



**Remarks to the House Environmental Resources & Energy Committee
Public Hearing on
“Pennsylvania Waterways and the Chesapeake Bay”
June 26, 2023**

Submitted by:

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As an agency, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (Commission) is guided by a strategic plan which provides a detailed blueprint of how to achieve our mission. One of our strategic plan goals is “...to expand the stream habitat program that performs stream corridor Best Management Practices (BMPs) that improve local water quality and fish habitat and contribute to the goals of the Pennsylvania Phase 3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan....” This strategic goal recognizes that stream habitat projects translate to downstream clean water and healthy aquatic ecosystems that support fishing and boating opportunities.

In response to this strategic plan goal, in 2020 the PFBC created the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Habitat Unit. This unit was created from an initial

\$3.8 million project through the U.S Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant program. Our staff in this unit facilitate streambank and floodplain restoration efforts within the working agricultural landscape. Specifically, we provide technical guidance and construction oversight in collaboration with our many project partners.

These partners include federal agencies such as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, the Pennsylvania Game Commission, county conservation districts, private landowners, and non-governmental organizations including the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy and the Northcentral Pennsylvania Conservancy, to name a few.

In 2021 we added four more staff to expand the capacity of the unit. With the help of the previously mentioned partners, between 2020 and 2022 our agency was able to complete 80 streambank and floodplain restoration projects that improved 13.5 miles of streams in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed, and in 2023 the Commission expects to complete another 39 projects that will enhance nearly 7.2 miles of instream and riparian habitat.

One example in a working agricultural landscape is the Little Shamokin Creek Watershed project in Northumberland County. Little Shamokin Creek is a stocked trout water that is also the main water source for Sunbury Municipal Authority, a public water supply service authority. PFBC staff and partners have installed BMPs on over fifteen properties in this watershed working with willing landowners including many farmers.

Another example is the Turtle Creek Stream Corridor project in Union County. In 2004, excess sediment from eroding streambanks, over-widened channels, livestock access, and lack of tree canopy impaired Turtle Creek, and the DEP added 8.79 miles of stream to the state's 2004 Clean Water Act section 303(d) list of impaired waters. From 2012 through 2020, the Northcentral Stream Restoration Partnership (Partnership) worked with 14 landowners along 5.3 miles of Turtle Creek to implement BMPs including streambank fencing, streambank stabilization, and riparian buffers. As a result of the Partnership and landowners' efforts, water quality and aquatic habitat have significantly improved.

Thank you again to the Committee for inviting the Commission to testify on this important issue. I would be happy to answer any questions at this time.