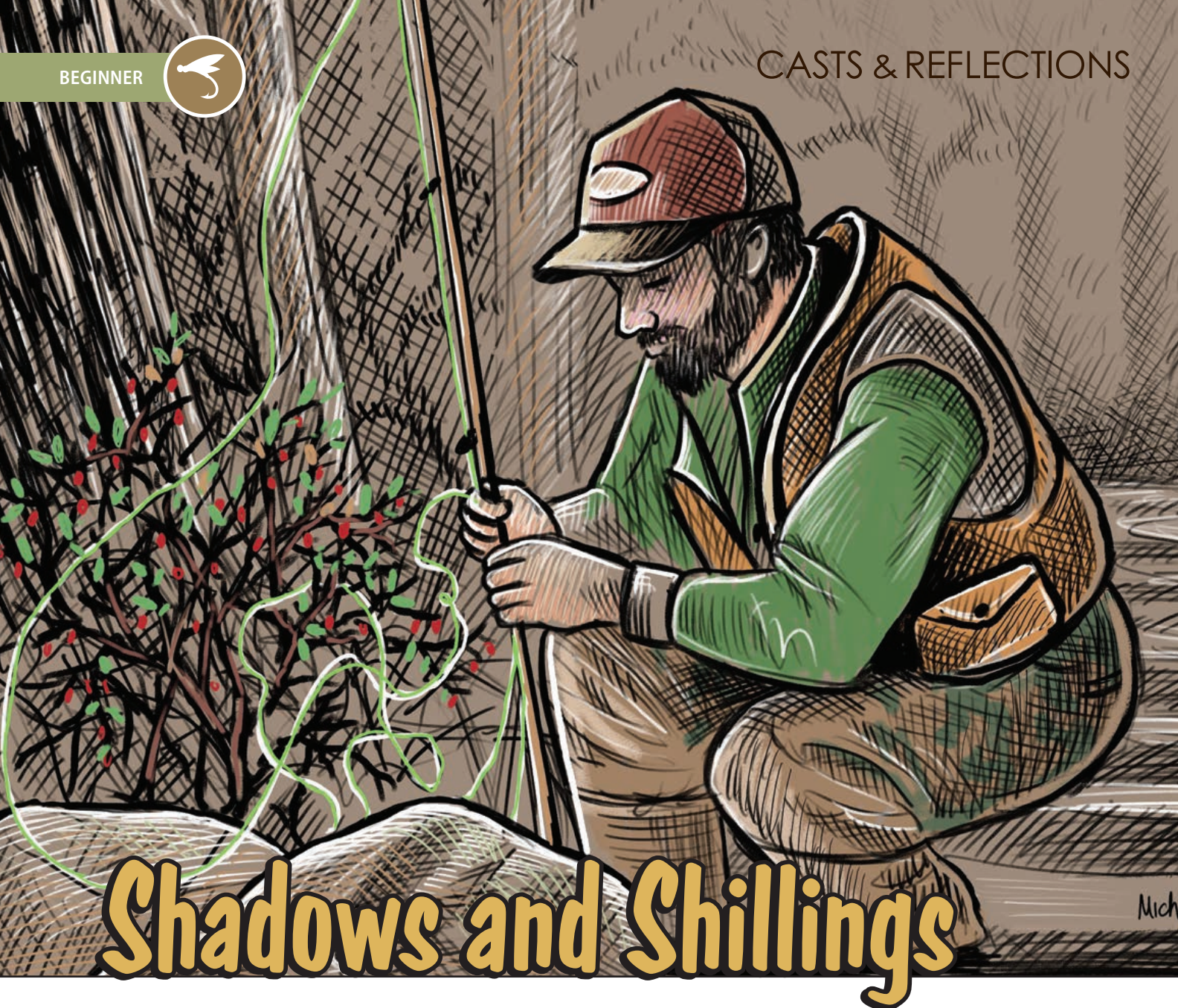
In October 2024, the PFBC joined the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources and the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to plant a forest buffer at the Mahantango Access, Snyder County, to help reduce flooding in the Susquehanna River. Native trees and shrubs planted included swamp white oak, river birch, American sycamore, silky dogwood and winterberry. The Alliance helps landowners install and care for buffers and has planted 1,000 acres of forest buffers in Pennsylvania since 2018.

Native Brook Trout often live in mountain creeks bordered by trees including threatened hemlock trees that provide shade and cold water. I'm reminded of a slope

above Shermans Creek where hemlocks anchor soil. Below the slope is a stretch of deep, slow-moving water not for Brook Trout but Smallmouth Bass, Fallfish and panfish. It's a good place to drift slowly in a kayak or canoe while casting lures. It would be tragic if the trees were killed by the hemlock woolly adelgid, an insect whose sap-sucking nymphs weaken trees whose contributions to good water quality are often overlooked.

In a report titled "Forested Buffers, The Key to Clean Streams," the Stroud Water Research Center, Chester County, describes a study of streams in eastern Pennsylvania to determine the difference in pollution processing by forested and non-forested segments of waterways. Forested segments are far more efficient at processing pollutants. Forested segments also have more aquatic life, which increase in number in waterways with forested buffers.

So, it is understandable why anglers appreciate trees and fish do, too. ☐



Shadows and Shillings

by Michael Kensinger

What remains of autumn's leaves hangs like gold shillings in the trees. The sun, burning high in the sky, casts long shadows across the crystal-clear water of a cold trout stream. After a busy few months, I welcomed a November day to slip into the autumnal waters with my fly rod.

Unfortunately, conditions were not prime. Instead, a bright sun coupled with clear, low water made for a challenging outing. Immediately, I ensnared my line in a barberry bush, and it continued

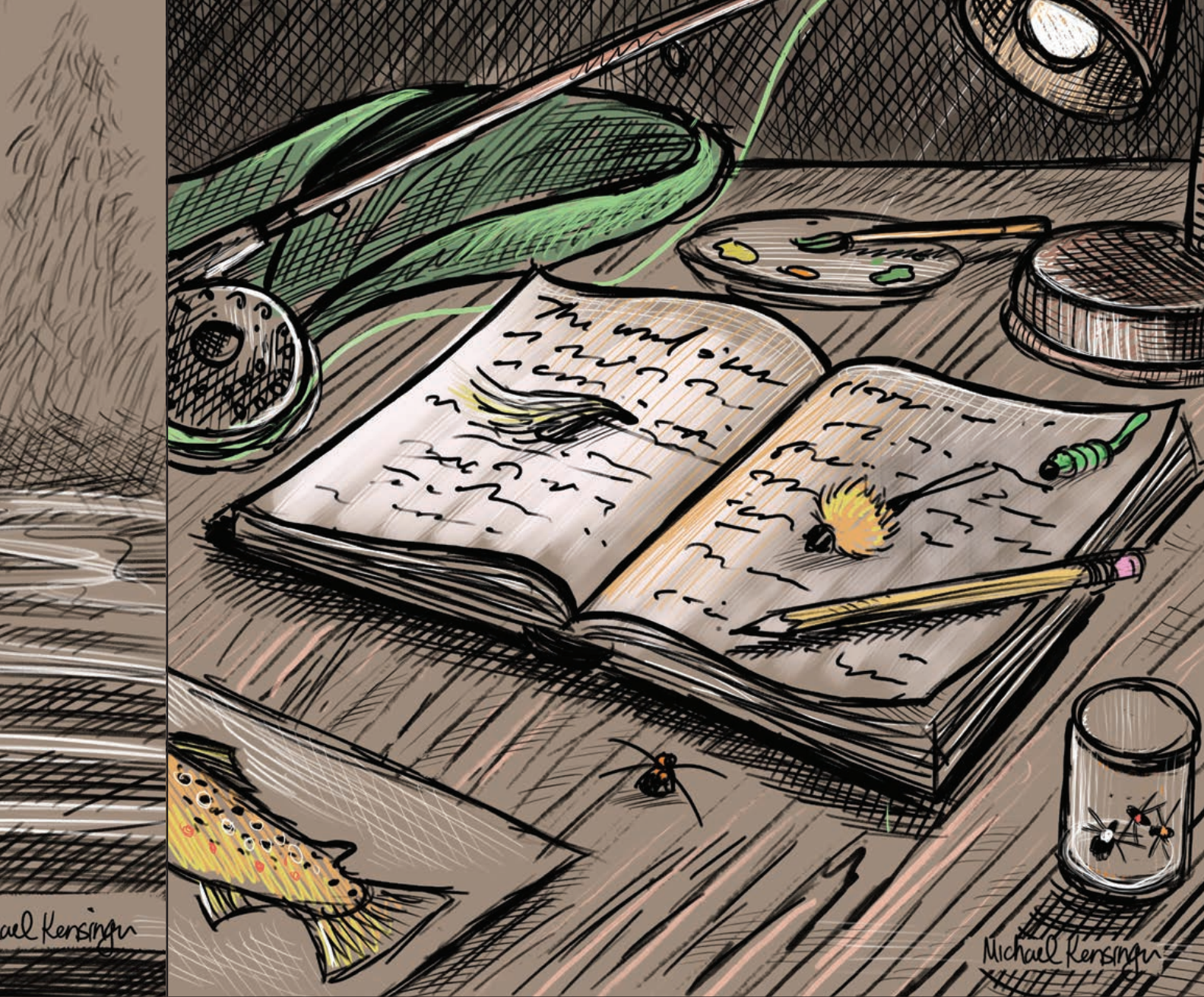
that way for a while—one branch or twig after another. Frustrated with my tangle tango, I saw a small Brown Trout downstream.

Determined, I finally freed my line and made my way upstream, noting low water levels with leaf-clogged rivulets in between pockets of deeper water. I took out my thermometer, dipped it into the water and counted to 30. It read 46 degrees F, and ahead of me was a welcoming pool shaded by overhanging rhododendron. I cast one of the first flies I ever tied, a Green Weenie, using a bow and arrow cast. The Green Weenie hit its mark in a shaded pocket of water. As

soon as it drifted down the pool and cut through a riffle, a small but feisty wild Brown Trout took it. I smiled and let out a sigh of relief to have a fish on.

Later, I walked under a bridge where some riffles gathered below a stone dam. As water swirled at my boots, I felt a slap against my ankle—a poor White Sucker stuck in shallow water. I scooped it up with my net and released it in deeper water. The sucker slipped away, righted itself in the current and was now in a much less precarious situation.

On the next span of stream, a trout slipped off my barbless hook, but I eventually landed another



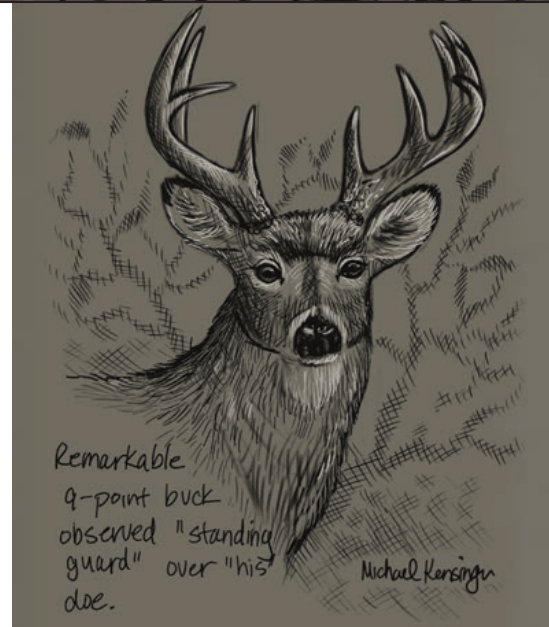
artwork-Michael Kensingger

Brown Trout, roughly 13-inches long. I also had several Creek Chubs take the Green Weenie without hesitation. As I slipped the largest of the chubs back into the water, I heard the staccato rattle of a belted kingfisher as it flew overhead. With low, clear water, it was a good day to be a kingfisher and a bad day to be a fish. A sheet of leaves covered the surface at the lower end of the pool, where the majority of the fish had taken cover.

I ended my trout outing at a pool filled with a great deal of trout—ranging from 8- to 18-inches long. These appeared to be stocked fish and

well-fed—Brown Trout, Rainbow Trout and a couple of Brook Trout. Apparently, these fish were not hungry, as I could not entice a single bite from the lot of them. Just as my nymph hit the water, they would rush to it, only to show disapproval once near it. The current was not as good as it usually was here, and the trout seemed to lack interest in my offerings. And so, I packed up and headed out.

On my way home, I noticed a white-tailed deer feeding and saw behind her a large 9-point buck, standing guard over her, as if posed for a photo. I smiled. It had been a fantastic day filled with lasting memories. ☐



Remarkable 9-point buck observed "standing guard" over "his" doe.



"HAPPY LITTLE TREES"

Lead to Large Water Quality Benefits

by Jessica Aiello



photo-PFBC archives



photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation

Joe Frassetta and Marci Mowery, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation President, during a Happy Little Trees 5K.

Nearly 60 percent of Pennsylvania is covered by trees, which is good news for the health of our waterways, as the link between trees and water quality is well-known. Trees absorb rainwater with their roots, slow runoff with their leaves and transpire water, which can reduce downstream flooding. Riparian trees (those along streams and rivers) shade the water to help keep it cool, creating an ideal habitat for aquatic invertebrates and fish. The roots and leaves provide additional cover, food and habitat benefits to aquatic species and stabilize stream banks. The sponge-like quality of trees also helps remove sediment and pollutants from waterways, improving overall water quality.

Managing, protecting and enhancing these forested resources is essential for all Pennsylvania residents and visitors. As Marci Mowery, Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation President, points out, “Of the 17 million acres of forest across the Commonwealth, only 2.2 million acres are managed by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Much of the rest is managed by local governments or privately owned. That means we all have a role in ensuring adequate and healthy forests and tree canopy.”

You can support trees in Pennsylvania by participating in the virtual Happy Little Trees 5K this April. The race, which was inspired by Bob Ross and his long-running PBS show, “The Joy of Painting,” began in 2004 as a collaborative effort between Bob Ross Inc. and volunteers in Michigan to combat

invasive pests and tree diseases. Event organizers realized that with “The Joy of Painting” now available online and through streaming platforms, new generations are coming to admire Ross’s signature painting style and unique way of being.

Joan Kowalski, President of Bob Ross, Inc., said, “The official Bob Ross 5K is probably our most favorite initiative. It perfectly encapsulates everything Bob held dear—nature, environmental care and, of course, happy trees. He would have been pleased to see its global popularity.”

Ross became fascinated with the natural world while stationed in Alaska for the United States Air Force. The calm lakes and awe-inspiring waterfalls he saw there were a positive influence on his life, and he decided to find a way to share nature’s therapeutic beauty with the world. While his show, “The Joy of Painting,” didn’t take off immediately, after 4 to 5 years on the air, non-painters were drawn to Ross’s pleasant voice and calm demeanor. The show was so successful as a therapeutic medium, in fact, that therapists began prescribing it to patients.

The Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation heard about the Bob Ross 5K a few years ago and had to get involved.

“Tree planting in Pennsylvania state parks and forests is a focus of our organization because of the many benefits forests provide to us,” said Mowery. “We are very excited to join our colleagues from other states in this fun opportunity to connect the aesthetic appeal of the natural world with planting of trees. When we plant trees, we invest in future generations.”

The Happy Little Trees 5K is considered a virtual walk/run, meaning there is no specific day, time or location where it must take place, as long as it occurs between April 19-27, 2025. Registered participants can walk around a track at their local park, hike through a state forest or jog through their neighborhood. Keep an eye on PaParksAndForests.org for pop-up opportunities to join other registered participants.

Proceeds from the registration and any donations made will go toward planting trees and protecting forests across Pennsylvania’s 124 state parks and 20 forest districts.

Anyone who registers by April 1, 2025, will receive a Happy Little t-shirt, a commemorative bib number, a sticker and a finisher’s medal. Registration closes on April 15, 2025. If you are looking to register 10 or more people, please contact Michelle O’Kelly at okellym1@michigan.gov for potential discounts and special registration instructions. Don’t forget to submit your photos and results after the event and help show how many people care about Pennsylvania’s trees and water quality. ☐

Preregister:



NECESSARY FISHING ACCESSORIES

by *Darl Black*
photos by the author

When I was seven or eight, my dad presented me with a rod, reel and a few old lures. Handing me a pair of fingernail clippers, he said, “This is a necessary fishing accessory. Use these to cut the line instead of biting that mono with your teeth.” Over the years, I’ve added items to the accessories list.

Line Cutters

Pinch-Style Clippers

An inexpensive nail clipper is still as efficient for cutting extruded nylon or fluorocarbon fishing line as any fancier line cutter from a tackle company. Make sure to properly dispose of discarded line.

Braided Line Scissors

Until braided line hit the market in the late 1990s, a clipper was the only line-cutting tool needed. Braided line, however, is comprised of many fine strands of spun gel woven together. Pinch-style clippers only mash it down. A special type of small scissor is required to make a clean cut. Braided line scissors can be purchased at local bait and tackle shops and online tackle stores for about \$10.

Jig Eye Cleaning Tool

Although not a line cutter, consider this a “paint cutter” since you need a clean jig eye to tie the line. This little punch safely cleans hardened paint from the hook eye of jigs, eliminating the risky action of using another hook point to chip away paint to tie the jig on the line.

Hook Removal Tools

Long Nose Pliers

An ordinary pair of 6- or 7-inch long nose pliers is usually the go-to

tool used by anglers to extract hooks from a fish. The jaws of these pliers allow the angler to reach hooks outside the jaw or inside the mouth of medium to large fish. Basic long nose pliers may be purchased at a hardware store for less than “fishing pliers” offered by tackle manufacturers.

Bent Nose Pliers

Standard size long nose pliers are too large for small fish that “swallow” a bait hook. However, a small pair of bent nose pliers with its 90-degree bend at the tip is a “finesse” tool for this circumstance. Furthermore, bent nose pliers are best at removing circle hooks from any size fish by enabling a 360-degree rotation of hook.

Baker Hookout

When a large toothy fish like a Muskellunge, Northern Pike or Bowfin or a monster catfish takes a bait deep into its mouth, the Baker Hookout is the tool to grab. Its long shaft with offset pistol grip handle enables one to see down the fish’s mouth to grab the hook without getting fingers near the predator’s teeth.

Hook Cutters

Don’t wait until you need a hook cutter to realize you don’t have one. Standard long nose pliers will not cut hook wire. You should have either a pair of diagonal cutters or end nippers. Diagonal cutters handle lightwire hooks, but I prefer a 6-inch pair of end nippers for standard wire hooks. Although heavier and a little more expensive than diagonal cutters, end nippers get the job done efficiently.



Hook Sharpening Devices

Every hook eventually needs sharpening. For cutting point hooks in sizes #6 and larger, a small fine-tooth flat file is ideal. I prefer “ole yeller”—a 3-inch file with a yellow handle, which has been around for decades. For smaller hooks, a hook hone with a groove is the answer; simply run the point through the groove.

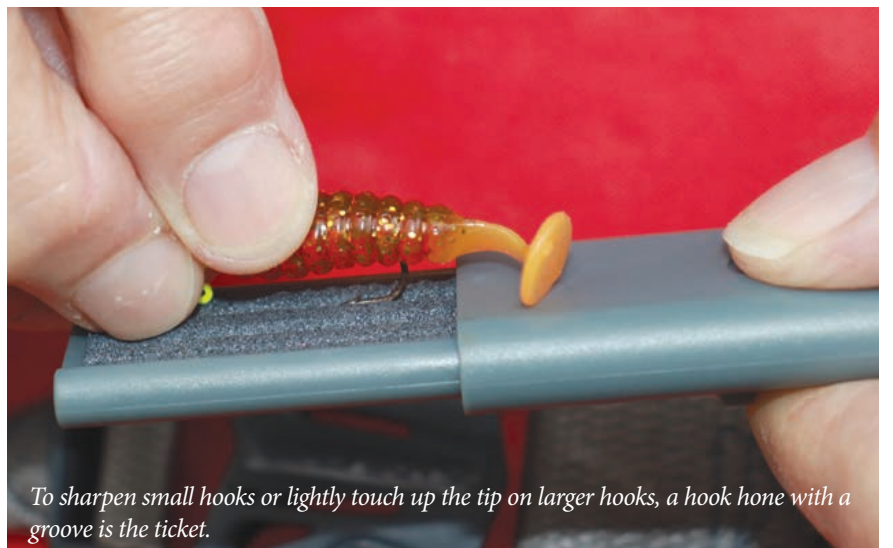
I carry all these tools in an 11-inch zippered case within easy reach when fishing in my boat. I also have a second smaller zippered case with the same items to carry when shore fishing or fishing in a friend’s boat. ☐



Clockwise from top right: Baker Hookout, 4-inch bent nose pliers, 7-inch round nose pliers, yellow handle file, hook hone with a groove, end nippers, diagonal cutters, jig eye cleaning tool, braided line scissors and fingernail clipper on cord.



A jig eye cleaning tool is safer to use to dislodge or chip away harden paint.



To sharpen small hooks or lightly touch up the tip on larger hooks, a hook hone with a groove is the ticket.





OUTDOOR MOMENT

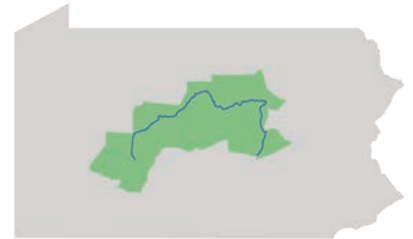


The West Branch Susquehanna River is located entirely in Pennsylvania and flows through Cambria, Indiana, Clearfield, Clinton, Centre, Lycoming, Northumberland, Union and Snyder counties.

Size: It's the largest tributary of the Susquehanna River at 243 miles long and Pennsylvania's longest officially designated water trail, making it a popular destination for kayaking and canoeing.

Field Notes: The West Branch Susquehanna River was once greatly impacted by acid mine drainage pollution from abandoned coal mines, but cleanup efforts have improved the river's health.

Did you know? Native Americans referred to this branch of the river as Quenischachgekhanne, meaning "the long reach river".



painting-jim Kent

PHILIP TOME— *Founding Father of the West Branch*

by Brady J. Crytzer

In the 18th century, no name loomed larger over the West Branch Susquehanna River than Philip Tome. As one of the earliest settlers of the region, Tome was a hunter, angler and pioneer. He was an interpreter among the powerful Iroquois Confederacy and established some of the earliest communities in central Pennsylvania. Two centuries after his death, his legacy as a “founding father” of the West Branch Susquehanna River remains.

Although Philip Tome made a name for himself as a true frontiersman, he was not born in the forest. Originally from Dauphin County, outside of Harrisburg, Tome’s family first moved to Northumberland County in 1786. Settlement was hard, and hostile native groups soon forced them out. Five years later, the Tome’s returned to Northumberland County and became one of the first Pennsylvania families to settle along the West Branch Susquehanna River. They were hardy people and did whatever they could to survive. Tome would go down in history as a famed hunter, but a close examination of his fishing prowess offers an important glimpse at life along the Pennsylvania frontier.

Fishing is a favorite pastime for modern Pennsylvanians, but in the early republic it was a critical food source. For centuries prior, Native Americans constructed triangular dams known as “weirs” to funnel fish into their baskets and nets. Along with wearing buckskins and trapping game, the Tome’s also borrowed this ancient strategy from their native neighbors. Along the frontier, this type of cultural exchange was common and for good reason. It was wildly effective. In one instance, Tome recalled catching “twelve wagon loads of suckers, three barrels of eels, and two barrels of salmon and rock-fish” in a single day. The construction of weirs was made illegal by the



photo-courtesy of the Pennsylvania Game Commission

colony of Pennsylvania in 1761, but these policies rarely took hold in the distant wilderness.

In 1791, native trout swarmed the West Branch Susquehanna River and its tributaries, and the then 10-year-old Tome was always there to capitalize. After settlers constructed a small dam across a creek, Tome noted that trout would strand themselves along its edges. Sensing opportunity, the young man left his homestead to catch the fish but was scolded by his father for shirking his chores.

“I took a basket and proceeded to the dam,” he remembered. “My father asked me where I was going. I replied that I was going to get some trout. I filled my basket as quickly as possible and hurried home.” Although his father was upset about Philip leaving unannounced, he was impressed by his ingenuity. Because of this system, the family graciously dined on trout throughout the year.

Fish were a staple food for settlers along the West Branch Susquehanna River. Along with trout, Tome fed

his family with slippery and unappetizing freshwater eels. Sharpening sticks into multi-tipped spears, Tome and his brothers became masters of “gigging,” thrusting these weapons directly into the water at their prey. “If the night was favorable,” wrote Tome, “we could catch from 60 to 100 eels.”


In the decades to come, Philip Tome garnered a reputation as an exceptional hunter and master angler, but his fame truly took off when he published his life’s story in 1854. Titled *Pioneer Life, Or Thirty Years A Hunter*, the autobiography made Tome the unofficial conscience of the Pennsylvania forest. He lived by a code and advocated for a set of principles that still resonates today.

“It is not the destruction of life which affords the pleasure of the chase,” wrote Tome. “It is the excitement

attendant upon the very uncertainty of it which induces men to leave luxurious homes and expose themselves to the hardships and perils of the wilderness. We did it in obedience to the primal laws of nature: for the subsistence or defense of ourselves and those whom we were bound by the ties of nature to support and defend.”

Philip Tome, a hunter, angler, interpreter and frontier diplomat, died a year after his book’s release in 1855. He was 73. □

Brady J. Crytzer teaches history at Robert Morris University. The author of seven books studying the early history of Pennsylvania, he lives and fishes outside of Pittsburgh.



*West Branch Susquehanna River
in 2024.*

photo-PFBC archives

West Branch Susquehanna River *Water Trail*

NC
PA!

SW
PA!

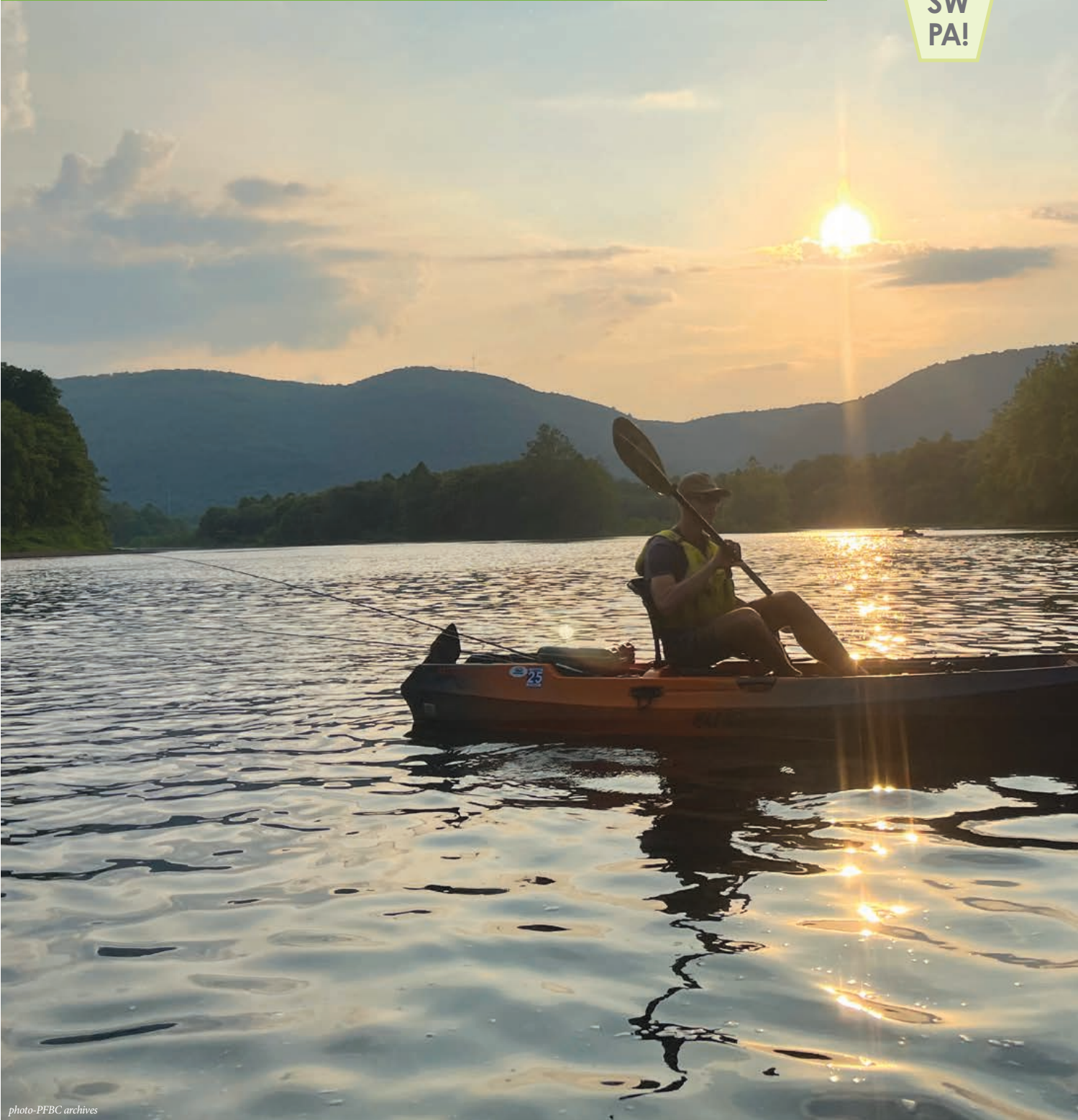


photo-PFBC archives



A kayak angler at sunset on the West Branch Susquehanna River.

by Bob Frye

BobbyJo Tallon once didn't know the West Branch Susquehanna River existed. She'll never forget it now. The Binghamton, NY, native frequently paddles the North Branch Susquehanna River, twice having floated the full 444 miles of the Susquehanna River from Cooperstown, NY, to Havre de Grace, MD. In between, though, she and her daughter, Devyn Dellapenta, canoed the entire 228 miles of the West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail, from Cherry Tree, Indiana County, to Sunbury, Northumberland County.

It was, she came to learn, "a totally different animal."

"It was really amazing to me the difference in scenery," said Tallon. "You're working with a lot more mountains, just a lot more hills. Devyn and I were lucky enough to see a lot of wildlife on the main branch. But, the West Branch, just being in the middle of nowhere and seeing more animals than people, was really unique."

They saw black bears, white-tailed deer, ducks, great blue herons and even elk.

"The West Branch is a hidden gem. I couldn't believe how absolutely beautiful it was when we were on there," said Tallon.

That anyone would say such a thing today is a testament to its recovery and revival.

"Once, in the early 20th century, the river was more an industrial highway than anything," said Alana Jajko, Director of Communications & Outreach for the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, the river trail's sponsor. The surrounding forests were stripped bare, their logs floated downstream to Williamsport, Lycoming County. Early on, they were tied together as super-sized rafts. Later, they were free-floated until corralled in "booms," or pools, between manmade islands connected by chains of floating logs. Men— sometimes boys as young as 12 years old— known as "lumber hicks" would sort them by the brands burnt into their ends and move them along to be turned into everything from ship masts to furniture.

"The largest boom was the Susquehanna Boom in Williamsport," said Jajko. "You can still see remnants of it on the river in the form of little grassy chains of islands."

That made fortunes for some—Williamsport was home to "Millionaire's Row," a section of downtown with more millionaires per capita than any other American city—but also left behind a scarred landscape.

On top of that, acid mine drainage from deep mines in the same hills left much of the river dead, too polluted to support fish life.

But, how things have changed. The surrounding hillsides are once again heavily forested, to the tune of hundreds of thousands of acres of state forests, state parks and state game lands.

The 34 miles or so of river between Karthaus, Clearfield County, and Renovo, Clinton County, is, in fact, the wildest, remotest float a paddler can experience in Pennsylvania.

“If you get in at Karthaus, you get out at Renovo,” said Jajko. “You kind of don’t have any other choice. It’s quite a stretch, definitely winding and wild.”

“But, we’ve gotten feedback that it’s people’s favorite section for that very reason, that it’s so off the grid. People have compared it to being in Colorado. You kind of forget that you’re in Pennsylvania.”

At the same time, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC), watershed organizations and sportsmen’s groups have worked hard to clean up the river. The result is a diverse and improving fishery.

“The river’s lower reaches, from Williamsport down to the mouth, a little over 35 miles, have always been pretty good,” said Jason Detar, PFBC’s area fisheries manager. “It’s always supported a pretty good warmwater fishery, particularly for Smallmouth Bass.”

But, these days, the river upstream is undergoing “a remarkable recovery.”

“The uppermost reaches of the West Branch, in Cambria and Clearfield counties, support wild Brown Trout, with the occasional Brook Trout mixed in,” said Detar.

“Work remains to be done, especially toward the river’s middle. The Karthaus to Renovo section, for example, remains in recovery phase,” said Detar. So, while it’s an iconic float and has Smallmouth Bass and other fish, it’s not yet necessarily a destination fishing water.

It’s getting better, though, and “I do think we’ll continue to see improvements in decades to come,” said Detar.

“The West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail is considered beginner-friendly, a Class I water with tame rapids under normal conditions that draws people. And certainly, when the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership hosts organized group floats, for 50 to 100 people at a time, all fill up,” said Jajko.

But, there’s really no way to monitor traffic on the river.

Tallon and Devyn saw no other paddlers upriver of Renovo. That was probably at least partly due to the time of year, though. Because Tallon is a school teacher, they couldn’t start their trip until July. That meant lots of skinny—ankle deep—water that can make kayaking and canoeing difficult.

Even if some sections of the river are best floated in the spring and fall, others are doable all year.



photo-Bob Frye

Stopping along the West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail to enjoy the quiet.

“From day trips to multi-day sojourns, there are a lot of different ways you can mix and match on-the-water adventure, which is really cool,” said Jajko.

The Susquehanna Greenway Partnership has information on recommended paddling itineraries and other information on its website. “Those kinds of details, available in one place, are the very thing that make ‘official’ water trails different from other waterways,” said Tali MacArthur, Program Manager for the Pennsylvania Organization for Watersheds and Rivers.

“The benefit of a water trail is that there’s information you can rely on about that waterway,” said MacArthur. “There’s a map that shows you where you can put your boat in the water, where you can take your boat out of the water, points of interest along the way and possible connections to land trails nearby. These are resources that you can count on.”

Susquehanna Greenway Partnership:





The West Branch Susquehanna River as seen from the overlook at Hyner View State Park, Clinton County.



Photos: Bob Frye

Accessing the West Branch Susquehanna in Hyner, Clinton County.



A view of the West Branch Susquehanna River from the overlook at Hyner View State Park.

“The idea is that there’s an entity you can call, talk to, visit their website, or go on their Facebook page to find out about the waterway, so you’re not going in cold.”

There’s a network of water trails across the state at pecpa.org/water/pa-water-trails—that MacArthur hopes to grow.

In the meantime, existing trail sponsors, like the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership, are always looking to improve conditions for paddlers. On the West Branch Susquehanna River, for example, the focus right now is on studying two kinds of access: opportunities to add new launches and opportunities to make more launches Americans with Disabilities Act compliant. The idea is to get even more paddlers and more anglers on the West Branch Susquehanna River and into its various river towns going forward.

Tallon hopes to be one of them. Visiting the river she never knew existed once is not enough.

“Oh my gosh, it’s stunning,” said Tallon. “When you’re on it and you’re going through the mountains, and you come around the bend and there’s just more mountains, it’s gorgeous.” ☐

More Information:

At 228 miles long, the West Branch Susquehanna River Water Trail can seem daunting. But, the Susquehanna Greenway Partnership breaks it into manageable pieces. Paddlers who visit susquehannagreenway.org/branches/west-branch will find suggested floats ranging in size with difficulty level, paddle time, potential hazards and recommended water levels.

Visitors can also buy a waterproof river trail map for \$25 or download a free digital version.

There’s a West Branch Paddle Club, too. Members get merchandise discounts, notice of group floats and more. Dues support projects benefitting the river, like the installation of fishing line recycling collection bins.

Paddlers who complete the entire river or any of four segments—detailed online, too—can earn pins and other recognition.

For additional information on paddling safety, launch permits, registration and the other branches of the Susquehanna River, go to susquehannagreenway.org/water-trails.



2025 FISHING LICENSES

Annual licenses are valid from December 1, 2024, through December 31, 2025. WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.

Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
101	Resident (Annual)	16-64	\$27.97
104	Senior Resident (Annual)	65 & up	\$14.47
105	Senior Resident (Lifetime)	65 & up	\$86.97
108	1-Day Resident (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$14.47
119	Disabled Veterans Reduced Resident License **	16 & up	\$2.97
122	Disabled Veterans Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$0.00
125	POW Resident Annual License **	16-64	\$2.97
102	Non-Resident (Annual)	16 & up	\$60.97
113	Non-Resident PA Student (Annual)	16 & up	\$27.97
106	1-Day Tourist *** (not valid March 15–April 30)	16 & up	\$31.97
103	3-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$31.97
107	7-Day Tourist	16 & up	\$39.47
110	Voluntary Youth Fishing License (Annual)	Less than 16	\$2.97
109	Mentored Youth Permit	Less than 16	\$0.00
150	Trout Permit	16 & up	\$14.97
151	Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
151SLE	Senior Lifetime Lake Erie Permit	65 & up	\$9.97
152	Combination Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$20.97

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee. Excludes licenses or permits issued at \$0.00. ** Can only be issued if initial license was purchased at a County Treasurer or PFBC offices. *** Includes Trout and Lake Erie permits, not valid March 15–April 30.

2025 MULTI-YEAR FISHING LICENSES

WHILE FISHING, your license must be, either in digital or print form, upon your person and provided upon the request of an officer.


Code	Type of Fishing License or Permit	Age	Cost*
150	1-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$14.97
151	1-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$9.97
152	1-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$20.97
030	3-Year Resident	16-64	\$79.97
031	3-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$178.97
032	3-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$39.47
033	3-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$40.97
034	3-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$25.97
035	3-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$58.97
050	5-Year Resident	16-64	\$131.97
051	5-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$296.97
052	5-Year Senior Resident	65 & up	\$64.47
053	5-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$66.97
054	5-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$41.97
055	5-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$96.97
060	10-Year Resident	16-64	\$261.97
061	10-Year Non-Resident	16 & up	\$591.97
063	10-Year Trout Permit	16 & up	\$131.97
064	10-Year Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$81.97
065	10-Year Combo Trout Lake Erie Permit	16 & up	\$191.97

* Includes issuing agent fee of \$1.00 and \$0.97 transaction fee.



2025 SEASONS, SIZES and CREEL LIMITS

COMMONWEALTH INLAND WATERS-2025

Species	Seasons	Minimum Size	Daily Limit
ALL SPECIES OF TROUT  Additional regulations may apply-consult the current <i>Pennsylvania Fishing Summary</i> .	Statewide Opening Day of Trout Season April 5 at 8 a.m. through Sept. 1	7 inches	5-streams, lakes and ponds (combined species)
	Extended Season: Stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 16 and Sept. 2 through Dec. 31	7 inches	3 (combined species)
	Extended Season: Waters not managed as stocked trout waters Jan. 1 through Feb. 16 and Sept. 2 through Dec. 31	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
BASS - Lakes, Rivers and Streams Largemouth, Smallmouth and Spotted Additional regulations may apply.	Jan. 1 through April 11 and Oct. 1 through Dec. 31	15 inches	4 (combined species)
	April 12 through June 13	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only (no tournaments permitted)	
	June 14 through Sept. 30	12 inches	6 (combined species)
Muskellunge and Tiger Muskellunge* Pickereel* Northern Pike*	Open year-round	40 inches	1 (combined species)
		18 inches	4
		24 inches	2
Walleye and Saugeye (Hybrids) Sauger	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 3 through Dec. 31	15 inches	6
	Jan. 1 through March 14 and May 3 through Dec. 31	12 inches	6
American Shad**	Open year-round	No minimum	3
American Shad	Open year-round - Lehigh River, Schuylkill River*** and tributaries	NO HARVEST - Catch and immediate release only	
American Shad	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
River Herring**	Susquehanna River and tributaries		
Hickory Shad**	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Herring, Gizzard Shad	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
American Eel	Open year-round	9 inches	25
Striped Bass and Striped Bass/White Bass Hybrids	Open year-round	20 inches	2 (combined species)
Sunfish, Yellow Perch, White Perch, Crappies, Catfish, Rock Bass, Suckers, Carp, White Bass, Bowfin and Other Gamefish Not Otherwise Listed Additional regulations may apply- see <i>Panfish Enhancement Special Regulations</i> .	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Baitfish/Fishbait**** (except Mudbugs/includes Crayfish)	Open year-round	No minimum	50 (combined species)
Mudbugs (Dragonfly Nymphs)	Open year-round	No minimum	Unlimited if taken from lakes, ponds, swamps and adjacent areas. 50 per day if taken from moving waters (rivers and streams).
Mussels/Clams	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		
Paddlefish, Spotted Gar and Other Threatened and Endangered Species	CLOSED YEAR-ROUND		

SEASONS, SIZES AND CREEL LIMITS – Except for trout season, which begins at 8 a.m., all regulatory periods in the fishing regulations are based on the calendar day, one of which ends at midnight and the next of which begins immediately thereafter.

* Except those species in waters listed in the **Brood Stock Lakes Program**. Tiger Muskellunge is a muskellunge hybrid.

** Unlawful to take, catch or kill American Shad in the Susquehanna River and all its tributaries. River Herring (Alewife and Blueback Herring) has a closed year-round season with zero daily limit applied to Susquehanna River and tributaries, Lehigh River and tributaries, Schuylkill River and tributaries, West Branch Delaware River, Delaware River, Delaware estuary, Delaware River tributaries upstream to the limit of the tidal influence and Conowingo Reservoir.

*** Lehigh River upstream of the first dam in Easton, Pennsylvania and its tributaries and the Schuylkill River upstream of the I-95 Bridge and its tributaries.

NOTE: It is not a violation of the bass regulations if a bass is immediately returned unharmed to the waters from which it was taken. It is unlawful for an angler to cast repeatedly into a clearly visible bass spawning nest or redd in an effort to catch or take bass.

NOTE: For bass regulations, power dam pools and recreational dam pools on the Susquehanna River and navigational dam pools on the Ohio River drainage are "rivers." It is unlawful to conduct a fishing tournament on the North Branch, West Branch or main stem of the Susquehanna River that allows a tournament angler to harvest bass.

NOTE: Stocked trout waters are closed to fishing from February 17 to the opening day of the regular trout season in April, unless included in the **Stocked Trout Waters Open to Year-Round Fishing Program**.

NOTE: Landlocked Alewife less than 8 inches in length taken from inland ponds, lakes or reservoirs that are collected by legal means may be harvested for use as baitfish.

NOTE: It is legal to fish for trout in Class A streams year-round, with no harvest beginning the day after Labor Day to the opening day of

trout season the following year. The exception is those stream sections designated as both Class A Wild Trout Streams and Stocked Trout Waters (Miscellaneous Special Regulations). These stream sections are closed to fishing from February 17 until 8 a.m. on the opening day of trout.

**** **BAITFISH** includes all forms of minnows; suckers, chubs, Fallfish, lampreys; Gizzard Shad 8 inches or less; and all forms of darters, killifishes and stonecats (except those listed as threatened or endangered species). Legally taken gamefish may be used as bait. It is unlawful to use or possess goldfish, comets, koi and Common Carp as baitfish while fishing. **FISHBAIT** includes crayfish, crabs and the nymphs, larvae and pupae of all insects spending any part of their life cycle in the water.

For all crayfish species, the head must be immediately removed behind the eyes upon capture unless used as bait in the water from which taken.

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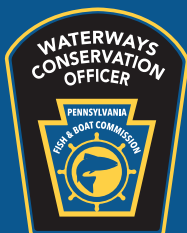
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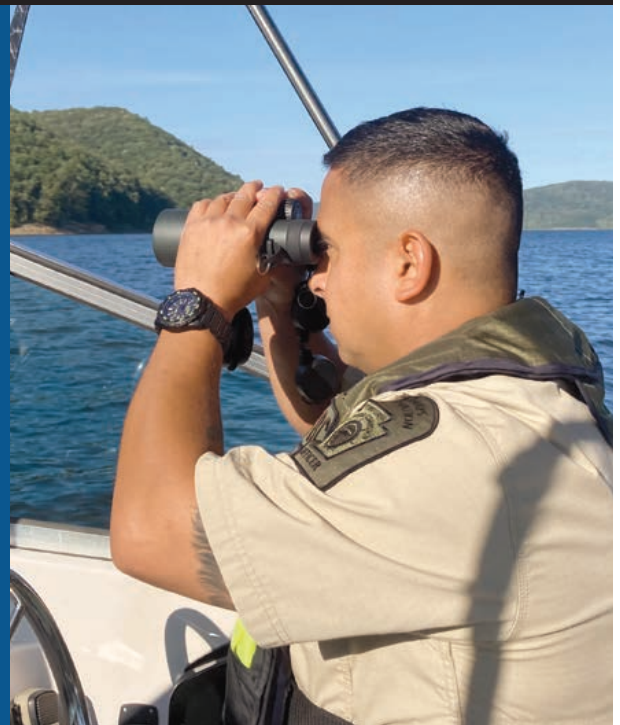
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NOTES *from the Streams*

A Small World

Waterways Conservation Officers (WCOs) have some say in where they get assigned out of the academy, but they frequently don't get the district of their dreams. For me, I completed my first 2 years out of the academy in Northern Montgomery and Eastern Berks counties in the Southeast Region. While I did enjoy my time in that area, made many friends and learned much about what it means to be a WCO, it simply wasn't the place I was going to spend the rest of my career.

When the opportunity arose, I transferred to the Northcentral Region of the state to take over the district of Clinton and Western Lycoming counties. Currently, Clinton County has a population of about 40,000, and Berks County has about 400,000. This meant I was moving to an area with less people, which was going to take some getting used to. However, what Clinton County lacks in resident population it makes up for in tourist population, being part of the largest outdoor recreation area in Pennsylvania.

Repeatedly, while I am patrolling my new district, I'm reminded that the world is small. While checking fishing licenses, I have encountered many people who live in the Southeast Region. One time, I checked an angler who turned out to be my high school teacher. Another time, I met a couple at a trout stocking

on Pine Creek who told me they were both retired Game Commission deputies from an area I used to patrol in Berks County. But to top it all off, I had a gentleman stop me on Little Pine Creek this fall and say, "You look really familiar; do you patrol Green Lane Park, Montgomery County?" I was a bit taken aback, but I recognized him as a gentleman that I had checked crappie fishing this past spring while in my previous patrol district.

I haven't been in my new district long, but it's funny how familiar faces seem to occasionally pop up. It always reminds me that although we do live in a huge world with billions of people, it can still feel small and tight-knit at times.—WCO Derek A. Norman, Clinton and Western Lycoming counties.

Gear Up for Adventure

Don't Forget to Wear Your Life Jacket!



PFBC ON THE JOB



photo-courtesy of WCO Derek A. Norman

Derek A. Norman
Waterways Conservation Officer

Home County: Snyder County
Current District: Clinton and Western Lycoming counties
Years as a WCO: 3½ years



Who or what influenced you to become a WCO?

"I interned with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection while in college. My boss during that time was a Deputy Waterways Conservation Officer with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission. His influence made me realize a job like this one existed."

Where is your favorite place to fish in your district? Why?

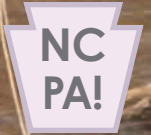
"Pine Creek, it's a nice fishery that is managed for trout and bass. You can catch Walleyes and muskies in the lower reaches."

What is the best aspect of being a WCO?

"Getting paid to do what I love on a daily basis. I would normally walk the streams anyway, but now I get paid to do it. I also like talking to like-minded sportsmen."

What is the toughest aspect of being a WCO?

"Telling people bad news. Telling someone they're getting a citation or telling someone an individual they know was injured in a boat accident."



Getting Kids Excited about Fishing and Conservation

by Linda Stager

photo-Linda Stager

Something exciting is happening in a local school near you right now. Aquariums are set up in classrooms across the state, and after the holiday break, they will be humming with “Trout In the Classroom” (TIC) projects.

At the Westfield Area Elementary School, Tioga County, Jodi Bruce, a language arts teacher and self-professed “trout fan,” will lead her school in an annual process that produces trout fingerlings by year’s end. Under Bruce’s guidance, students learn about water quality, life cycles and conservation.

“I’m a member of the Cowanesque Valley Anglers Club, and when Jason St. Peter from the club contacted me to see if we could partner to bring the TIC program to my school, I said yes!”

“The first part of the school year, we talk about the stages we’ll witness throughout the trout’s development and the environment necessary for trout to survive. We replicate that within our TIC tank. We are careful to monitor those factors to produce the best trout by the time we release them. We also talk about things we do in our own streams that help or hurt trout. We analyze a stream to determine whether it would be a good place to locate trout.”

“One of the other things we do is a great math activity, where we talk about why there are hatcheries. The kids do math calculations to decide how many trout eggs in a native environment will make it to adulthood. We compare that to

how many eggs will make it to adulthood within a hatchery environment. The kids really like that and understand the necessity of helping our local angler club,” said Bruce.

Over the last 5 years, Bruce’s project has grown. Last year, Bruce moved the trout aquarium from her classroom to the school’s main hallway. Now, fourth through sixth graders share in the trout’s development. “Kiddos unpack their lockers and then just spend a few minutes watching the fish each day,” said Bruce.

“We front load the trout life cycle, so the students are aware of the different changes that they are going to witness. We constructed a basket that hangs submerged in the water from the top of the tank, and the trout eggs go into that basket by a net. It makes it easier for the kiddos to stand and see the eggs. In nature, the eggs would be hidden in a gravel bed, but they are very visible in our tank. Each day, the kids take turns tending to the tanks. And, quickly enough, they’ll see little tails start to form.”

Later in the spring, students march down a path from the school to the Cowanesque River with the little fish in battery-operated and aerated 5-gallon pails. They scope out a protected spot and choose a place to stock the fish in the stream.

Bruce’s popular program includes other activities, too. For example, the school takes busloads of students, in fact, the entire sixth grade, on a field trip to the Cowanesque Valley Anglers Club nursery. Several “stations” allow the students to hear from a wildlife biologist, local outdoor enthusiasts and club members.



photo-Linda Stager

Cowanesque Valley Anglers Club nursery



photo-Ashley McKee

Ashley McKee's art project as part of the Trout In the Classroom program.



photo-Linda Stager

The look of awe after catching a fish at the kids fishing hole.

An exciting art project took over the school's lobby last year. Art teacher Ashley McKee's class created a huge diorama of fish in an aquarium. The floor-to-ceiling colorful display features three-dimensional trout crafted by the students from 2-liter soda bottles. In other years, students have baked "trout cookies" to teach anatomy and sketched trout drawings, which they crafted into backpack charms.

Bruce's project truly is a community project. Every spring, the Cowanesque Valley Anglers Club opens two local fishing holes for kids under 16 or anyone who is disabled and stocks them with trophy-sized trout from the nursery. The excitement is palpable.

Other local organizations, too, have stepped up. Sponsorships support ongoing program expenses, and many hands from all over the school district help by sustaining excitement for the project.

How does a teacher do something similar in their school? Find a sponsoring partner and register for an upcoming workshop through the Pennsylvania TIC website (QR code below).

"I always tell the kids my passion for trout came from spending time with my family. And, even though fishing isn't always a part of it, the science of trout and learning to understand the importance of our local nursery and what it does for our community is significant. The value of handing down tradition and knowledge is vital. We meet so many cool people who teach us things that you can't always learn in a textbook; those are things to hand down to the next generation," said Bruce.

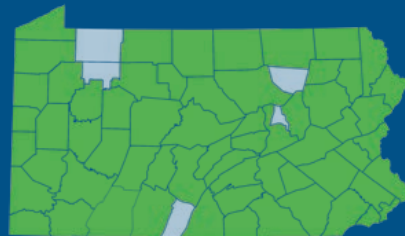
Communities like St. Peter's and Bruce's tell you that these programs teach kids a lifetime appreciation for fishing and conservation.

We would agree. ☺

2023-2024 Pennsylvania Trout In the Classroom Made a Splash!

- 417 classrooms
- 200 of 500 Pennsylvania school districts
- 255 classrooms partner with Trout Unlimited or other organizations
- 57,114 students across Pennsylvania

62 Counties with TIC



Map Legend

- Counties with TIC
- Counties without TIC

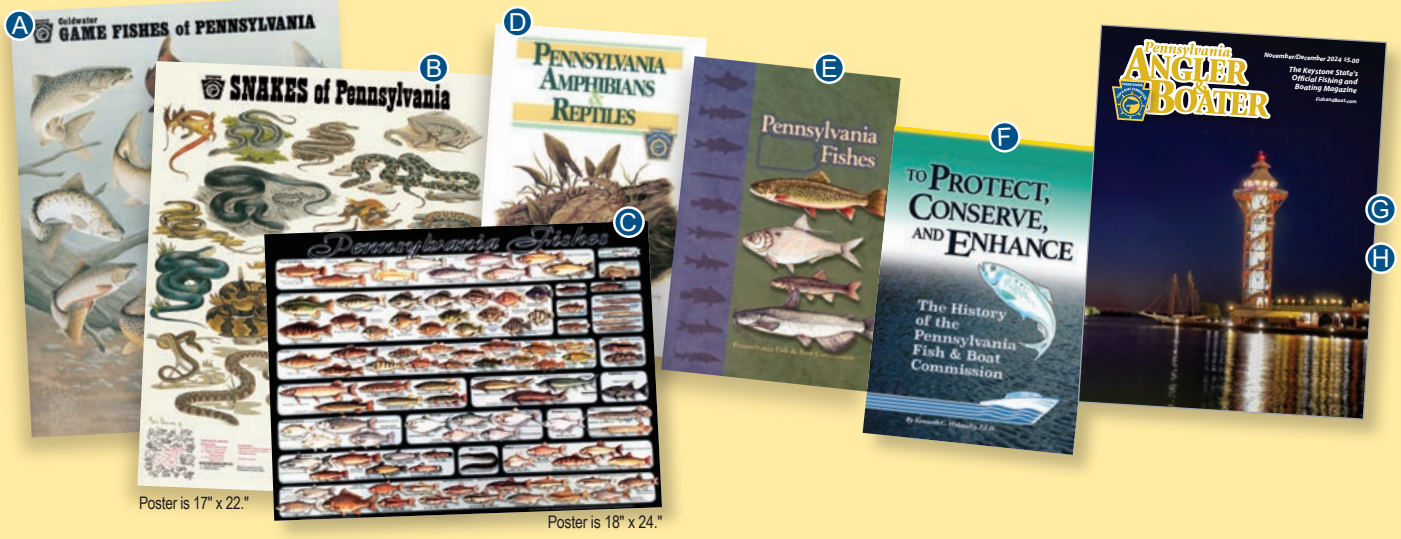
More information:



Posters are 17" x 22."

Books are 6" x 9."

Magazines are 8.25" x 10.88."



	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
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B Set of: Frogs, Salamanders, Snakes, Turtles (4 posters)	\$12.11	_____	_____
C Set of: Pennsylvania Fishes Wall Charts (2 posters)	\$ 9.16	_____	_____
D Pennsylvania Amphibians & Reptiles Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
E Pennsylvania Fishes Book (172 pages)	\$14.34	_____	_____
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SCOTT JEDD

Lure Sleuth



by Alex Zidock Jr. photos by the author

He's a sleuth among collectors. Coming from the Old Norse word sloth, meaning "trail," sleuthing then is following a trail, and that's precisely what keeps Scott Jedd interested in collecting fishing lures. After buying and selling fishing lures since the early 1990s, he changed his focus and shifted from a hobby collection to a full-time passion.

"What really attracts me are things that nobody knows what the heck they are. So, I now look for unidentifiable lures and research them," said Jedd. "I'll be checking old patents, and I'm like, well, this matches this, and that matches that," said Jedd. "And, you know, there's no better feeling to take one of these lures that I bought and didn't know what it was, and then, I match it to an obscure patent, and suddenly, you've got a name and a history. Then, you can add that history to something else I researched or may have in my collection and share that information with other collectors. This has now become my

passion. So, I mostly look for the lures with no identifying marks at every show I go to."

Jedd, who lives near Downingtown, began collecting fishing lures when he inherited a tackle box. "My grandfather, who lived in Ohio and fished there and in Pennsylvania, decided one day to drive as far north as he could to fish and ended up 3 hours north of Toronto, Canada. He liked it there so much he bought a little fishing cabin. He eventually left me a tackle box full of an assortment of lures he gathered from many locations."

"There were three or four in my grandfather's tackle box that were about \$100 lures. That's remarkable, I thought, and if that's the case, I can find other ones to sell. So, I started collecting and doing research. Pretty soon, you know, a \$3 profit turned into a \$10 profit. And then, suddenly, I was buying tackle boxes for \$300, \$400 and even \$500 and doubling my money," said Jedd.

Two years ago, the company where Jedd worked for 30 years decided to restructure, and he was offered a way out. "That's when I decided to do this lure collecting and selling



You never know what you may find in an old tackle box. These are excellent examples of some homemade and folk art lures Scott Jedd is researching. The nameplate on the complete tackle box he recently purchased is Martin Skinner; whether Skinner made them is still unknown.

full time, and I made the transition,” said Jedd. “And, so far, I’m happy and making a living.”

“I went to a flea market this past weekend,” said Jedd. “And, while I didn’t expect much, occasionally, you find a diamond in the rough. Walking down one aisle, sitting on the corner of a table, were two lures for sale for \$3 each. They turned out to be Malcolm Shipley Pocono Minnows from the 1895 era made right here in Pennsylvania,” said Jedd.

Three lures in Jedd’s collection are among his favorites. “They’re unknown, obviously, but there’s a partial story here. We call this the Pringle Minnow, and if you look at the props, there’s a small grommet on the back side of both sides of the props. On that grommet, there’s a patent date, and that patent date is findable. The patent corresponds to Eugene Pringle, who made gloves and filed a patent for the grommet in 1902. There is no known crossover with the lures other than probably what was left of the glove stud inventory that ended up for sale somewhere, and someone used the grommet to make these lures,” said Jedd.

According to Jedd, there are only eight of these lures known to exist. “I was able to acquire the third one in July or August. So, I’ve got three of the eight, and I know where the others are,” said Jedd. “I would very much love to know the story behind these, because they’re very uniform. All eight are the same size, have the same hole configuration, have the same eyes and have the same grommets on the props. And, it’s a popular story now, so other collectors also want to know.” Jedd suggests anyone interested in collecting fishing lures join the National

Fishing Lure Collectors Club. If you have old fishing lures and would like more information about them, Jedd is the administrator of a forum on YouTube at Identify Your Pre-1980 Fishing Lures. ☐



Only eight Pringle Minnows exist, and Scott Jedd has three of them. Unique to the lure is a grommet patented by a hand glove maker. But, at this time, the Pringle company has no connection to lure making. Jedd is currently trying to track down the maker of the lures.

Scott Jedd

scottjedd@yahoo.com



NEW RULES for RENTALS

by Mike Parker

Communications Director

Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

The concept of “try before you buy” is nothing new when it comes to many common purchases, from test driving a new car to free trials on a digital music streaming service. While some people are more prone to impulse buying for something they really want, it’s usually safer to take it for a test spin first.

For boaters, one of the best ways to try something new is through a boat rental service, also known as a livery. Amid an explosion of unpowered boating over the past decade across Pennsylvania, the number of liveries has also grown, providing first time boaters with more opportunities than ever to rent a kayak, pontoon or personal watercraft (PWC) for a short-term commitment. If the renter has a great experience, there’s a good chance they’ll become a repeat customer, or even buy their own boat for future adventures.

Of course, it’s not only first-timers who rent boats, and liveries aren’t only for test drives. Plenty of experienced boaters also rent boats while on a vacation, for special events or they simply don’t want to take on the financial commitment, maintenance and storage needs that go along with boat ownership. No matter the type of renters they serve, livery operators bear a great deal of responsibility when sending renters out onto the water.

Survey Says

Throughout 2023-2024, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) conducted a wide-ranging survey to gather input from known livery operators, identify new liveries and learn about current business practices and challenges within Pennsylvania’s boat rental industry. Following stakeholder input, the PFBC Board of Commissioners acted at its October 2024 meeting to adopt several new requirements for livery operators to clarify their responsibilities, ensure the safety and satisfaction of renters and connect more customers with liveries. The new regulations took effect on January 1, 2025.

What’s Changed?

The section of the PA Fish and Boat Code (Title 58, Chapter 117) that applies to boat rental businesses has always included basic rules for livery operators, requiring



photo-PFBC archives



For boaters, one of the best ways to try something new is through a boat rental service, also known as a livery.

them to perform regular inspections of boats and equipment, offer basic boating safety orientation to renters of both powered and unpowered boats and provide qualified observers to keep an eye on renters who are using PWCs.

Under the amended regulations, livery operators will now need to provide some detailed business contact information to PFBC. Using a free online form through **HuntFish.pa.gov**, livery operators can enter their business name, address, types of boats available for rent and make any updates, as needed. This step is required for all boat rental businesses, regardless of size, from those with brick-and-mortar locations to individuals who use social media marketplaces to rent boats in exchange for money.

Another new change is that it is now mandatory, not optional, for livery operators to provide basic boating safety orientation to all renters. In addition, any livery staff who provide safety orientation for motorboat renters are required to possess a Boating Safety Education Certificate (BSEC).

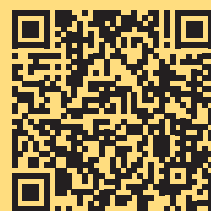
While it has long been required that boat rental agreements be put in writing, livery operators must now include information in the agreement that identifies the livery by name, the renters who have completed safety orientation and the dates of the rental period. A copy of this information must be made available to a Waterways Conservation Officer upon request.

Anyone born on or after January 1, 1982, who rents a boat equipped with a motor greater than 25 horsepower or any PWC is exempt from possessing a BSEC when the livery verifies that the renter has completed the safety orientation provided by the livery prior to rental. However, for PWCs, liveries will now have to provide renters with a map of the designated area where they can operate the PWC and keep the map on board with them. Observers will continue to be required to monitor PWC renters and must also provide immediate assistance in case of an accident or misuse.

Additional language has been added to regulations to ensure that liveries have the proper registrations and unpowered launch permits displayed on rental boats based on where they will be accessing the water.

As always, the goal of any boating adventure is to have fun. By researching your rental options in advance and asking questions before exchanging money, you'll find a reputable rental business that will provide you with a safe and legal experience, so you can focus on enjoying time on the water. ☐

**Do You Have a Boat Rental Business?
Connect with PFBC:**





Get the Net!

by Braden Eisenhower

photos by the author





A clean, organized boat maintains safe walkways and limits equipment damage through the chaos of landing a fish.

It's one of those days. All is quiet on your line. Meanwhile, your fishing partner is battling another fish. What's left for you to do but handle the net?

That's not to say the task is unimportant; a capable net operator helps his or her fishing partner's dream of landing a trophy come to fruition. Even so, how many anglers have given net duty careful thought, much less sought to perfect the skill?

The act of landing a fish is quick work. Success begins before the catch, with attention to organization and communication.

Chaos erupts when a fish strikes. Anglers must be able to move freely without fear of breaking equipment or falling overboard. It's wise to organize the boat to reduce clutter and enable safe walkways. Designate spaces for tackle boxes, coolers, life jackets and rods that are not in use—whatever gear typically accompanies you to the water.

Anglers often stow nets in storage compartments when traveling. While prepping the boat, ensure the net is fully deployed and kept within reach. Keep the net (or nets) clear of tackle boxes, clothing, lures and other gear throughout the day.

Discuss preferred landing areas with your boat partner. When Muskellunge fishing, for example, my dad and I prefer to land fish on the port (left) side of the boat. This spot offers ample clearance, so we each have room to play the fish or execute a successful netting without mishaps caused by the outboard, trolling motor or cockpit on the starboard (right) side. The fish dictates where the netting occurs some of the time, of course, but we at least have an ideal scenario in mind.

While navigating throughout the boat with net in hand, keep the net high and away from obstructions. Rod eyelets, boat cleats and the throttle handle seemingly reach out to grab the net bag. With larger nets, keep the netting material in your non-dominant hand while holding the net handle with your dominant hand.

If fishing from shore, be mindful of obstacles like bushes and brush. Look for a place to stand near the water's edge that offers safe and stable footing.

When it's time to land a fish, it's a team effort. The angler fighting the fish must maintain a tight line throughout the fight and netting—and needs room to do so. The angler working the net should position him or herself next to this angler with the net out of the water. This provides a target for the angler fighting the fish, who works to get the fish close to the surface of the water while simultaneously

leading the fish to the net headfirst. When the fish is within reach, the netting angler slides the net under the fish and lifts upward in a scooping motion. This allows the depth of the net bag to consume the fish, so it's unable to tail kick and come free of the net.

The scooping motion is quick and fluid, but only performed when the fish is ready. If the fish is deep and continuing to make hard runs, keep the net out of the water until the time is right. A fish, no matter the species, will not willingly swim into a net. Dunking the net too early will only startle the fish and prolong the battle.

This protocol also works when fishing solo. The ordeal is drawn out as the angler must play the fish while diverting attention occasionally to ready the net. With patience and coordination, the angler calmly slides the net under the fish and performs the scoop.

Landing a fish is tedious yet chaotic. Master this fundamental skill to truly get your hands on a trophy fish. ☐



Folding nets are handy when transporting to and from the water. Deploy and stow the net in a convenient place. No one wants to scramble to locate and ready a net when a fish is on the line.



BOATING FACILITY GRANT PROGRAM

by Mark McLaughlin
Waterways and Marina Management Chief
Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission

On a beautiful October day, with the fall leaves at their most vibrant, a large group of local residents and supporters gathered along the banks of the Lackawaxen River to participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony at Wayne County's newest park and boating access site. As part of the county's vision to establish a new water trail on the Lackawaxen River, Sycamore Point Park River Access & Boat Launch in Honesdale will serve as the uppermost access point for the proposed water trail. Once considered a forgotten river, the Lackawaxen River's past as a coal passage route as well as industrial thoroughfare made access difficult for boaters and anglers. Spearheaded by Wayne and Pike Trails and Waterways Alliance (and many

other partners), more access sites are being added, and interest in the Lackawaxen River as a welcoming spot for boaters and anglers is on the rise.

The grounds now boast a 20-foot wide concrete ramp for kayak and canoe access, a parking area with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible parking spaces, a dry composting restroom and a refurbished ADA-compliant river walk from Twelfth Street to the river. Residents agree that the park is a much appreciated upgrade from what was previously known as Industrial Point. According to the Honesdale Borough Mayor, Derek Williams, "leadership in the community recognized that this is a place people go, so we should invest in it and make it easier to go."

Wayne County was awarded funding from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) in April 2021 and construction at Sycamore Point Park began in 2023, but the brainstorming about the potential project began amongst many different groups years ago. Because



The ramp leading down to the Lackawaxen River, Wayne County
 photos-PFBC archives

of its location in the Delaware River Watershed, the PFBC was able to leverage an award from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund. Since 2020, PFBC has received three grants from the Fund totaling \$1.6 million. As a result of these awards, PFBC has been able to leverage those dollars to help fund over \$14.5 million in 19 other projects across the watershed.

"The theme of the ceremony, and key to the project's successful completion, was collaboration," said Ryanne Jennings, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Wayne County Community Foundation. "This project has taken everyone rowing in the same direction to come to fruition," said Sheila Eyler, United States Fish and Wildlife Service Mid-Atlantic Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office Project Leader. "Thanks to your efforts, more people will be able to experience the beauty of this place connecting nature in ways that will inspire generations to come". ☐



The sign at the Sycamore Point Park River Access & Boat Launch, Wayne County.



Citizens of Honesdale and supporters of the Sycamore Point Park River Access & Boat Launch gather at the ribbon-cutting event.



Tim Schaeffer, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Executive Director, speaking at the Sycamore Point Park event.



ENHANCING YOUR FLIES

by John Allen

photo by the author



People always strive to make pre-existing creations better. In fly fishing, we want the best flies possible. As fly tiers, we take some of the best flies made and make them better. Whether it be better floating, flashier or more durable, you can always make your flies better.

The most difficult thing to do while fly fishing for wild Brook Trout is keeping your fly floating. My two favorite patterns are a Wulff and an Elk Hair Caddis. The biggest downside to both patterns is they become easily waterlogged. Using polypropylene yarn, a naturally floating material, for the wings, helps reduce the issue. Even when the material gets waterlogged, a few quick false casts are usually enough to clear the water from the fly.

The most common way to enhance your flies is by adding flash. This can be done by incorporating bead heads or flash into the backs, bodies or tails of your nymphs and streamers. Flash is great for catching the attention of fish. It can be as subtle or gaudy as you want. I find subtle is best on highly pressured fish, and gaudy is best on freshly stocked trout.

One of the most frustrating things about fly fishing is when my fly completely falls apart on a good bite. To make a fly more durable, counter wrap the body of the fly with another material. I like to use fishing line, wire and oval tinsel in a variety of different colors. Fishing line is good for blending in, and wire gives the fly some weight while also segmenting the body. Oval tinsel is both lightweight and strong, plus adds an additional element of flash.

This winter as you're tying your flies for the coming year, make your usual flies even better using these techniques. ▣



PFBC's Ladies Introduction to Fly Fishing Program

by Sara Schlesinger

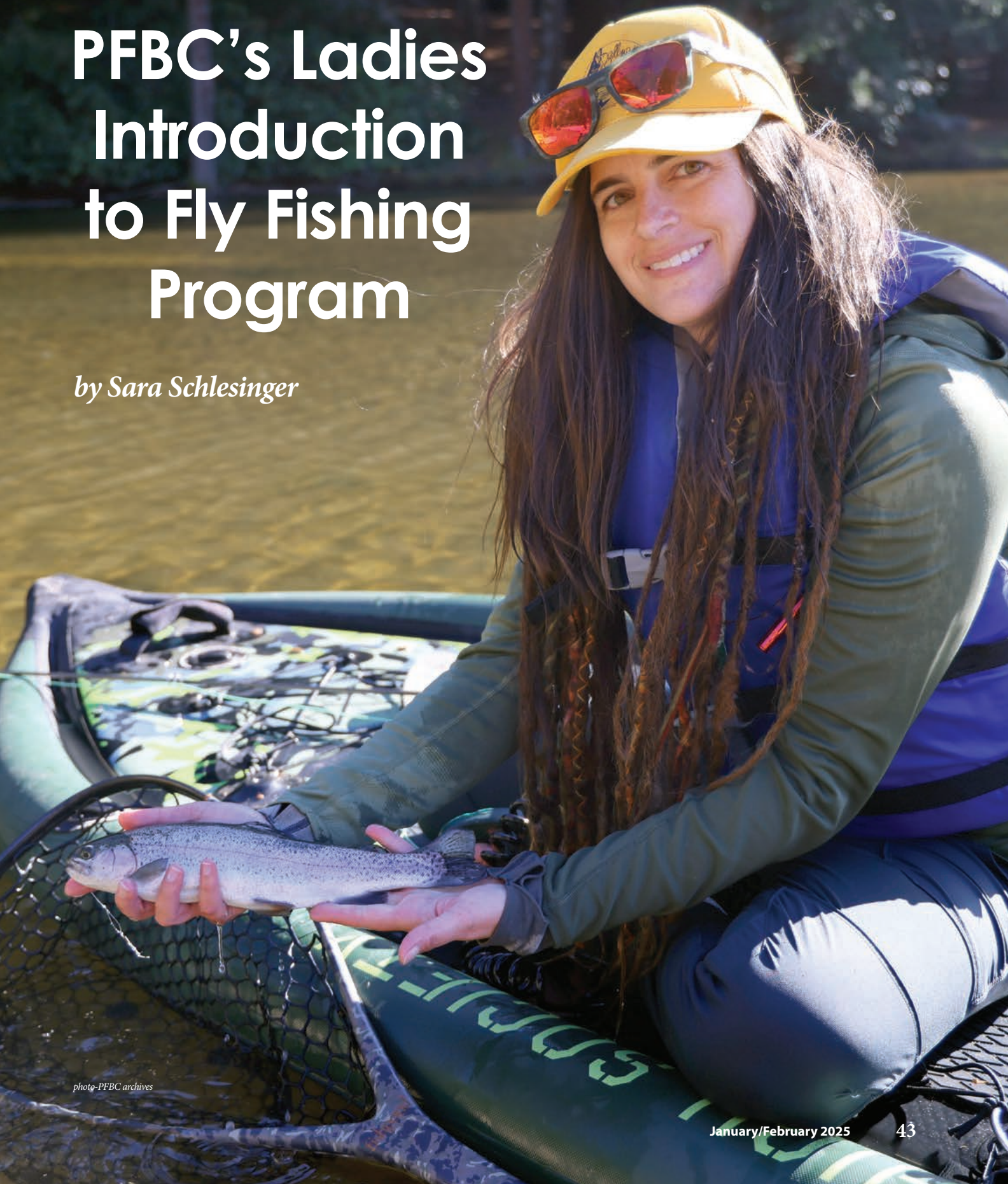


photo-PFBC archives



If you're looking to improve your fishing skills, or even try fishing for the first time, I highly recommend the programs that the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) offers to anglers. And, the best part, these programs are free.

I've been fishing since I was little and fly fishing for about 7 years, but I never had much guidance. Last summer, looking to improve my skill set, I signed up for the Ladies Introduction to Fly Fishing online program. The online learning taught me the thought process behind different leader and tippet selections, how to read the water and much more. Signing up for this course also qualified me to participate in the Women's Introduction to Steelhead Fly Fishing program in Erie.

I attended this program last fall, where I caught my first steelhead, and I was hooked. Recently, I had the opportunity to attend the program again, and I expanded my knowledge, improved my casting, made new friends and danced with some chromers (steelhead) and suckers, which fight even harder than steelhead.

Not only did I catch a bunch of fish, but I also landed great connections and new friendships. This program is a phenomenal opportunity for networking with like-minded people. Women from West Virginia, Maryland, Ohio and New York were in attendance as well. The first time I attended this event, I went alone, not knowing another person. Each time I go, I make more friends and connections, expanding locations

for fishing opportunities through other female anglers who offer open invitations to hang out and fish in their home waters.

Don't be afraid of trying something new, because you might not be good at it. As a female angler looking to get into the sport or advance your skills, it's easy to be intimidated by a male dominated activity. I implore you to push past any thoughts of self-doubt, and I promise you'll be thrilled with what's waiting on the other side. That's what sets PFBC's Ladies Introduction to Fly Fishing program apart from others, the inclusivity and encouragement from a variety of mentors.

The group consisted of people ranging from those who have never touched a fly rod to women who have been fishing for years but never for steelhead as well as local guides, certified casting instructors, well-known fly tiers and fly fishing authors. Each person supported and encouraged one another. So, if you arrived alone, you left with new friends and a sense of belonging.

We, as Pennsylvanians, are blessed to have more miles of streams than any state, other than Alaska, along with superb programming and mentorship for anglers provided by PFBC, Trout Unlimited chapters and other groups encouraging and educating anglers. And, for more benefit, those who actively recreate are more invested in the conservation of our natural resources. ▣



Raymond B. Winter State Park, Union County

photo-PEBC archives

Gear Up for Adventure!

WEAR YOUR LIFE JACKET.

Life jackets save lives year round and are required to be worn November 1 to April 30.

Regulations:



photo-Anna Topper

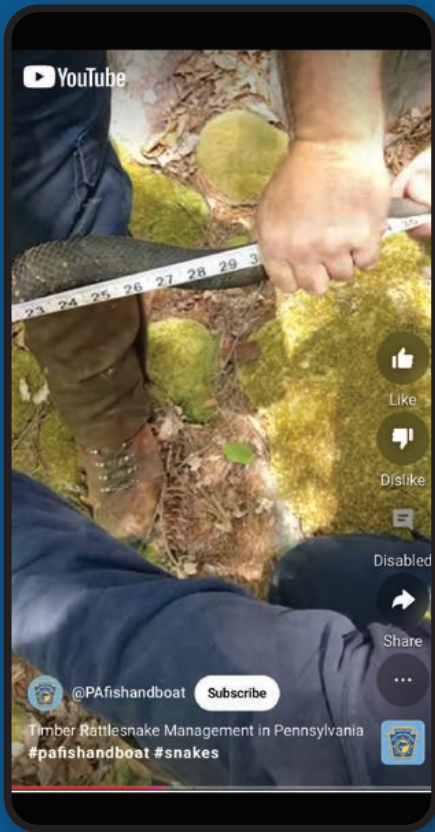
Calhoun Recognized as Educator of the Year



photo-PFBC archives

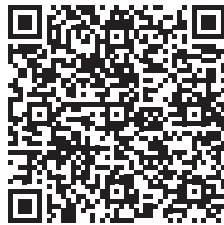
Chris Calhoun, Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) Lead Water Rescue Instructor, Butler County, has been named the 2024 Northern Region Educator of the Year by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators. The award recognizes Calhoun's 35 years of commitment to improving safety and training on Pennsylvania's waterways and beyond. In addition to his role with PFBC, Calhoun is a full-time professor and coordinator for the park and recreation management program at Butler County Community College, where he teaches paddling, boating and water safety. Calhoun has instructed training programs in 14 states, is recognized internationally as an expert in his field and has contributed to Pennsylvania's unique status as having the nation's only Federal Emergency Management Agency-approved water rescue program.

CONNECT WITH US



Timber Rattlesnakes are part of our natural heritage and one of three venomous snakes native to our state. Learn more about how the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and partners work together to monitor and protect snake populations from becoming threatened or endangered.

Timber Rattlesnake Management:



@PAfishandBoat #FishPA
#PAfishandBoat #WearIt

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EXPLORE PA WATERS®



➔ **Finn Cronin** caught and released this Largemouth Bass while fishing at Middle Creek Wildlife Management Area, Lancaster County, during a Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission staff-led "Introduction to Fishing" program held as part of an event celebrating National Hunting and Fishing Day.



