



For Immediate Release

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Pennsylvania Announces Fisheries Position regarding N.Y. City Reservoir Releases to Delaware River

Harrisburg, PA – The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) today announced the release of a fisheries recommendation for management of water released to Delaware River tributaries from New York City water supply reservoirs.

The recommendation focuses on the Delaware River and its tributaries, the East Branch, West Branch and Neversink rivers where N.Y. City reservoirs are located.

“We worked closely with the New York state Department of Environmental Conservation in the development of this position and believe it is a strong statement for sound aquatic resource management which, if implemented, will be a significant step forward in managing Delaware River water for down-basin uses,” said Leroy Young, director of the PFBC Bureau of Fisheries. “We are pleased that the recommendation is protective of the upper Delaware River mainstem, which is a priority for Pennsylvania, as well as the tributaries.”

The report, entitled *Recommended Improvements to the Flexible Flow Management Program for Coldwater Ecosystem Protection in the Delaware River Tailwaters*, was completed on Jan. 12, 2010, and is a collaborative effort by both fishery agencies.

Over the past 50 years, water management in the Delaware River has been regulated by a 1954 U. S. Supreme Court decree. Subsequent management decisions have been made unanimously by parties to the decree that include N.Y. City, New York state, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Delaware. The Delaware River Basin Commission, comprised of the basin states and a federal government representative, has additional interstate water management responsibilities under an interstate compact. The newly released fisheries position calls for improvements in the flexible flow management program (FFMP) that manages reservoir releases and expires in 2011.

The fisheries report sets management objectives and levels of protection for fisheries in various tributary and Delaware River segments downstream from water supply reservoirs. Reservoir release scenarios and a recent 10-year record of N.Y. City water supply needs were used as inputs into the operational analysis and simulation of integrated systems (OASIS) computer model. The OASIS model generated stream flow and reservoir storage information. These outputs were used with a second computer tool to predict fish habitat available for trout and other coldwater species in various seasons. The federally endangered dwarf wedgemussel was also considered.

The fisheries recommendation is condensed to a table of reservoir releases from Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink reservoirs that modifies the current FFMP to better support cold water ecosystems downstream of the reservoirs to the town of Callicoon. The majority of flow supporting Delaware fisheries is released from Cannonsville reservoir into the West Branch and the fisheries recommendation calls for 1.35 to 2 times the existing flow in the summer and winter when reservoirs are relatively full.



Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission

Young reports that trout spawning and incubation habitat, adult trout habitat, and riffle dwelling fish habitat all improve significantly under the recommendation. Summer temperatures should be more favorable for trout and cold water fishes in the upper Delaware River mainstem. Dwarf wedgemussels will be protected by the fisheries proposal.

A complete copy of the recommended improvements to the FFMP can be found on the PFBC website at www.fishandboat.com under Featured Topics.

The mission of the Fish and Boat Commission is to protect, conserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's aquatic resources and provide fishing and boating opportunities. For more information about fishing and boating in Pennsylvania, please visit our website at www.fishandboat.com.

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