

APPRECIATING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Public land managers play a vital role in conserving and caring for our commonwealth's natural resources, restoring wildlife habitats, and promoting forest health. Their service is to advance the mission of each state agency charged with a different natural resource whether it be plants, animals, or water. Their work is understated and vital to the health of all living things through clean air and water, and a resilient food chain. These public servants provide for us all. North Branch Land Trust recently had the opportunity to sit down with;



Nicholas Lylo

District Forester of Pinchot Forest District

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/pinchot>



Rich Glinski

District Forester of Loyalsock State Forest

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-forests/find-a-forest/loyalsock>



Brian Taylor

State Parks Regional Director

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/dcnr/recreation/where-to-go/state-parks>



Michael Beahm

Northeastern Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/pgc/about-us/about-the-pgc>



Mike Parker

Communications Manager of Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

<https://www.pa.gov/agencies/fishandboat>

to ask a few questions on the importance of land management and how the public can support their efforts.



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Interview with Nicholas Lylo

District Forester of Pinchot Forest District



Pinchot State Forest, home of around 50,000 acres spans across five counties including Lackawanna, Luzerne, Wyoming, Susquehanna, and Wayne. The forest itself gets its name from the recognition of Gifford Pinchot, a longtime contributor to forestry and strong advocate for forest land conservation. Across the 50,000 acres are 8 (eight) tracts and 3 (three) Recreation Areas for public use. The lands themselves characterize “many of the mountainous areas near the confluence of the Susquehanna and Lackawanna rivers,” along with many other scenic wonders across Northeastern Pennsylvania.

What is the mission of your agency? How was it formed and when (legislation, etc.) – brief history so the reader understands the genesis and unique mission of your agency?

N. Lylo: “[The Bureau of Forestry] is niche as it is the only agency that has legislative responsibility for the state forest system and forest protection. My agency’s mission combines the protection of forest lands, conservation [of forests], and the management of state forest lands. It is a two-fold mission having both legislative and management responsibility. The bureau started in 1895 – came out of the early conservationist efforts of Pinchot and Roosevelt, who realized need for protection of forestlands (& water lands for social use).”

“In 1995, legislation for Act 18 was passed [and this] established the Department of Conservation & Natural Resources and multiple use management which later transformed into ecosystem management in the 2000s. Within the Bureau of Forestry, we have three aspects to our work where we oversee the [Pinchot] state forest land, act as a protection organization [with our Wildland fire program], and as a forest health program to fight invasive insects and diseases.”

What is something you wish the public to better understand about your operations?

N. Lylo: “Having worked within this profession for over 30 years, the biggest thing I have found is explaining the difference between the Bureau of Forestry and other state forest lands along with other conservation state agencies. Within the Bureau of Forestry, our mission continually reflects having a passive recreation mission due to the legislation passed with Act 18.”

What are some of the biggest challenges which you face in managing public land/water?

N. Lylo: “One of the biggest challenges [myself and the agency face] is making people aware of the Bureau of Forestry, state forest lands, and the use and value of those lands. Because state forests in our region are a relatively new concept, forests have not historically been forest lands. For example, when you look at the foundations of the Lackawanna State Forest (once known as the Lackawanna Forest District) many people may not know that this forest land was the beginning of what we call Pinchot State Forest today.”

What are some opportunities you have to help the public better understand, appreciate and steward the natural resources that your agency manages?

N. Lylo: “One of the strongest opportunities within northeastern Pennsylvania is the valuable partnerships we have. Conservation organizations like North Branch Land Trust, for example, help facilitate sustainable surveillance of the land along with responsible outdoor recreation. Having an understanding and realizing these things for future benefit is very important. Within the state forest lands, there are often large parcels of land that become available to purchase. Large parcels of land that became available to be state forest lands – needed a willing partnership – cannot do anything well without public support”

Can you share some recent projects and how they have advanced conservation, increased habitat, provided user benefit, etc.?

N. Lylo: “One big project is the creation of the Pinchot State Forest itself and that was a multi-phase project where prior to 2016, the forest simply did not exist. Through partnerships and public support, opportunities to purchase land [within what is now Pinchot] arose. Beginning with the Theta Land Corporation, the Commonwealth got involved in purchasing over 25,000 acres and was an additional foundation to Pinchot State Forest. We have also worked in the past with the Earth Conservancy to acquire 10,000 acres of former blue coal land in the area. More notably, the Bureau worked with The Conservation Fund to acquire the Miller Mountain Tract through mitigation money from pipeline and gas work across northeastern Pennsylvania.”

*In 2016, DCNR secretary and forester approved Lackawanna to Pinchot name change in recognition of Gifford Pinchot.

How do you balance conservation goals with other uses?

N. Lylo: “Forest management goals are what drives the agency. The mission, legal, and Constitutional values drive us towards meeting conservation goals. Outside of that, there are the multitude of needs within the environment including the recreation community, timber industry community (forest products), watersheds. This industry is what I would consider a society-driven need, because the forests themselves provide both air and water.”

How can members of the public best support efforts to protect and maintain public lands?

N. Lylo: “For the community, having state forest’s so readily available is vastly important for not only the Bureau, but also the community throughout northeastern Pennsylvania. Through education and outreach in schools [and the community], recognition of the value of healthy, sustainable forests can be achieved. Additionally, staying informed on current events and how they impact the environment along with laws and policies doing the same is a great way for the public to stay informed. Most of all, however, the best way to support these efforts is by using your state forests and all they have to offer.”



APPRECIATING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Rich Glinski

District Forester of Loyalsock Forest District



Loyalsock State Forest covers over 114,552 acres throughout counties which include Sullivan, Lycoming, and Bradford. Known as Northeastern Pennsylvania's "Endless Mountains" region, the forest itself encompasses a vast array of hiking trails, waterfalls, and the well-known Loyalsock Creek.

What is the mission of your agency? How was it formed and when (legislation, etc.) – brief history so the reader understands the genesis and unique mission of your agency?

RG: "PA DCNR, Bureau of Forestry mission is to conserve, steward and enhance Pennsylvania's trees, forests, and native wild plants and connect with all the people and communities we serve. The original agency, PA Division of Forestry, was first founded in 1895 and the delegated duties of the PA Bureau of Forestry are outlined in Act 18 and the Pennsylvania Constitution."

What is something you wish the public to better understand about your operations?

RG: "It is important to understand that the Bureau of Forestry strives to manage our state forest lands using ecosystem management. Because of this, we have to balance all the different aspects of what we do so that human actions do not negatively impact or otherwise compromise the integrity of our natural ecosystems. Most often, our constituents are focused on their own individual interests and expect us to be able to accommodate their desires without exception."

What are some of the biggest challenges which you face in managing public land/water?

RG: "With a global economy come global problems, primarily in the form of non-native invasive plants, insects and diseases. Many of our forests have seen rapid decline caused by spongy moth, emerald ash borer, hemlock wooly adelgid, and beech leaf disease, just to name a few. Adding to the problems are the rapid expansion of invasive plants such as Japanese barberry, Amur honeysuckle, stilt grass, knotweed, the list goes on and on. Another problem that we see is the illegal construction of trails, most often by mountain bikers. The trails are being cleared in areas with sensitive soils or habitats and create a massive network of unsustainable trails."

What are some opportunities you have to help the public better understand, appreciate and steward the natural resources that your agency manages?

RG: “Our Conservation Volunteer Program is a good way for individuals and families to come out onto the state forest and be a part of creating and maintaining recreational or other land management projects that will serve generations to come. By signing up as a Conservation Volunteer, the work can be coordinated through the forest district and can lead to enhanced networking and collaboration with like-minded people.”

Can you share some recent projects and how they have advanced conservation, increased habitat, provided user benefit, etc.?

RG: “Our projects are far too many to list, but a few recent ones include:

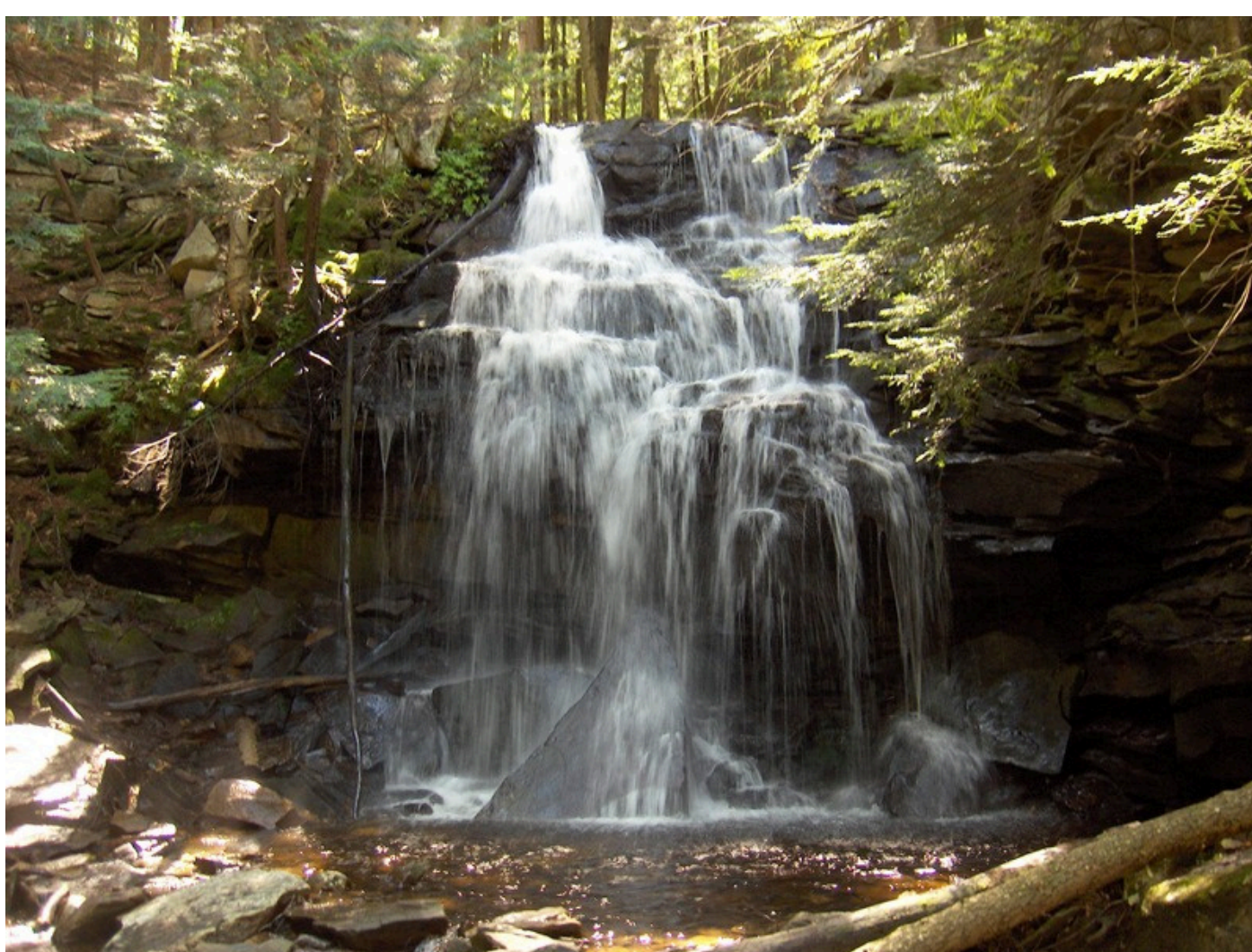
- 1) A collaboration with Longwood Gardens to propagate the globally rare bog Jacob’s ladder and use the seedlings to re-plant in the state forest to expand on known natural populations.
- 2) Increasing habitat for ruffed grouse and wild turkeys by working with the Ruffed Grouse Society and National Wild Turkey Federation.
- 3) The creation of an astronomy viewing area so that astronomers can enjoy some of the darkest skies in the state in a controlled atmosphere without the worry of having equipment damaged or creating conflicts with other users,
- 4) Designation of a youth and handicapped only fishing area on Little Bear Creek that utilizes aquatic habitat structures that are built and maintained through a cooperative effort with a local outdoor club.”

How do you balance conservation goals with other uses?

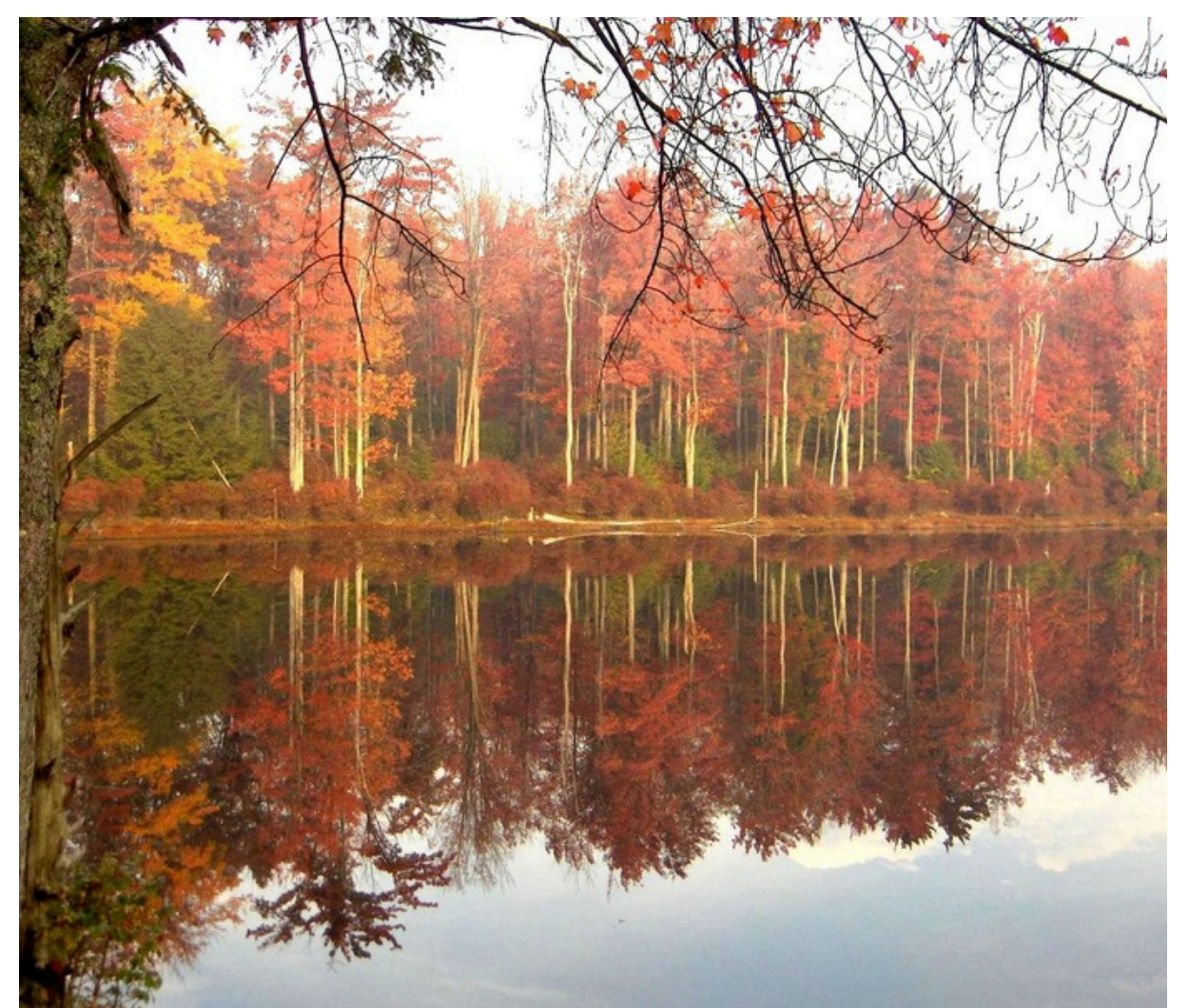
RG: “It is not always possible to truly balance everything, and there are times when one user group will be favored while another is inconvenienced. The key is to educate the various users on why the various projects need to happen and then to keep them informed on the progress. During the planning stages of large projects, it is important to bring the various stakeholders to the table to gain input so that things are not overlooked and everyone’s input is considered.”

How can members of the public best support efforts to protect and maintain public lands?

RG: “By getting out and using them. Take the initiative to use the land and be involved. The more we can show the public is using the state forest, the easier it is to gain support when needed.”



Haystacks Waterfalls



Sones Pond Fall Foliage



APPRECIATING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Brian Taylor

State Parks Regional Director



Frances Slocum State Park

Managing over 300,000 acres of land across Pennsylvania, the Bureau of State Parks strives to follow their mission of providing opportunities for the public to enjoy. Spanning across North Branch Land Trust's 8 (eight) different counties, lands are used for popular outdoor recreation including activities like hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, boating, wildlife watching, and much more. As always, stewardship remains an integral part of the operations within the Bureau of State Parks for both current and future generations to fully enjoy.

What is the mission of your agency? How was it formed and when (legislation, etc.) – brief history so the reader understands the genesis and unique mission of your agency?

The Bureau of State Parks has operated as a branch of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources since its establishment in 1995 under Act 18 which is known for its work within conservation and natural resources. The parks themselves feature a wide array of activities while also maintaining sustenance allowing them to continue flourishing year after year.

BT: "The mission of the Pennsylvania State Parks is to provide opportunities for enjoying healthful outdoor recreation and serve as outdoor classrooms for environmental education, and meeting these purposes, the conservation of the natural scenic aesthetic and historic values of parks should be given first consideration. [Through Act 18 and the development of DCMR], we have used the legislation and our mission to collectively help and grow [our state park system]"



What is something you wish the public to better understand about your operations?

BT: “Running a state park operationally is a lot more complex than what the average visitor may think or observe. There is a lot more to [state parks] than just running campgrounds, cabins, or simply monitoring trails. As we often describe them, it is like operating a town.”

“A lot of our state parks have miles of their own water lines, sewer lines, lift stations, water tower storage, and some parks even have wastewater treatment plants to process the sewage that is collected in the park. As you can imagine, all of this on top of the campgrounds, cabins, and visitor centers that everyone is familiar with and the amenities that they use.”

Attention to detail is no small feat for the fleet of state parks in northeastern Pennsylvania, where seasons come fast and preparations begin very early to ensure efforts are sustainable for the future.

“For example, for the fall and winter, the parks will have to winterize a lot of their systems or buildings to prevent them from freezing because naturally the visitation and use [of the parks] drops down during the wintertime... And then going out and bringing most of our systems and amenities back on board [in the spring] is where we usually find a lot of our issues.”

What are some of the biggest challenges which you face in managing public land/water?

BT: “[Managing state parks is unique] where something like [park popularity] is not just a challenge, but it is also a blessing. [The popularity of these parks], even though we are so well-loved at times, can lead to overcrowding of people and ultimately lead to resources being worn out. Sometimes we must make decisions to close or restrict access to an area or facility or popular place in our parks, so that they can be repaired and upgraded so resources can regrow and regenerate to sustainable levels. Again, [overcrowding] is a good problem to have, but it is one that we do need to manage at time. And, you know, on top of that is the fact that we have so many people that love our parks so there is an aspect of no matter what decision we make, we are not going to make everybody happy.”

On top of park popularity comes the nature of invasive species and the concerns which follow as they infiltrate most state parks. For Brian and his crew, they rely greatly on the Bureau’s resource management division to assist with training, planning, and coordinating efforts not only with field workers, but with volunteers at times as well.

What are some opportunities you have to help the public better understand, appreciate and steward the natural resources that your agency manages?

BT: “One of the biggest opportunities that we have is our environmental education staff within our parks and the great work they do in this regard. [The staff] does an outstanding job of providing opportunities in our parks for the visitors to come and learn about a plethora of different topics in our parks. Whether it is a black bear program or learning to kayak and everything in between, our educators foster a love for nature and for the visitors to learn more about those topics and the natural enjoyment [within the parks].”

“Specifically, at each park we have a volunteer program whether it is picking up litter on a trail or being a campground host or even helping during annual festivals [the volunteers] are a lifeblood in the parks. So, I would encourage if people were interested about these opportunities to reach out to their local state parks and ask what opportunities they have because there are a lot more than you may realize.”

Can you share some recent projects and how they have advanced conservation, increased habitat, provided user benefit, etc.?

BT: “As a Bureau we have recently picked up a lot is our prescribed fire program where we train state park staff in the use of these prescribed fires and working with many partners, we have continued to grow this project. It is beneficial for the many ecosystems [with the NEPA region] and currently we burn areas like grasslands and meadows. In our region alone, we have seven state parks with burn plans, and the most recent having been at Nescopeck in April of this year.”

“Another project I am proud of is the treating of hemlock woolly-adelgid in recent years. Overall, we monitor more than 60 sites for the woolly-adelgid and if any one of those areas have high levels, we will go treat them. One of the more interesting parts about this too is that we do not treat every area every year, but it is more so on a need-basis where monitoring frequently occurs.”

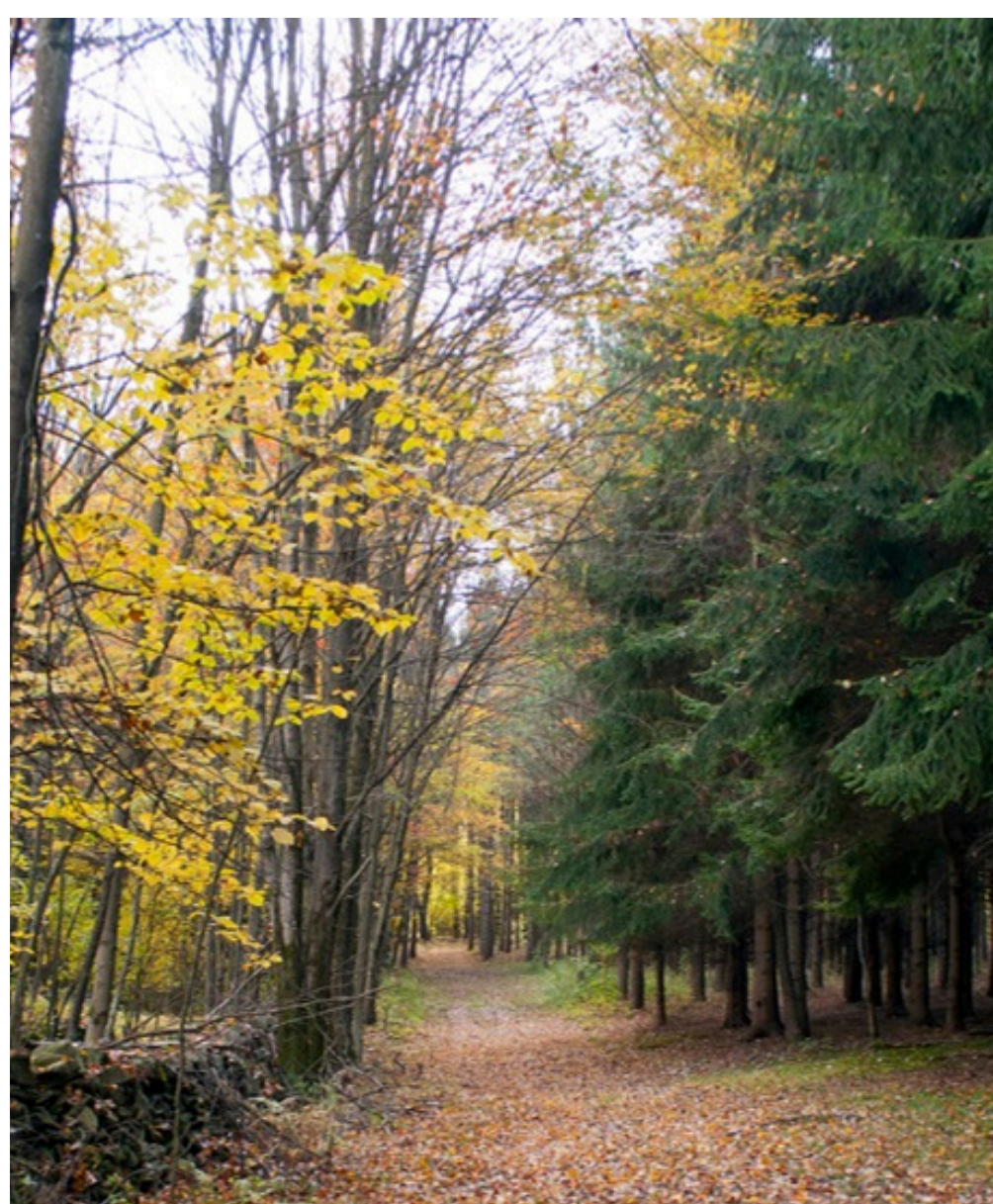
How do you balance conservation goals with other uses?

BT: “As mentioned with [the agency’s] brief history of state parks, we use our legislation of Act 18 and our mission to kind of guide us in these decisions, as well as a few internal review mechanisms.”

“Each state park has a park management process plan that also guides [the Bureau] on what we can use to see if an activity is appropriate or not. And then obviously we are constantly monitoring our natural resources in parks through many different facets to see if things need to be adjusted in case there is a known negative impact. We also use our experience with visitors to discuss how something may affect a certain user of the park.”

How can members of the public best support efforts to protect and maintain public lands?

BT: “I think one of the best ways to protect and maintain these public lands is for visitors to use them and enjoy [the parks] properly and invite others to do so as well. Part of what we do as state parks is create memories. There are a lot of people that have gone to state park growing up, which created fond memories of the parks or the outdoors through their family trips, and these memories created a connection to the outdoors, which I think leads to visitor finding ways to conserve and protect the land.”



Varden Conservation Area



Ricketts Glen State Park – Lake Jean



APPRECIATING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Michael Beahm

Northeastern Regional Director of the Pennsylvania Game Commission



The PA Game Commission owns and manages over 1.5 million acres of state game lands throughout Pennsylvania. Some of these lands span across the 8 (eight) different counties which North Branch Land Trust work.

What is the mission of your agency? How was it formed and when (legislation, etc.) – brief history so the reader understands the genesis and unique mission of your agency?

MB: “The mission of our agency is to Manage and protect wildlife and their habitats while promoting hunting and trapping for current and future generations.”

“The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) was formed in 1895 by the state Legislature to address dwindling wildlife populations caused by unregulated hunting, deforestation, and pollution.

Governor Daniel Hastings signed the bill into law on June 25, 1895, establishing the PGC to manage and protect the Commonwealth's wildlife resources. through the collection of hunting license fees, natural resource revenue from State Game Lands, and federal excise taxes on firearms and ammunition.”

What is something you wish the public to better understand about your operations?

MB: “We are a relatively small agency with a complex mission to include law enforcement duties, resource management and wildlife management responsibilities across the Commonwealth. The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages more than 480 species of wild birds and mammals! This is a huge responsibility and undertaking. The Pennsylvania Game commission is funded through the collection of hunting license fees, natural resource revenue from State Game Lands, and federal excise taxes on firearms and ammunition. We are not funded by Commonwealth tax dollars.

What are some of the biggest challenges which you face in managing public land/water?

MB: “Our biggest challenges with managing the Commonwealth Wildlife and wildlife resources have been invasive species and disease. Many invasive species have impacted our ability to manage habitats from terrestrial to aquatic. Many wildlife diseases threaten the wildlife population including Chronic Wasting Disease, High Path Avian Influenza, White Nose Syndrome, to name a few. “

What are some opportunities you have to help the public better understand, appreciate and steward the natural resources that your agency manages?

MB: “We often have citizen involvement data collection that is utilized in making management decisions of our wildlife species. The most common is the annual Christmas Bird count.”

Can you share some recent projects and how they have advanced conservation, increased habitat, provided user benefit, etc.?

MB: “We have put a lot of recovery effort into bat populations as a result of White-nose syndrome in 2011. To date we have invested \$1.9 million during 2022-2024 into developing safe techniques for detecting WNS using UV light and non-toxic spray to increase bat survival. This resulted in a 2-year infection decline of 66% at a treatment site. After discovering that bats surviving WNS seek cold winter roost temperatures to conserve energy, the Game Commission modified the airflow on site to create ideal conditions for survivors in 2015. Within 8 years, the population at this site grew by 11,157% and is now the largest in the state for the endangered tri-colored bat. The agency has also started tracking adult female little brown bats to their new summer colonies where they raise their young together. In the past 2 years, biologists have located 40 maternity colonies with over 2,000 breeding females to protect and monitor. Game Commission efforts to increase survival have been critical in helping this keystone species begin to recover.”

How do you balance conservation goals with other uses?

MB: “As the Commonwealth’s Wildlife agency, this has not been an easy task. The public does not often differentiate between state parks, forests, and state game lands. Each of these agencies has very different missions and purposes for the lands they manage. The Pennsylvania Game Commission manages its land specifically for management of wildlife populations and opportunities for people to hunt, trap, and wildlife viewing opportunities. We rely on our agency's mission and core values to find a balance. Keep wildlife first in all our decision!”

How can members of the public best support efforts to protect and maintain public lands?

MB: We have a lot of great citizen science efforts to contribute to our agencies mission. We encourage people to follow our Facebook, Instagram, and other social media accounts for the latest news and activities that support our efforts.”





APPRECIATING PUBLIC LAND MANAGERS

Mike Parker

Communications Manager of Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission



The PA Fish & Boat Commission continuously supports on-water efforts to better the community which many people enjoy and resort to each day. Throughout Pennsylvania's 86,000 miles of flowing water, the PFBC aims to "protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing & boating opportunities [for all]."

What is the mission of your agency? How was it formed and when (legislation, etc.) – brief history so the reader understands the genesis and unique mission of your agency?

MP: "The mission of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) is to Protect, Conserve, and Enhance Pennsylvania's Aquatic Resources and Provide Fishing and Boating Opportunities. The origins of the PFBC date to 1866 when a convention was held in Pennsylvania's capital city of Harrisburg, to investigate water pollution being caused by the wholesale logging of the state's forests and the impacts caused by sedimentation of mountain lakes and streams. There were also serious concerns about the reduction of American Shad runs in the Susquehanna River. This discussion resulted in Governor Andrew Curtin signing into law the Act of March 30, 1866, which named James Worrall Pennsylvania's first Commissioner of Fisheries.

In modern times, the PFBC is an independent administrative Commonwealth commission comprised of 10 Commissioners appointed by the Governor and approved by the state Legislature. The Commission ordinarily meets four times a year in a public setting to conduct agency business, with new officers elected annually in July.

The agency is organized into bureaus, which include Administration; Boating; Engineering; Information Technology; Fisheries; Hatcheries; Human Resources; Law Enforcement; and Marketing, Outreach, and Education. The agency consists of approximately 400 employees."

What is something you wish the public to better understand about your operations?

MP: “Funding. The PFBC is a user-funded agency receiving no Pennsylvania General Fund tax revenue to support its programs. The agency manages its operations through two special funds: the Fish Fund and the Boat Fund. Revenue for the Fish Fund is generated from sales of fishing licenses and fees ($\approx 66\%$) and federal funds ($\approx 22\%$) obtained from taxes on fishing-related items. Revenue from the Boat Fund is predominantly generated from boat registration/titling fees, and refunds of liquid fuels taxes on gas used by motorboats and federal aid.”

What are some of the biggest challenges which you face in managing public land/water?

MP: “On behalf of the Commonwealth, the PFBC manages 50 lakes and approximately 400 public access areas along rivers and streams statewide. Among the biggest challenges our agency faces as managers of these properties is the cost of maintaining and replacing critical infrastructure, including dams. As state dam safety standards have evolved, the PFBC has moved ahead with major rehabilitation projects on approximately 30 aging dams over the past decade. Often, these multi-year, multi-million-dollar projects include a lengthy draining and closure period for the lakes, which impacts recreational fishing and boating opportunities in the local community. Our biggest challenge in this area is effectively communicating to the local stakeholders, explaining the reason for the repair, and performing the repairs as quickly as possible under the constraints of the state government process for conducting large scale infrastructure projects. During this process, it is imperative that we keep our promise to bring the lakes and fishery within the lake back better than ever at the completion of the project.

As landowners, another major challenge is to maintain and expand public access to waterways.

Obtaining new access to the water can involve complicated legal agreements to obtain public fishing and boating easements on private property, as well as preserving the access that we already have. While most anglers are inherently ethical, courteous, and conservation-minded, some public access is abused with littering and misuse. The biggest reason we lose access to the water on private property is littering and trespassing on areas not authorized for public use.

Overall, we have continued to successfully expand our public access program on waters statewide.”

What are some opportunities you have to help the public better understand, appreciate and steward the natural resources that your agency manages?

MP: “We have an Adopt-an-Access program that continues to expand on our PFBC-owned properties. You can read more about it on our website:

<https://www.pa.gov/services/fishandboat/adopt-an-access>

Much like adopt-a-highway programs, this allows organizations such as Girl and Boy Scout troops, civic organizations, religious groups, neighborhood associations, and businesses to adopt PFBC accesses in their communities and conduct litter cleanup and beautification projects.

In general, we try to include good stewardship messages in every aspect of our operations. For instance, all of our trout stockings are open to the public and provide excellent educational experiences for the volunteers or onlookers who attend. During a trout stocking, you will learn about different waterways in your community, how important clean and cold water is to trout, and how to properly handle trout as they are stocked into the waters. When we are transparent and partner with the public, they feel pride and ownership in the local waterways they enjoy and are more likely to keep those places clean and self-police among other anglers who share those places.”

Can you share some recent projects and how they have advanced conservation, increased habitat, provided user benefit, etc.?

MP: “Through our Boating Facility Grant Program, the PFBC has led efforts to fund three new public access areas to create the Lackawaxen River Trail in Wayne County. This water trail from Honesdale to Hawley includes new accesses at Sycamore Point, White Mills, and Indian Orchard. This waterway, already popular with paddlers, will now include world-class, accessible boat ramps with various convenient amenities at each site. The river trail provides a new recreational and economic driver for Wayne County and the surrounding region.

Pairing with the forementioned dam rehabilitation projects, whenever we have the opportunity, we enhance habitat within lakes when they are drained. When we have direct access to the dry lakebed, PFBC Habitat crews are able to assemble various structures made of stone, wood, and concrete to create both natural and artificial habitat for fish. When the lakes are refilled and the habitat structures are submerged, they’ll quickly grow algae on them, attract macroinvertebrates, small fish, and eventually larger fish who will feed on smaller fish and use the areas to spawn. We mark these areas with GPS and include them on our website so that anglers can fish over the habitat structures, which are often some of the best fishing ‘hot spots’ on the lake. For a minimal cost, and often through donated funds from local sportsmen’s organizations, the PFBC is able to add habitat structures to lakes that will last for up to 40 years. Certain styles of habitat structures can also be added to lakes while they are filled.

Some notable lake habitat projects in the northeast include Frances Slocum Lake, Luzerne County, where the PFBC, DCNR, and Nanticoke Conservation Club constructed and installed Porcupine Crib habitat structures throughout the lake in 2019.

Lower Woods Pond, Wayne County, reopened to the public in May 2024 after a lengthy dam rehabilitation project which included the lake being drained for more than 10 years. The new dam includes a modern dam, spillway, and boat launch for the public. The natural tree growth that grew within the lakebed while dry will provide incredible fish habitat and a nutrient boost to the water, creating the “new lake effect” that, along with restocking of native fish species, jumpstarts the fishery. In April, portions of Turtle Creek, Union County were “delisted” from the federal Clean Water Act impaired waters list. Since 2013, the PFBC has partnered with other agencies on multiple successful habitat projects on private farm properties along Turtle Creek have reduced excessive siltation, stabilized streambanks, reduced livestock grazing in the stream, and restored an abundant population of aquatic life. To date, restoration work along 4.16 miles of Turtle Creek has resulted in approximately 2 miles of stream being delisted.”



How do you balance conservation goals with other uses?

MP: “We address this constant need for balance within our agency mission: To protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities.

While the protection and conservation of our native aquatic life and waterways is always the top goal, one of the reasons is to provide fishing and boating opportunities to people who love to fish and boat. Without one, you can't really have the other. In the middle of our mission, we aim to enhance resources and opportunities where possible.

One great example of balance is our trout management program. We place special emphasis on protecting our wild trout resources in cold water streams, while also providing world-class stocked trout fishing opportunities on hundreds of warmwater streams. Thanks to this program, fishing pressure is taken off wild trout population and anglers statewide have the chance to fish on streams and lakes that don't naturally support wild trout but are cool enough during spring and fall to support trout from our hatcheries.

In recent years, we have also found opportunities to enhance our public fishing and boating access areas, where possible, with plantings of native trees and shrubs. In areas where we have open space, such as grass lawns that aren't needed for parking, we partner with groups such as DCNR, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, to fill these areas with native plantings. While making good use of the property, the trees provide cooling shade surrounding water, and act as natural buffers to prevent litter and pollution from entering waterways.”

How can members of the public best support efforts to protect and maintain public lands?

MP: “The best way to support the work of the PFBC is to buy a fishing license. If you already fish, it's a great bargain that isn't only your year-long ticket to fish, but it also supports all the programs that keep fishing in Pennsylvania great. Even if you don't fish, the purchase of a fishing license provides funding for programs that benefit our state's native species of fish, reptiles, and amphibians, and clean water.

If you'd like to be more active, look into our Adopt-an-Access program, or join a conservation organization that partners with the PFBC in our efforts.”

