

# LEGISLATIVE BUDGET AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

A JOINT COMMITTEE OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

## PA Game Commission Compliance with Its Strategic Plan

May 2021

Conducted Pursuant to Act 1998-166



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# REPORT SUMMARY



## Objectives and Scope

- ❖ To determine the extent of progress made by the PGC in implementing the five core goals of the Commission's 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:
  - Put wildlife first.
  - Improve wildlife habitat.
  - Follow sound business practices.
  - Serve the Pennsylvania public.
  - Improve support for hunting/trapping.
- ❖ To update and expand LBFC's October 2020 Financial Trend Analysis of the PGC.

## Report Overview

From 1984 through 1998, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) regularly audited the budget of the Pennsylvania Game Commission, as required by the Game and Wildlife Code. The General Assembly amended the Code in 1998, Act 1998-166, implementing a new hunting license fee structure and changing the nature and frequency of LBFC's audit involvement with the Game Commission (See Appendix A). Since 1998, the Code requires that LBFC conduct a performance audit every three years of the PGC's compliance with its Strategic Plan. The first of these reports was released in February 2000.

This audit of the PGC's compliance with its Strategic Plan sought to determine the PGC's progress in realizing its five core goals to:

1. Put wildlife first.
2. Improve wildlife habitat.
3. Follow sound business practices.
4. Serve the Pennsylvania public.
5. Improve support for hunting and trapping.

In addition, we updated our financial trend analysis from our 2020 report.

We Found:

- The PGC appeared to be generally in compliance with the *Pennsylvania Game Commission Strategic Plan 2015-2020* and their mission to "manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations."
- The Commission has not achieved its goal of implementing a marketing program and outreach effort that achieves a no-net loss of general hunting license sales.
- The PGC heavily relies on the sale of natural resources to fund its operations.

## Strategic Plan

The PGC's *Pennsylvania Game Commission Strategic Plan 2015-2020* (Strategic Plan), identifies the PGC's Vision, Values, and Mission Statements, as well as the five core goals set forth above. The plan also iden-

ties 34 Strategic Objectives that set forth specific initiatives or issues designed to accomplish each goal. These are designed to form the initial basis for directing the work of the PGC's bureaus, divisions, and regions to complete each goal.

In general, all five core goals are reported to be at least partially achieved regarding the identified strategic objectives with some objectives more fully developed than others, as summarized below. Unless stated otherwise, we agreed with the assessment of the PGC as to their progress with the strategic objectives.

### Put Wildlife First

	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	2/8 objectives (25%)	6/8 objectives (75%)		
2020	6/8 objectives (75%)	2/8 objectives (25%)		

### Improve Wildlife Habitat

	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	3/5 objectives (60%)	2/5 objectives (40%)		
2020	5/5 objectives (100%)			

### Follow Sound Business Practices

	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	1/7 objectives (14%)	3/7 objectives (43%)	3/7 objectives (43%)	
2020	2/7 objectives (29%)	2/7 objectives (29%)	1/7 objectives (14%)	2/7 objectives (29%)

### Serve the Pennsylvania Public

	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	2/6 objectives (33%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	3/6 objectives (50%)	
2020	4/6 objectives (66%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	

### **Improve Support for Hunting and Trapping**

	<b>Fully or Largely Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved</b>	<b>Unknown/Not Able to Assess</b>
2018		6/8 objectives (75%)	2/8 objectives (25%)	
2020	4/8 objectives (50%)	4/8 objectives (50%)		

As noted above, in general, we agree with the assessment of the PGC as to their progress in implementing their strategic objectives. However, we disagree with the PGC analysis of Strategic Objective 5.7. The PGC changed the status of the objective from “Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved” to “Fully or Largely Achieved” regarding the number of hunting licenses sold. Given the decline in hunting license revenue as well as the total number of hunting licenses sold, we believe the status should remain the same.

The status of Strategic Objective 5.3 is a concern. The status of Strategic Objective 5.3 remains the same – “Partially Achieved.” We agree with this assessment. The objective reads, “working with NGO partners, establish a non-Pennsylvania Game Commission position to develop a support network to better recruit and sustain women hunters, lapsed hunters, and mentored adult hunters. Use this network to add 5,000 new license buyers by 2020.”

Attracting new hunters is critical to the PGC carrying out its mission. We would have expected to see this strategic objective “Fully or Largely Achieved.”

### **Financial Trend Analysis**

We updated our October 2020 report to include FY 2019-20 and extended the report to incorporate FY 2010-11 through FY 2013-14. Doing so provides an opportunity to analyze trends over a ten-year period rather than the previous five.

As before, for this analysis, we chose 17 financial indicators based on the availability of data and the appropriateness for the PGC. The indicators are grouped into three areas: revenues, expenditures, and operating position.

The two indicators we found to require a warning trend deal with benefit and retirement costs, both of which are outside the control of the PGC. We are also concerned with the PGC’s heavy reliance on the sale of natural resources for funding.

### Financial Indicators

Category	Financial Indicator	Trend
Revenues	Revenues per Capita	Favorable
	Revenues per Licensee	Favorable
	Revenues by Source	Caution
	License Revenues per Licensee	Favorable
	Intergovernmental Revenues	Caution
	Actual vs. Budgeted Revenues	Caution
	Revenues vs. Expenditures	Favorable
Expenditures	Expenditures per Capita	Caution
	Expenditures per Licensee	Caution
	Expenditure by Function	Caution
	Employees per Capita	Favorable
	Employees per Licensee	Caution
	Personnel Costs as Percent of Expenditures	Favorable
	Fringe Benefits as a Percent of Wages and Benefits	Warning
	Retirement Costs as Percent of Wages and Benefits	Warning
Operating Position	Fund Operating Surplus or Deficit	Favorable
	Fund Balance as a Percent of Expenditures	Favorable

### Background

The PGC is an independent public wildlife protection agency established by Act 1895-187. This act created the Board of Game Commissioners to “protect and preserve the game, song and insectivorous birds and mammals of the state...” and to “enforce the laws of this Commonwealth relating to the same.” Act 1897-103 set forth the actions prohibited by law and the penalties for such actions. Act 1937-316 consolidated the game laws and changed the name of the Board of Game Commissioners to the PA Game Commission. Act 1986-93, which became effective on July 1, 1987, codified the game laws into the Game and Wildlife Code.

As of December 2020, the PGC had an authorized complement of 721 salaried positions. At that time, a total of 633 positions, were filled, 88 were classified as vacant, and 37 were in a “vacant reserve” status.

## **Report Recommendations**

### **We recommend:**

The PGC's next strategic plan reduce the number of core goals allowing the Commission to focus more intently on the following:

1. Recruiting significantly more new hunters and bringing lapsed hunters back to the sport; and
2. Diversifying the Commission's revenues to rely less on the sale of natural resources given the instability of that source of revenue.

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# SECTION I OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY



## Introduction

Between 1984 and 1998, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) regularly audited the budget of the PGC. These annual “budget audits” were required by the Game and Wildlife Code.

In 1998, the General Assembly amended the Code to implement a new hunting license fee structure. This legislation, Act 1998-166, also changed the nature and frequency of LBFC’s audit involvement with the Game Commission. Act 1998-166 requires LBFC to conduct a performance audit every three years of the PGC’s compliance with its Strategic Plan. The first of these audits was released in February 2000.

## Objectives

The performance audit of the PGC’s compliance with its Strategic Plan has the following objectives:

To determine the extent of progress made by the PGC in implementing the five core goals of the Commission’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

- Put wildlife first.
- Improve wildlife habitat.
- Follow sound business practices.
- Serve the Pennsylvania Public.
- Improve support for hunting/trapping.

To update and expand our October 2020 Financial Trend Analysis of the PGC.

## Scope

This audit primarily covers PGC activities from 2015 to 2020, as they relate to the goals and objectives of the PGC’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan and FY 2010-11 through FY 2019-20 for the financial trend analysis.

## **Methodology**

To determine the extent of progress made by the PGC in implementing its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, this audit, as in prior audits, “grades” the PGC’s success in achieving the goals and objectives of its Strategic Plan. This rating is based largely on information provided by the PGC as to their assessment of their level of achievement of the various objectives.

We also reviewed PGC Annual Reports and other supplemental materials in making these assessments.

To expand and update our Financial Trend Analysis of the PGC, we obtained data from PGC annual reports, the Commonwealth’s SAP accounting system, Pennsylvania’s Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, and a performance audit report issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Auditor General. We used this information to calculate 17 financial indicators necessary to analyze the PGC’s fiscal condition.

## **Acknowledgements**

LBFC staff acknowledges the excellent cooperation and assistance provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission and its staff during the audit. Appreciation for the cooperation and support they provided during this audit is extended to Executive Director Bryan J. Burhans, PGC Legislative Liaison Joshua Zimmerman, and the other members of the PGC staff who provided information for this report.

## **Important Note**

This report was developed by the staff of the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, including project manager, Christopher Latta and staff analysts, Stevi Sprenkle and Shanika Mitchell-Saint Jean. The release of this report should not be construed as an indication that the Committee as a whole, or its individual members, necessarily concur with the report’s findings, conclusions, or recommendations.

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## SECTION II THE PGC'S STRATEGIC PLAN, 2015-2020



### **During the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan period:**

- ❖ *Through PGC wildlife management practices, the Osprey was delisted as a threatened species, and the peregrine falcon was downgraded from endangered to threatened.*
- ❖ *With a variety of partners PGC increased grassland and young forest habitat by 23,832 acres and increased State Game Land by 13,601 acres.*
- ❖ *PGC's license privilege, permits, and application sales increased. General Hunting License sales declined.*

## Overview

PA Act 1998-166 directs LBFC to conduct a performance audit of PGC's compliance with its strategic plan every three years. The strategic plan under review in this report was *the Pennsylvania Game Commission Strategic Plan 2015-2020* (Strategic Plan). The last LBFC report conducted pursuant to Act 1998-166 was released in June 2018 and gave the status of the Strategic Plan implementation from Fiscal Years (FY) 2015-16 to 2016-17. While the current LBFC plan covers the full Strategic Plan period, we focused on updating the status of the Core Goals from the last 2018 LBFC report. The Goals were:

- Core Goal #1 - Put Wildlife First: Manage, propagate, and protect all of Pennsylvania's wild birds and mammals and put wildlife first in decision-making.
- Core Goal #2 - Improve Wildlife Habitat: Manage wildlife habitats.
- Core Goal #3 - Follow Sound Business Practices: Operate using sound, proven business practices to ensure long-term financial stability, to sustain performance improvement, and commitment to excellence.
- Core Goal #4 - Serve the Pennsylvania Public: Serve the Commonwealth as the leader in wildlife conservation.
- Core Goal #5 - Improve Support for Hunting/Trapping: Support our hunting and trapping heritages.

We requested the status of each Core Goal and corresponding strategic objective as of the end of the Strategic Plan period (June 30, 2020). Additionally, we requested information from the PGC to support their assessment of the status of each strategic objective and conducted our own independent research where appropriate. Generally, we agreed with PGC's assessment of their compliance with their Strategic Plan. The status reported at the start of each objective is as reported by the PGC. Unless otherwise stated, we agree with their assessment.

We found:

- The PGC appeared to be in compliance with the *Pennsylvania Game Commission Strategic Plan 2015-2020* and their mission to "manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations."

- The Commission has not achieved its goal of implementing a marketing program and outreach effort that achieves a no-net loss of general hunting license sales.

The sections that follow provide a more in-depth discussion of the status of each core goal and strategic objective from the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

## PGC Core Goals

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### **A. Core Goal #1 - Manage, propagate, and protect all of Pennsylvania's wild birds and mammals and put wildlife first in decision making.**

The PGC had eight strategic objectives related to Core Goal #1 and the management of Pennsylvania's wildlife. As shown in Exhibit 1, significant progress was made in Core Goal #1 wildlife management since the last LBFC report. We will discuss the eight strategic objectives and the status of each.

#### Exhibit 1

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### **Overview Status of Core Goal 1 Strategic Objectives**

	<b>Fully or Largely Achieved</b>	<b>Partially Achieved</b>	<b>Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved</b>	<b>Unknown/Not Able to Assess</b>
2018	2/8 objectives (25%)	6/8 objectives (75%)		
2020	6/8 objectives (75%)	2/8 objectives (25%)		

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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To best understand the strategic objectives in Core Goal #1 it is important to know the wildlife classifications for at-risk species. Pennsylvania state law defines endangered and threatened classifications. The federal government defines recovered, extinct, and extirpated. The PGC uses all five classifications to identify at-risk species in Pennsylvania. In Exhibit 2, we highlight the Pennsylvania species identified in each classification at the time of this report, along with the definition of each.

Exhibit 2

**Pennsylvania Endangered, Threatened, Recovered, Extinct, and Extirpated Species and Classification Definitions**

At Risk Classification	Definition
Endangered Species in PA	Endangered
American Bittern Black-crowned Night-Heron Black Tern Blackpoll Warbler Common Tern Dickcissel Great Egret Indiana Bat King Rail Least Bittern Least Shrew Little Brown Bat Loggerhead Shrike Long-Eared Bat Northern Flying Squirrel Piping Plover Sedge Wren Short-eared Owl Tri-Colored Bat Upland Sandpiper Yellow-bellied Flycatcher Yellow-crowned Night-Heron	<p><i>PA Code 58 § 133.4</i> defines endangered as: species in imminent danger of extinction or extirpation throughout their range in this Commonwealth if the deleterious factors affecting them continue to operate. This term includes:</p> <p>(i) Species whose numbers have already been reduced to a critically low level or whose habitat has been so drastically reduced or degraded that immediate action is required to prevent their extirpation from this Commonwealth.</p> <p>(ii) Species whose extreme rarity or periphery places them in potential danger of precipitous declines or sudden extirpation throughout their range in this Commonwealth.</p> <p>(iii) Species that have been classified as “Pennsylvania Extirpated,” but which are subsequently found to exist in this Commonwealth as long as the conditions listed in subparagraph (i) or (ii) are met.</p> <p>(iv) Species determined to be “endangered” under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531—1544).<sup>a/</sup></p>
Threatened Species	Threatened
Allegheny Woodrat Long-eared Owl Northern Harrier Peregrine Falcon Red Knots Small-footed Bat West Virginia Water Shrew	<p><i>PA Code 58 § 133.4</i> defines threatened as: species that may become endangered within the foreseeable future throughout their range in this Commonwealth unless the casual factors affecting the organism are abated. The term includes:</p> <p>(i) Species whose populations within this Commonwealth are decreasing or have been heavily depleted by adverse factors and while not actually endangered, are still in critical condition.</p> <p>(ii) Species whose populations may be relatively abundant in this Commonwealth but are under severe threat from serious adverse factors that have been identified and documented.</p> <p>(iii) Species whose populations are rare or peripheral and in danger of severe decline throughout their range in this Commonwealth.</p>

**Exhibit 2 Continued**

At Risk Classification	Definition
<b>Recovered Species</b>	<b>Recovered</b>
Bald Eagle Osprey	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defines recovery as: “the process that stops the decline of an endangered or threatened species by removing or reducing threats. Recovery ensures the long-term survival of the species in the wild. At that point, the species is recovered, and protection of the ESA is no longer necessary.”
<b>Extinct Species</b>	<b>Extinct</b>
Passenger Pigeon	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defines extinct as: “no longer in existence, i.e., no individuals of this species exist.”
<b>Extirpated Species</b>	<b>Extirpated</b>
Canada Lynx Cougar Delmarva Fox Squirrel Moose Wolf Wolverine	The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service defines as: “locally extinct; other populations of the species exist elsewhere.”

Note:

<sup>a/</sup> 16 U.S.C. § 1532(6) defines endangered species as “any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range other than a species of the Class Insecta determined by the Secretary to constitute a pest whose protection under the provisions of this chapter would present an overwhelming and overriding risk to man.”

Source: Developed by LBFC staff with information from the following: (1) PA Code 58 § 133.4 (2) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Definitions. <[https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/HCP\\_Handbook-Glossary.pdf](https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/HCP_Handbook-Glossary.pdf)> (3) U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Recovery Program. <<https://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/recovery.pdf>> (4) Pennsylvania Threatened & Endangered Species. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/EndangeredandThreatened/Pages/default.aspx>>

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As stated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, in simple terms: “Endangered species are at the brink of extinction now. Threatened species are likely to be at the brink in the near future.”<sup>1</sup> Because part of the mission of the PGC is to manage and protect wildlife a large portion of their focus is on at-risk species in Pennsylvania.

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<sup>1</sup> *What is the Difference Between Endangered and Threatened?* U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 3. March 2003. <<https://www.fws.gov/midwest/wolf/history/e-vs-t.html>>

**Strategic Objective 1.1: Keep Pennsylvania's wildlife from going extinct, becoming extirpated, or reaching the threshold where a species must be listed as Threatened or Endangered, anywhere this can be controlled.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

According to the PGC, progress has been made with some species in Pennsylvania. One of the most noteworthy changes that occurred during the period covered by the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan was the restoration of the Piping Plover. The federally endangered and state-extirpated, Piping Plover, was restored as a breeding bird in Pennsylvania in 2017. While the Piping Plover remains classified as endangered in Pennsylvania,<sup>2</sup> the first successful nesting of at least one pair occurred every year from 2017 to 2020, after over 45 years of extirpation.

Another bird, the Common Tern, attempted nesting at Presque Isle State Park, which previously had not occurred since 1966.<sup>3</sup> Progress was made for Osprey and Peregrine Falcons which will be discussed under Strategic Objective 1.1.1.

Other species dropped from the Pennsylvania state breeding list, including Black Tern and Loggerhead Shrike. Some bat species are close to expiration due to White Nose Syndrome.

**Strategic Objective 1.1.1: Recover population of peregrine falcon and ospreys to sustainable levels, sufficiently to de-list by 2020.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

**Osprey.** Following successful implementation of the *Management of the Osprey (Pandion haliaetus) in Pennsylvania, Ten Year Plan (2015-2025)*<sup>4</sup> (Osprey Plan), the Osprey was delisted as a threatened species by PGC commissioners at the January 2017 board meeting. As stated at the meeting:

In accordance with goals and objectives stated in the [Osprey Plan], following this plan, the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) has achieved a population level, geographical distribution, and tolerance of human activity that no longer meets the definition of a

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<sup>2</sup> PA Code 58 § 133.21.

<sup>3</sup> Piping Plovers, Common Terns Making Conservation History on Presque Isle. Outdoor News. <https://www.outdoornews.com/2018/07/13/piping-plovers-common-terns-making-conservation-history-on-presque-isle/>

<sup>4</sup> Master, Terry, et al. Management of the Osprey in Pennsylvania, Ten Year Plan (2015-2025). East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania and Pennsylvania Game Commission. September 2015. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Documents/Osprey%20Management%20Plan.pdf>>

threatened species. As of the 2016 nesting season, osprey populations have met the objectives outlined: at least 50 total nesting pairs with a steady or increasing population including at least ten nesting pairs in each of four watersheds for the second consecutive comprehensive survey. Delisting of the osprey can be accomplished by amending *Pa. Code Section 133.21*... Upon delisting, ospreys will continue to be a protected species under state statutes and will continue to be afforded protection under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Pennsylvania Game Commission staff will continue to implement the Plan and monitor osprey nests to ensure that this species does not regress toward endangerment.<sup>5</sup>

According to PGC's latest estimates, there are currently at least 150 pairs of ospreys nesting annually in Pennsylvania.

**Peregrine Falcon.**<sup>6</sup> The peregrine falcon was previously federally endangered and remained endangered in Pennsylvania at the start of the strategic plan period. It has not been completely delisted; however, it was upgraded from endangered to threatened at the January 2019 PGC board meeting. At the meeting it was stated that the upgrade "reflects steady statewide population recovery as specified in the Board-approved *Peregrine Falcon Management Plan* [Falcon Plan]. The recovery metrics for upgrading species status to threatened have been achieved."<sup>7</sup> The Falcon Plan notes that in order to upgrade the legal status of the peregrine falcon from endangered to threatened in the Commonwealth, 75 percent of the delisting targets in the Falcon Plan must be met. According to the PGC this was met for the commissioners to vote to update the listing that occurred in January 2019. Moving forward, to completely delist population goals must be met (Strategy 1.5.2 of Falcon Plan):

Legal delisting requires that several conditions be met for at least 3 consecutive years; (1) 22 or half the historic number of nests are occupied (calculated as the number of cliff-nesting pairs plus 25 percent of the pairs on man-made structures; (2) at least half of the pairs fledge young, and (3) 1.5 or more fledglings are produced per occupied nest.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission, January 31, 2017 Meeting. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/MediaReportsSurveys/Documents/2017%20January%20Minutes.pdf>>

<sup>6</sup> Brauning, Daniel, Patricia Barner and F. Arthur McMorris. Management and Biology of the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in Pennsylvania Ten Year Plan (2013-2022). <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Peregrine-Falcon/Documents/Peregrine%20Falcon%20Management%20Plan.pdf>>

<sup>7</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission Quarterly Meeting January 29, 2019. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/MediaReportsSurveys/Documents/2019%20January%20Minutes.pdf>>

<sup>8</sup> Brauning, Daniel, Patricia Barner and F. Arthur McMorris. Management and Biology of the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) in Pennsylvania Ten Year Plan (2013-2022). <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Peregrine-Falcon/Documents/Peregrine%20Falcon%20Management%20Plan.pdf>>

This criterion has not yet been met; however, the PGC documented a record number of Peregrine Falcon during the 2020 season and work is continuing to be able to fully delist this bird.

***Strategic Objective 1.1.2: Have initial release of wild northern bobwhite quail to at least one focus area by 2020.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

While the northern bobwhite quail is not classified as threatened or endangered in Pennsylvania, there are concerns about its future as a breeding species. According to the PGC:

Northern bobwhites were relatively common across southern Pennsylvania farmland and brush lands until about 1945. Populations declined rapidly between 1945-1955, but made a recovery in the early 1960's. Since 1966, the range and populations of bobwhites have declined to the point that most counties in the commonwealth no longer have bobwhites as a breeding species.<sup>9</sup>

Progress has been made with strategic objective 1.1.2, however, the PGC estimates the strategic objective will not be fully achieved until 2023. PGC worked towards this objective through the *Northern Bobwhite Quail Management Plan for Pennsylvania 2011-2020*. The PGC was also in the process of implementing the activities outlined in the *Letterkenny Army Depot Bobwhite Quail Focus Area Management Plan 2017-2027* during the Strategic Plan period.<sup>10</sup> The goal of this plan is "to establish a self-sustaining wild northern bobwhite quail population at Letterkenny Army Depot" (LEAD).<sup>11</sup> Thus far a memorandum of understanding has been signed between the PGC and LEAD, and land preparations for the quail habitat have begun. According to the PGC, they have reached out to potential source states and several are willing to provide quail when the habitat quality is deemed sufficient.

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<sup>9</sup> Klinger, Scott. Northern Bobwhite Quail Management Plan for Pennsylvania 2011-2020. October 31, 2011. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunting/Documents/Northern%20Bobwhite%20Quail%20Management%20Plan.pdf>>

<sup>10</sup> Keller, Thomas. Letterkenny Army Depot Bobwhite Quail Focus Area Management Plan 2017-2027. October 2018. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunting/Documents/Letterkenny%20Army%20Depot%20Bobwhite%20Quail%20Focus%20Area%20Management%20Plan.pdf>>

<sup>11</sup> *Id.*

**Strategic Objective 1.1.3: Prepare strategies to contain white-nose syndrome and stabilize the population of at-risk bats by 2016.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

White-nose syndrome (WNS) is thought to have arrived in Pennsylvania around 2008 and remains a threat to bats both in the Commonwealth and nationally.<sup>12</sup> WNS "is a disease that affects hibernating bats and is caused by a fungus, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, or *Pd* for short. Sometimes *Pd* looks like a white fuzz on bats' faces, which is how the disease got its name... [WNS] has killed millions of bats in North America. At some sites, 90 to 100 percent of bats have died."<sup>13</sup>

While there is currently no cure for WNS, the PGC has worked towards solutions to contain WNS and the struggling bat population in Pennsylvania. These solutions include experimental use of Polyethylene glycol (PEG) 8000, which is an antifungal agent. According to the PGC, PEG appears to mitigate WNS infections. Additionally, the PGC also improved airflow at mines in cooler sites to improve conditions for bats that have survived WNS.

PGC bat hibernacula surveys have shown small to moderate increases in certain bat species at some mine locations. Five species of bats remain threatened or endangered in Pennsylvania.

**Strategic Objective 1.1.4: Install five bat gates by 2020 to protect highest priority bat hibernacula.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

Bat hibernacula are a place where bats hibernate; Pennsylvania mines and caves are common sites. A total of eight mines were gated (or repaired) to protect hibernating bats during the Strategic Plan period.

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<sup>12</sup> WNS has been confirmed in 35 states and suspected in 4 states. Where is WNS Now? White-nose Syndrome Response Team. <<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/where-is-wns>>

<sup>13</sup> What Is White-nose Syndrome? White-nose Syndrome Response Team. <<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/static-page/what-is-white-nose-syndrome>>

**Strategic Objective 1.1.5: Begin implementation of priority actions detailed in the 2015 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan by 2016.**

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

During the strategic plan period the PGC began implementation of the *Wildlife Action Plan 2015-2025* with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).<sup>14</sup> This plan identifies 664 species of greatest conservation need and includes at least one action item for each species. Work done during the Strategic Plan period includes actions such as animal surveys, conservation of Pennsylvania’s marsh birds, woodrats, bats, and other species. Additionally, the PGC assisted in the roll out of the web-based Conservation Opportunity Area tool: <https://wildlifeactionmap.pa.gov/>.

**Strategic Objective 1.2: Sustain and enhance game bird, game mammal, and furbearer populations at sustained hunting and fur-taking levels.**

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

This remains an ongoing objective. The PGC has determined that the game bird, game mammal, and furbearer populations remained at sustainable hunting and furtaking levels during the Strategic Plan period. Exhibit 3 contains the harvest numbers for some of the game and furbearer species during the Strategic Plan period.

Exhibit 3

**Pennsylvania Selected Game and Furbearer Species Harvested  
 2015 through 2020**

Fiscal Year	Deer	Bear	Fall Turkey	Spring Turkey	Elk	Rabbit	Grouse
<b>2015-16</b>	315,813	3,741	14,861	39,934	87	177,588	28,434
<b>2016-17</b>	333,254	3,529	10,708	34,515	106	209,488	22,581
<b>2017-18</b>	367,159	3,431	9,168	36,970	106	83,314	18,893
<b>2018-19</b>	374,690	3,153	9,129	39,080	101	121,710	8,717
<b>2019-20</b>	389,431	4,653	9,005	35,639	129	108,452	10,254

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

<sup>14</sup> 2015-2025 Pennsylvania Wildlife Action Plan. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeActionPlan/Pages/default.aspx>>

The PGC continues to work on investigating, monitoring, and researching threats to sustainable hunting and furtaking levels. For example, the PGC is aware of game species that have seen population declines (such as ruffed grouse and muskrats) and are taking steps to ensure appropriate responses are being made. Another threat, specific to game mammals, is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The PGC has surveillance programs in place to monitor and combat the threat of CWD. The PGC also investigates tips made about wildlife crimes that threaten Pennsylvania wildlife.

***Strategic Objective 1.2.1: Update existing species management plans to guide and prioritize research, monitoring, and management efforts by 2020. All plans will be reviewed by 2016 and resubmitted to the Board of Commissioners for approval. Revisions will align with agency budgetary capacity, curtail or discontinue land purchases, and prioritize acquisitions to obtain the most critical and unique tracts.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

According to the PGC, some of the species' management plans (SMP) were reviewed and revised by 2016. For most of the plans a focus was made on more comprehensive updates for 2020. Exhibit 4 shows the status of the SMPs at the end of the Strategic Plan period.

#### Exhibit 4

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### Species Management Plan Status

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Species	Status
Wild Turkey	Commissioners approved <i>Pennsylvania Wild Turkey Management Plan 2018-2027</i> . <sup>a/</sup>
White-tailed Deer	Revision of 2009-2018 management plan is ongoing. Completion of this revision has been delayed due to diversion of staff time to CWD research and management and personnel changes.
Fisher	Revision of 2008-2017 management plan is ongoing. Completion of this revision has been delayed due to personnel changes.
Black Bear	Revision of 2006-2015 management plan is ongoing. Completion of this revision has been delayed due to multiple personnel changes.
Snowshoe Hare	Initial plan is nearly complete and undergoing internal review.
Ring-necked Pheasant	Revision of the 2008-2017 pheasant management plan has not been completed due to limited success of restoring sustainable wild populations of pheasants.
Elk	Commissioners approved <i>Elk Management in Pennsylvania a Five-Year Plan 2020-2025</i> . <sup>b/</sup>

**Exhibit 4 Continued**

Species	Status
Beaver	Revision of 2010-2019 management plan will begin following completion of the fisher management plan. Completion of this revision has been delayed due to personnel changes.
Bobwhite Quail	2021-2030 management plan was completed.

Note:

<sup>a/</sup> Casalena, Mary Jo. Pennsylvania Wild Turkey Management Plan 2018-2027. <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Turkey/Documents/Pennsylvania%20Wild%20Turkey%20Management%20Plan%202018-2027.pdf>>

<sup>b/</sup> Banfield, Jeremy and Christopher Rosenberry. Elk Management in Pennsylvania, A Five-Year Plan (2020-2025) <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Elk/Documents/Elk%20Management%20Plan%202020-2025.pdf>>

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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## B. Core Goal #2 - Manage wildlife habitats.

The PGC had five strategic objectives related to Core Goal #2 and the management of Pennsylvania’s wildlife habitats. As shown in Exhibit 5, significant progress was made in Core Goal #2 wildlife habitat management since the last LBFC PGC strategic report. We will discuss the five objectives and the status of each.

### Exhibit 5

#### Overview Status of Goal #2 Strategic Objectives

Year	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	3/5 objectives (60%)	2/5 objectives (40%)		
2020	5/5 objectives (100%)			

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PGC.

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**Strategic Objective 2.1: Transition management practices on State Game Lands towards large-scale (increase average acreage by 50%), high-quality, early successional habitats via timber harvest, planting native warm-season grasses, old field management, and prescribed fire. Decrease use of high-input, single-value plantings and practices, such as agricultural plantings.**

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

According to the PGC this Strategic Objective was successfully achieved with an increase in forest management activity from 7,129 acres in FY 2015-16 to 15,807 acres in FY 2019-20. This was an increase of 121.7 percent.

**Strategic Objective 2.2: Increase grassland and young forest habitat on private land, including hunter access lands, by 5,000 acres by 2020. Focus as much effort as possible on hunter access and State Game Lands properties to enhance hunter opportunities.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

Through a variety of partnerships, the PGC successfully increased grassland and young forest habitat by 23,932 acres from 2015 to 2020, far exceeding the goal of 5,000 acres. Exhibit 6 contains the number of acres per year.

### Exhibit 6

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#### Increased Grassland and Young Forest Habitat Acreage (by Project)

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Fiscal Year	CREP/CRP <sup>a/</sup> Acres	VPA-HIP <sup>b/</sup> Acres	IUP <sup>c/</sup> Acres	Total
2015-16	6,688	229	768	7,685
2016-17	3,935	481	735	5,151
2017-18	4,638	84	1,387	6,109
2018-19	0	N/A	1,229	1,229
2019-20	2,433	N/A	1,325	3,758
<b>Total</b>	<b>17,694</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>5,444</b>	<b>23,932</b>

Note:

<sup>a/</sup> This is a partnership between Farm Bill Biologists with Pheasants Forever and the Natural Resources Conservation Service to get grassland habitat on less productive agricultural lands to the benefit of wildlife, water quality, and soil health. These plans and acreages were implemented through farm bill programs – Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). In FY 2018-19 plans were made, however, no acres were converted.

- b/ The PGC was awarded Voluntary Public Access – Habitat Incentive Program (VPA-HIP) funding through the Farm Bill. The PGC used some of these funds for habitat improvement projects on Hunter Access Program properties.
- c/ The PGC partners with Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) to assist with the Working Lands for Wildlife golden-winged warbler initiative. While the focal species was golden-winged warblers, young forest benefited a variety of migratory birds, and game birds and mammals.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PGC.

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***Strategic Objective 2.3: Develop regularly updated State Game Lands Comprehensive Management Plans that maximize habitat potential, with the first round of initial planning accomplished by 2017; by 2020, implement completed plans according to timeline set within each plan.***

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

Of the 305 State Game Lands Comprehensive Management Plans (CMP) due by June 30, 2020, 303 plans (99.3 percent) were submitted, and 280 plans (91.8 percent) were approved. Additionally, the PGC has implemented a new process moving forward to modernize the CMPs and integrate them into the PGC's geographic information system (GIS) to make them more user-friendly for staff to get them completed by required timelines.

***Strategic Objective 2.4: Focus State Game Lands acquisition efforts on lands that provide access to existing State Game Lands, inholdings, indentures, and sensitive habitats for special concern species and other unique landscapes consistent with available funding levels from the Game Fund, mitigation funds, and federal matching funding. When funding is lacking, curtail or discontinue land purchases and prioritize acquisitions to obtain the most critical and unique tracts.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

As shown in Exhibit 7 there was an increase of 13,601 acres in new state game lands (SGL) from FY 2015-16 to FY 2019-20.

Exhibit 7

**Focused State Game Lands Acquisition**

Fiscal Year	Total Acres of New SGL	Type of Land Acquisition			
		Interior	Indenture	Access	Bat Hibernaculum
2015-16	439	1	1	3	-
2016-17	1,953	2	7	5	1
2017-18	4,299	2	1	7	-
2018-19	6,151	-	3	7	-
2019-20	756	1	1	2	-

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PGC.

***Strategic Objective 2.5: Expand use of the number of acres of prescribed fire to improve field, forest, and shrubland habitat by 10% annually by 2020.***

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

A prescribed fire is a tool used by the PGC for habitat management on State Game Lands. The PGC defines a prescribed fire as “an organized, coordinated effort that works to apply fire at the right place, at the right time, and at the right intensity to improve the health and resilience of forests, grasslands and shrublands.”<sup>15</sup> These fires are planned months (and sometimes years) in advance and typically only occur in March, April, May, and November in Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup>

Exhibit 8 presents the number of acres burned via prescribed fire during the Strategic Plan period. According to the PGC, while the acreage goals (10 percent annual increase) were not met every year over the period, the overall goal of the prescribed fires was met. The PGC stated that while there were “logistical limitations” that prevented achieving acreage goals, such as weather (2018 and 2019 wet conditions) and the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), there was an increase in staff training, qualifications, and capacity to achieve increased acreage goals in the future.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/HabitatManagement/Pages/PrescribedFire.aspx>

<sup>16</sup> A map of planned burns can be found at: <https://pagame.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=d7ab50bde980460fab22de6316ec73ca>

Exhibit 8

**Prescribed Fire Acreages  
(by Year)**

Year	# of Acres Goal (with 10% increase each year from 2015)	# of Acres Achieved	% Change from Previous Year
2015	-	7,478	-
2016	8,226	10,569	+41
2017	9,048	14,468	+37
2018	9,953	9,150	-37
2019	10,949	9,757	+7
2020	12,043	8,577	-12
<b>Total</b>	<b>57,697</b>	<b>59,999</b>	<b>-</b>

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the PGC.

**C. Core Goal #3 - Operate using sound, proven business practices, to ensure long-term financial stability, to sustain performance improvement and commitment to excellence.**

The PGC had seven strategic objectives related to Core Goal #3 and the internal control management of the PGC. As shown in Exhibit 9, progress was mixed for Core Goal #3 since the last LBFC PGC strategic plan report. We will discuss the seven objectives and the status of each.

Exhibit 9

**Overview Status of Goal #3  
Strategic Objectives**

Year	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	1/7 objectives (14%)	3/7 objectives (43%)	3/7 objectives (43%)	
2020	2/7 objectives (29%)	2/7 objectives (29%)	1/7 objectives (14%)	2/7 objectives (29%)

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information received from the PGC.

***Strategic Objective 3.1: By 2020, initiate construction of Game Commission Wildlife Research and Education Center in State College to house specific Game Commission staff.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

2020 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

The PGC determined that the funding needed for this objective was non-existent. Therefore, the biologists will instead be headquartered in Harrisburg at the completion of an office building expansion.

***Strategic Objective 3.2: By 2020, reposition 20% of dispersed non-law enforcement field staff from home offices to the most efficient headquarters.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Unknown/Not Able to Assess

Progress towards the objective was made such as relocating employees to different offices and reducing the number of PGC-owned vehicles, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic with many employees teleworking, PGC does not feel it is possible to measure the progress of this objective effectively.

***Strategic Objective 3.3: By 2016, reduce the number of in-person staff meetings by 50 % and replace with webinar technology.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Unknown/Not Able to Assess

Similar to Strategic Objective 3.2, progress was made such as procuring and utilizing technology needed for web conferencing and public webinars, however, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the PGC does not feel that it can properly assess the progress of this objective at this time. According to the PGC, most of their meetings occur virtually.

***Strategic Objective 3.4: Send all new members of the Board of Commissioners to a wildlife management training course to better support Board activities.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

According to the PGC, board members were sent to training courses as their schedules allowed. During our review period, the Senate confirmed five members to the PA Game Commission Board of Commissioners. Two members have completed the Wildlife Management Training course and

one is a certified Wildlife Biologist and has a training background. The other members were unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances.

**Strategic Objective 3.5: By 2020, build annual revenues to \$140 million.**

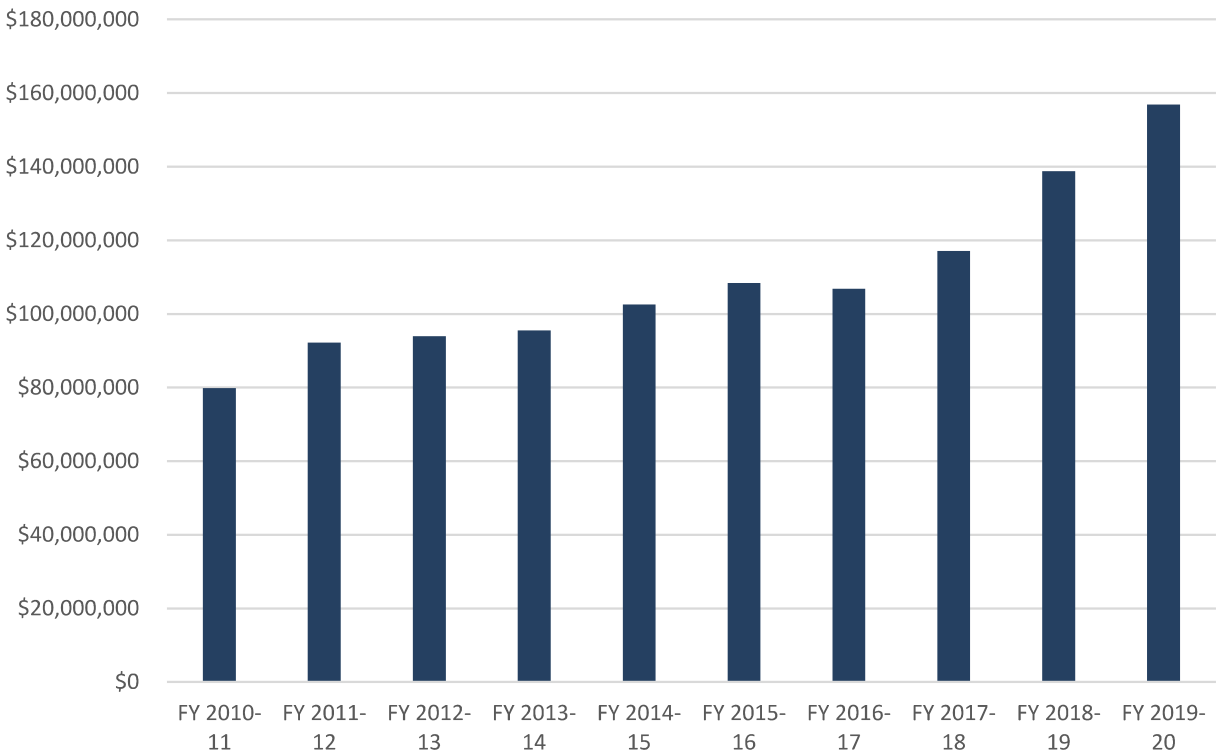
2018 Status: Partially Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed from LBFC's 2018 report. According to the Commonwealth's accounting system, PGC's revenues in FY 2019-20 exceeded this objective for the first time. Please see Exhibit 10.

Exhibit 10

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**Game Commission Revenues  
(Current Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff with information received from the PGC.

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**Strategic Objective 3.6: *By 2015, assign senior management team to review all proposed/new programs to foster increased collaboration and efficiency. The Executive Office will review and approve all grant applications prior to submission.***

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

The status of this strategic objective remains unchanged since LBFC's 2018 report. According to the PGC, as of 2017, the agency has adopted this as a standard operating procedure.

**Strategic Objective 3.7: *Develop marketing plan and offer expanded product offering through outdoor shop by 2017 and evaluate nontraditional revenue sources.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed from LBFC's 2018 report. According to the PGC, the Marketing Bureau did evaluate a variety of "non-traditional" revenue sources but did not implement them by the end of the Strategic Plan period.<sup>17</sup> The goal moving forward is to evaluate and establish a pilot program geared towards the hunting/outdoor industry. An official launch is scheduled in 2022.

## **D. Core Goal #4 - Serve the Commonwealth as the leader in wildlife conservation.**

The PGC had six strategic objectives related to Core Goal #4 and serving as Pennsylvania's leader in wildlife conservation. As shown in Exhibit 11, significant progress was made in Core Goal #4 wildlife conservation since the last LBFC report. We will discuss the six strategic objectives and the status of each.

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<sup>17</sup> Revenue sources – use of marketing vehicles and venues that are traditional and non-traditional to the Pennsylvania Game Commission, such as, Social Media, Digital Media, Grass Roots (shows, etc.), YouTube, Digital Marketing (Google marketing ads), Print (Game News – Hunting and Trapping Digest, Radio, and Billboards).

Exhibit 11

**Overview Status of Core Goal #4  
Strategic Objectives**

Year	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018	2/6 objectives (33%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	3/6 objectives (50%)	
2020	4/6 objectives (66%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	1/6 objectives (17%)	

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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***Strategic Objective 4.1: Establish a monthly webinar series available to all citizens by 2016 to provide education and outreach on wildlife conservation and agency topics, targeted to reach 50,000 viewers by 2020.***

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

This strategic objective was fully or largely achieved by 2016. According to the PGC since 2016, a variety of webinar series have been made available to the public, see Exhibit 12.

Exhibit 12

**PGC Webinar Series, 2016-2020**

Year	Webinar Series
2016	Bald Eagles in Pennsylvania Impact of Predators on White-tailed Deer Fawns in Pennsylvania Springtime Ecology of Black Bears Role of Prescribed Fire Trail Cameras for Wildlife Viewing Tips for Better Elk Viewing Deer Hunter Focus Areas Turkey Management The Return of Fishers to PA, November Christmas Bird Count
2017	Snow Goose Migration The Extinction of the Passenger Pigeon Tree Stand Safety

**Exhibit 12 Continued**

Year	Webinar Series
2018	Winter Birding Grouse Management Updates on the Mapping Center Woodland Survival The Use of Statistics in Wildlife Management The Deer Management Assistance Program Backyard Habitat Fawn Survival Nuisance Wildlife Information for Property Owners Chronic Wasting Disease Managing Farmland for Wildlife Lead Toxicity in Bald Eagles Chronic Wasting Disease Northern Bobwhite Quail
2019	Chronic Wasting Disease Grouse Habitat Management
2020	Chronic Wasting Disease Grouse Habitat Management Barn Owl and Kestrel Research Elk Hunting in Pennsylvania Elk Habitat, August 2020 Mourning Dove Research Chronic Wasting Disease Elk Check Station Northern Saw-whet Owl Research

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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Due to staffing constraints the Commission has not been able to consistently record and upload webinars monthly.

However, the PGC Wildlife on WiFi (WOW) program “provides innovative online learning opportunities, virtual lessons and educational resources about wildlife and its conservation.”<sup>18</sup> The program vision is to connect residents to Pennsylvania’s wildlife from anywhere. WOW provides “more than 50 online and DIY wildlife lessons, activities, story time readings, videos and livestream animal webcams.”<sup>19,20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> < <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Education/VirtualLearning/Pages/default.aspx>>

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission. Wildlife on WiFi (WOW) resources support Pennsylvania State Academic Standards for Environment and Ecology.

The online learning opportunities fall within six categories:

- Explore Backyard Wildlife
- Celebrate PA Birds
- Discover Wildlife Science
- Celebrate PA Mammals
- Virtual Teachers' Lounge
- Careers in Wildlife

In addition, there are opportunities from the field which allow residents to explore the work of scientists, game wardens, and other wildlife professionals.<sup>21</sup> Lastly, the PGC provides additional resource links for conservation organizations that provide additional activities, lessons, educational resources, and more.

A survey was developed by Responsive Management through a collaborative effort with the PGC. The purpose of the survey was to understand Pennsylvania residents' attitudes towards wildlife management. A total of 6,441 residents completed the survey. In a subsection of the survey residents were asked how familiar they were with the PGC's webinar series; statewide results showed that only 17 percent of respondents were very or somewhat familiar with the PGC webinar series prior to the survey.<sup>22</sup> The PGC's most recent GoToWebinar data from June 2020 through December 2020 showed that seven webinar series were made available to the public, with a total of 370 attendees. The PGC has indicated that monthly webinars will continue through 2021.

***Strategic Objective 4.2: By 2020, develop a comprehensive communications and marketing plan to increase Pennsylvania Game Commission effectiveness in reaching all Pennsylvania citizens.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed from LBFC's 2018 report. According to the PGC, the Bureau of Marketing and Strategic Communications was formed in the fall of 2020. Since the bureau is in its infancy, the PGC continues to focus its core efforts on their consumptive audience of hunters and furtakers.<sup>23</sup> However, as the PGC moves forward using a more comprehensive plan, they are working to train staff and develop communication tools needed to encompass all audiences.

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<sup>21</sup> < <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Education/VirtualLearning/Pages/default.aspx>>

<sup>22</sup> Responsive Management, *Pennsylvania Residents' Attitudes Toward Wildlife Management*, 2019.

<sup>23</sup> Consumptive - Pennsylvania Residents and Non-Residents who purchase a hunting license, furtaker's license or shooting range permit. Also, any of the preceding who are lapsed, and/or do participate in any of these activities. (i.e, may hunt in other states, not Pennsylvania. People participating in target shooting do fund conservation activities through the Pittman-Robertson Act).

In 2019, a study done on behalf of the PGC by Responsive Management found that millennials (ages 23 to 39) are less likely to hunt or fish and have little or no awareness of the PGC.<sup>24</sup> However, this demographic is supportive of the work the PGC does. Results from this study were used as a guide in the Commission's 2020 marketing plan.

An outside firm, Mile Creek Communications, LLC, was enlisted by the PGC to develop a marketing plan which included strategies for reaching their targeted audience.<sup>25</sup> The marketing plan's core focus is described within the marketing plan mission and goals:

Mission:

- Increase awareness of the PGC by Millennials residing within the Philadelphia Metro region by focusing on how its activities, programs, and actions positively impact their lives.

Goals:

- Measurably increase name recognition of the PGC with the target audience.
- Develop campaigns that tie the name (Pennsylvania Game Commission) to the important functions and beneficial services it provides to the target audience.

In addition, the plan seeks to not only increase awareness of the PGC, but to also promote its activities and demonstrate how the Commission's work benefits habitats, wildlife, and water resources.<sup>26</sup>

***Strategic Objective 4.3: By 2018, evaluate new tools to improve communications and engagement with the non-hunting public and merge as part of the Working for Wildlife program.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed from LBFC's 2018 report. However, the status change does fall outside of the scope of this study. According to the PGC, the newly formed Bureau of Marketing and Strategic Communications will have a job position that is solely focused

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<sup>24</sup> Responsive Management, *Increasing Awareness of and Support for the Pennsylvania Game Commission: Communications Recommendations*, 2019.

<sup>25</sup> Mile Creek Communications, LLC, Pennsylvania Game Commission 2020 Marketing Plan, *Increasing Awareness of the Pennsylvania Game Commission among Millennials living within the Metropolitan Philadelphia Region*. Important note: The Covid-19 pandemic began during the development of this marketing plan. It will have an unknown, lasting, and profound impact on not only the target audience but the entire country. As a result, it is impossible to know whether the research upon which this plan is based will be accurate in the next 3-6 months and beyond. The effects of the pandemic could conceivably change the views and opinions of the target audience on a variety of issues and how it perceives the PGC.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

on non-consumptive audiences.<sup>27</sup> The position will be “tasked to grow the awareness to the non-hunting public on all aspects of the PGC.”<sup>28</sup> Currently, the Bureau is still in its development stage and with current COVID-19 restrictions hiring has been delayed. The Commission is unable to estimate when the position will be filled, but it remains a priority.

***Strategic Objective 4.4: By 2020, increase volunteer Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officer ranks to 450 officers by increasing recruitment efforts and removing barriers from Pennsylvania Game Commission employees’(sic) becoming Deputies.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

2020 Status: Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved

That status of this strategic objective remains unchanged from LBFC’s 2018 report. It should be noted that as of January 1, 2018, the PGC changed the title of law enforcement officers from “Wildlife Conservation Officer” to “State Game Warden,” to encompass all the work they do, which includes enforcement of laws that regulate hunting, protect wildlife and the environment, in addition to education, research, and conservation programs.<sup>29,30</sup>

Currently, there are a total of 265 Deputy Game Wardens. According to the PGC, a Deputy committee was formed, and changes have been made, such as: a more streamlined deputy application process, and equipment needs were addressed. However, the number of interested applicants has failed to meet the number needed to replace retiring deputies. Lastly, the Commission acknowledges the importance of the Deputy Game Warden program in fulfilling its mission of protecting Pennsylvania’s wildlife resources and serving the public.<sup>31</sup>

***Strategic Objective 4.5: The Alternate-users Working Group is comprised of users of State Game Lands who do not necessarily use these lands for the primary use of hunting, trapping, and wildlife management (bicyclists, hikers, bird watchers, snowmobilers, etc.). By May***

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<sup>27</sup> Non Consumptive - Pennsylvania Residents who DO NOT purchase a hunting license, furtaker’s license or shooting range permit, but still have interest in wildlife.

<sup>28</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission.

<sup>29</sup> <<https://www.media.pa.gov/Pages/Game-Commission-Details.aspx?newsid=182>>

<sup>30</sup> Deputies are part-time and differ from the job of a State Game Warden which are full-time, career-oriented positions. The specifics can be found on PGC’s website: <[www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/CareersandVolunteers/Pages/DeputyGameWardens.aspx](http://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/CareersandVolunteers/Pages/DeputyGameWardens.aspx)>

<sup>31</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**2016, working group will collectively develop strategic plan to reduce conflict between user groups, reduce illegal activities, and reduce damages to State Game Lands system.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

This strategic objective has changed since the LBFC's 2018 report. According to the PGC, Working Group led discussions were held, which included a broad range of users (i.e., mountain bike riders, equestrians, and hikers). Results from these discussions were regulation based, so efforts were made to enforce and inform the public, such as, updated/new signage, local group meetings, alternate groups' newsletters, and outreach. Overall, the meetings have provided insight into abuse and need for regulations, and how to educate all users of State Game Lands.

**Strategic Objective 4.6: By 2018, overhaul agency website to increase user satisfaction, utility, and provide a more professional image for the agency.**

2018 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

This strategic objective remains fully or largely achieved since 2016. According to the PGC a template for state agencies was provided by the Office of Administration and was used to enhance the agency's website. These website enhancements have "increased the utility of the Game Commission's website by providing a dynamic website design that scales the site accordingly to the device." Since the 2016 website migration, 52 percent of customers used a mobile device to view the website; and in the 2019-20 fiscal year, 72 percent of customers viewed the website on a mobile device. The PGC states the website's mobile first design provides an easily accessible, professional digital presence to direct users to while promoting the mission of the PGC.

## **E. Core Goal #5 - Support our Hunting and Trapping Heritages**

The PGC had eight strategic objectives related to Core Goal #5 and supporting Pennsylvania's Hunting and Trapping Heritages. As shown in Exhibit 13, significant progress was made in Core Goal #5 wildlife management since the last LBFC report. We will discuss the eight objectives and the status of each.

Exhibit 13

**Overview Status Core Goal #5  
 Strategic Objectives**

Year	Fully or Largely Achieved	Partially Achieved	Not Achieved or Largely Not Achieved	Unknown/Not Able to Assess
2018		6/8 objectives (75%)	2/8 objectives (25%)	
2020	4/8 objectives (50%)	4/8 objectives (50%)		

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

***Strategic Objective 5.1: Increase Hunter Access with an enrollment campaign focused on new, high value opportunities with a goal of no net loss by 2020.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

The status of this strategic objective remains unchanged since the LBFC's 2018 report. The Hunter Access Program includes more than 11,500 parcels of private lands encompassing approximately 2.18 million acres, with properties located in 65 of Pennsylvania's 67 counties.<sup>32</sup> This program is governed by an agreement between the PGC and landowner(s); both "work in concert to improve public hunting and trapping opportunities and wildlife habitat on the property enrolled." Hunters and trappers help to manage game and furbearer populations through lawful hunting and trapping. In exchange for this access, the Game Commission provides, as funding allows a variety of benefits and incentives to the cooperating landowner, such as discount landowner hunting license, antlerless deer licenses,<sup>33</sup> free tree and shrub seedlings, free and reduced cost wood products, free Game News subscription, law enforcement,<sup>34</sup> and free program signage.<sup>35</sup>

According to the PGC, this strategic objective status remains partially achieved. In 2018, the PGC, through meetings and a focus group, devised a plan to engage with landowners to meet this strategic objective.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>32</sup> <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunting/HunterAccessProgram/Pages/default.aspx>>

<sup>33</sup> Cooperating landowners, with 50 or more contiguous acres of land within the county of application, may obtain one antlerless deer license.

<sup>34</sup> Cooperating landowners receive patrolling and enforcement of game law by Pennsylvania Game Wardens. These patrols reduce illegal ATV use, littering and dumping, and various other game law violations.

<sup>35</sup> <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunting/HunterAccessProgram/Pages/default.aspx>>

<sup>36</sup> Legislative Budget and Finance Committee, *PA Game Commission Compliance With Its Strategic Plan*, May 2018.

The Commission’s future strategic planning as it pertains to Hunter Access, will focus not on the number of acres, but also the number of quality acres enrolled in the program.

**Objective 5.2: By 2018, develop online, advanced hunter education courses.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

This status of this strategic objective has changed since the LBFC’s 2018 report. According to the PGC, a bow hunter online course was completed and made available to the public at the end of the 2017 calendar year. Since then, online basic and advanced hunter education courses have become available, which include Bow Hunter Education, Furtaking and Cable Restraint Certification, and Basic Hunter-Trapper Education.<sup>37,38</sup> Exhibit 14 shows each online course and learning goals.

Exhibit 14

**PGC Online Hunter Education Courses**

Course	Course Goals
<b>Successful Bow Hunting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible bowhunting</li> <li>• Big game anatomy and shot placement</li> <li>• Map and compass basics</li> <li>• Distance estimation</li> <li>• Shooting basics and a 3-D field course</li> <li>• Hunting methods and techniques</li> <li>• Tree stand use and safety</li> <li>• Big game recovery and care</li> </ul>
<b>Successful Bow Hunting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best management practices</li> <li>• Furtaker ethics, laws, and responsibility</li> <li>• Tools for successful furtaking</li> <li>• Cable devices</li> <li>• Trapline basics</li> <li>• Water sets</li> <li>• Land sets</li> </ul>
<b>Successful Furtaking &amp; Cable Restraint Certification<sup>a/</sup></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible hunting behavior</li> <li>• Basic firearm knowledge and safe handling</li> <li>• Wildlife conservation and management</li> <li>• Outdoor safety and survival</li> <li>• Basic and advanced hunting techniques</li> </ul>
<b>Basic Hunter-Trapper Education (HTE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsible hunting behavior</li> <li>• Basic firearm knowledge and safe handling</li> <li>• Wildlife conservation and management</li> <li>• Outdoor safety and survival</li> <li>• Basic and advanced hunting techniques</li> </ul>

<sup>37</sup> <[www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunter-TrapperEducation/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/Hunter-TrapperEducation/Pages/default.aspx)>

<sup>38</sup> Currently, all courses are available online and in-person (in certain regions). Using the online registration tool or calendar will allow hunters to search in their region for in-person course availability.

**Exhibit 14 Continued**

Course	Course Goals
<b>Basic Hunter-Trapper Education (HTE)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trapping and furtaking basics</li><li>• Basic shooting and safe hunting skills</li><li>• Expanding your hunting opportunities</li></ul>

Note:

<sup>a/</sup> This can be found at <https://www.hunter-ed.com/pennsylvania-cable-device/>.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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***Strategic Objective 5.3: Working with NGO partners, establish a non-Pennsylvania Game Commission position to develop support network to better recruit and sustain women hunters, lapsed hunters, and mentored adult hunters. Use this network to add 5,000 new license buyers by 2020.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

The status of this strategic objective remains unchanged since the LBFC's 2018 report.

In a research study conducted by The Center for Survey Research at Penn State Harrisburg of lapsed hunters on behalf of the PGC, participants indicated that time constraints and lack of places to hunt in the region factored into their decision not to purchase a license.<sup>39</sup> However, respondents indicated that they planned to purchase a hunting license at some point in the future. In addition, more areas to hunt, habitat improvement - especially with regards to pheasants, and the ability to buy a multi-year license could encourage lapsed hunters to purchase licenses.<sup>40</sup>

In a survey conducted by the PGC, respondents agree and/or strongly agree that the amount of personal free time and not enough space to hunt is what influenced their decision not to purchase a hunting license.<sup>41</sup>

The PGC has not established a support network to recruit and sustain women hunters, lapsed-hunters, and mentored adult hunters. According to the PGC, "a significant barrier to the formal adoption of an agreement were guidelines set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for entering into such agreements which are paid, in full or part, by monies allocated to

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<sup>39</sup> Center for Survey Research, Penn State Harrisburg, *Lapsed Hunter Research Study Focus Group and In-depth Interviews, 2019*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission, *Final Survey 100 Results, 2018*.

the states through the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act.”<sup>42,43</sup> The PGC reports an initial meeting with a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO). However, at the close of FY 2019-20 a partnership has not been established.

***Strategic Objective 5.4: By 2020, increase harvest rate of Pennsylvania Game Commission-released pheasants by 10% to increase hunter opportunity.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed since the LBFC’s 2018 report. The harvest rate for Commission-released pheasants according to the agency’s most recent study was 49 percent.<sup>44</sup> The PGC estimates the current harvest rate is likely approaching 60 percent. To-date no follow-up study on harvest rates has been conducted. According to the PGC, higher proportions of stocked pheasants have been allocated to State Game Lands (SGL) and other public properties. Since 2017, both SGLs and public properties have continued to show higher harvest totals than private properties.<sup>45,46</sup> Exhibit 15 shows the number of pheasants stocked and harvested by fiscal year.

Exhibit 15

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**PGC Pheasant Allocation and Harvest  
(by Fiscal Year)\***

Harvest	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number of Pheasants Allocated	215,266	243,000	170,000	192,082	209,290
Pheasant Harvest	205,366	221,588	120,459	168,532	179,023

<sup>\*</sup>/Estimates exclude harvest on shooting preserves.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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<sup>42</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission.

<sup>43</sup> Title 16—Conservation, U.S.C (Chapter 5B, 669-669i) § 1937.

<sup>44</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission, Bureau of Wildlife Management, *Game Farm Ring-Necked Pheasant (Phasianus Colchicus) Harvest Rates in Pennsylvania* (Final Report), July 2017.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Pheasants are stocked on State Game Lands, on other public lands (e.g., State Parks, county parks, etc.), and on private properties enrolled in the Game Commissions’ Hunter Access program.

An interactive map can be found on the Commission's website for pheasant stocking locations with a two- to four-day window of when stockings will take place within respective counties.<sup>47</sup>

***Strategic Objective 5.5: By 2016, develop a formal stewardship process for landowners enrolled in the public Hunter Access program. The goal is to increase retention of existing landowners and build program branding.***

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Partially Achieved

The status for this strategic objective has remained unchanged since the LBFC's 2018 report. The Commission has established a Private Lands Committee and developed a strategic plan. The strategic plan has been reviewed and preliminarily approved.

During the 2019-20 fiscal year the Commission worked in partnership with Pheasants Forever to assist the Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA). The partnership employed six biologists, which were funded by the Farm Bill.<sup>48</sup> Notable achievements during FY 2019-20 were:<sup>49</sup>

- Biologists assisted landowners with wildlife habitat management, and recommendations for the conservation of Species of Greatest Conservation Need.
- Biologists participated in 58 outreach events, reaching more than 700 participants.
- Nearly 250 landowners were reached through targeted mailings and over 1,300 landowner visits impacted more than 24,200 Pennsylvania acres through 79 new conservation plans, status reviews, contract updates and on-site habitat management.

The Commission indicates it will continue to "establish new and novel ways to secure funding and apply stewardship activities on high priority Hunter Access lands."<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/Wildlife/WildlifeSpecies/Ring-NeckedPheasant/PheasantAllocation/Pages/default.aspx>>

<sup>48</sup> Agricultural Improvement Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-334), (commonly known as the Farm Bill).

<sup>49</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission, *Your State Wildlife Agency, Fiscal 2019-20 Annual Report*.

<sup>50</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Strategic Objective 5.6: Revise and improve Hunter Access Program. Create an internal committee by 2017 to address future direction of the Hunter Access Program; define a five-year strategy and specific management goals; and develop marketing strategies to support program goals. This committee will develop the plan to align with agency financial capacity.**

2018 Status: Partially Achieved

2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

The status of this strategic objective has changed from the LBFC’s 2018 report. The Commission reports that through the Private Lands Committee, a sub-committee was established to standardize the Hunter Access Program, identify roles, and for future planning. The Private Lands Strategic Plan (2020) was revised using information gathered from surveys during the 2016-17 fiscal year, marketing, and outreach efforts. According to the PGC, the revised plan focuses on the use of funding for public outreach and healthy habitats on high priority lands.

The Private Lands Strategic Plan maps out objectives for the Hunter Access Program, increasing awareness, providing education, continued hunter access, program improvement, landowner benefits and incentives, and working with landowners. Exhibit 16 highlights the plan objectives specific to the Hunter Access Program and strategies.<sup>51</sup>

### Exhibit 16

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#### PGC, Private Lands Strategic Plan, 2020—Hunter Access Program

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Objective	Strategy
Develop wildlife habitat management and Hunter Access Program social media products.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Media post (Hunter Access Program, Landowners/Hunters)</li> <li>• Game News Articles:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Program overview</li> <li>○ Landowners perspective</li> <li>○ Hunter perspective/success stories</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Objective	Strategy
Develop a series of videos to highlight wildlife habitat management for private landowners and the Hunter Access Program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Video topics:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Overview of the Hunter Access Program</li> <li>○ Landowner perspectives on hunter access</li> <li>○ Hunter perspective and how to approach landowners</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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<sup>51</sup> Pennsylvania Game Commission, 2020 Private Lands Strategic Plan, *Helping Private Landowners Support Pennsylvania’s Wildlife, A strategy to preserve and improve public access, wildlife populations, and wildlife habitat on private lands.*

**Exhibit 16 Continued**

Objective	Strategy
Participate in local, state, and national private lands conferences and meetings to provide private landowners information regarding the PGC’s private lands programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote private lands programs at local fairs, outdoor shows, and other venues</li> <li>• Participate in professional natural resource managers conferences</li> </ul>
Continue to standardize Hunter Access Program implementation among regions through annual program review with regional Hunter Access Program managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continued standardization of Hunter Access Program</li> <li>• Annual reviews</li> <li>• Bi-annual meetings</li> <li>• Regional staff training</li> <li>• Continue 5-year (20%) rotation of Cooperator re-signs and ensure shapefiles of all enrolled parcels are updated.</li> </ul>
Improve program tracking, management, and implementation of Hunter Access Program Provide useful benefits and incentives to Hunter Access Cooperators to ensure program participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data retention and management systems</li> <li>• Geospatial data needs</li> <li>• Creation of a self-service interface</li> <li>• Funding of Game News</li> <li>• Calendars to landowners</li> <li>• Develop, print, and provide permission cards to landowners</li> <li>• Survey development (Bureau of Information &amp; Education) landowner interest in various incentives</li> </ul>
Work with landowners to provide more information for prospective hunters and trappers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revised standard signage to include landowner contact information</li> <li>• Work with GIS team to determine if we can differentiate between landowners requesting permission and those that are open access in Mapping Center Dot colors, or polygons).</li> <li>• Development of an email system for hunter/trappers to contact landowners via the mapping center</li> <li>• Survey development (Bureau of Information &amp; Education) access related feedback</li> </ul>

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

**Strategic Objective 5.7: Implement marketing programs and outreach efforts to achieve a no-net-loss of general hunting licenses sales between 2015 and 2020.**

2018 Status: Not Achieved to Largely Not Achieved  
2020 Status: Fully or Largely Achieved

According to the PGC this strategic objective has changed since LBFC's 2018 report and is now fully or largely achieved. However, we disagree. We found that specific to strategic objective 5.7, the general hunting license category revenue has continuously decreased from FY 2015-16 through FY 2018-19; followed by a two percent increase in FY 2019-20. In addition, the total number of general hunting licenses sold decreased during the same period; apart from FY 2019-20 in which there was less than a one percent increase from FY 2018-19 in the number of general hunting licenses sold.<sup>52</sup>

Exhibit 17 below shows the total number of General Hunting Licenses sold and sales revenue by fiscal year.

Exhibit 17

**PGC Number of License Sold  
(by Fiscal Year)**

License	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Number General Hunting License Sold <sup>a/</sup>	930,804	909,567	881,102	855,486	860,743
General Hunting License Revenue <sup>b/</sup>	\$20,030,605	\$19,721,549	\$19,155,628	\$18,671,443	\$18,981,369

<sup>a/</sup>General License categories combined both hunting and furtaker.

<sup>b/</sup> General Hunting License Categories: Resident Adult, Resident Military,(includes, Resident Military, National Guard, Reserves & POW), Resident Junior, Resident Junior Combo, Mentored Youth Permit, Mentored Youth No Tags, Resident Senior, Resident Senior Lifetime, Resident Senior Lifetime Combo, Resident Senior Lifetime Upgrade, Resident Landowner, Resident Disabled Veteran, Resident DV Lifetime, Resident DV Lifetime Renewal, Resident Reduced Disabled Veteran, Nonresident Adult, Nonresident Junior, Nonresident Junior Combo, 7-day Nonresident Small Game, Resident Senior Combo Renewal, Resident Mentored Adult Permit, Nonresident Mentored Adult Permit, and Nonresident Mentored Junior Permit, Nonresident Mentored Junior Permit, Resident Senior Lifetime Hunting Renew, Nonresident Complimentary, and Resident Mentored Junior Permit.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff using information provided by the PGC.

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<sup>52</sup> <<https://www.pgc.pa.gov/HuntTrap/LicensesandPermits/Pages/HuntingLicenseSalesReport.aspx>>

***Strategic Objective 5.8: Expand hunter recruitment/retention outreach to maintain no-net-loss in license sales through 2020.***

2018 Status: Not Achieved to Largely Not Achieved  
2020 Status: Partially Achieved

This strategic objective has changed since LBFC's 2018 report. According to the PGC, since the newly formed Bureau of Marketing and Strategic Communication has been in place, revenue has increased within license privilege, permit, and application sales. Exhibit 18 shows the PGC's total revenue from all license sales by fiscal year.

Exhibit 18

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**PGC All License Sales Revenue  
(by Fiscal Year)**

Revenue	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
All License Sales	\$35,535,338	\$35,353,341	\$36,124,770	\$36,006,294	\$39,143,625

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

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Among license privilege, permit, and application sales, revenue has increased by ten percent from FY 2015-16 to FY 2019-20, with the most significant increase from FY 2018-19 to FY 2019-20 at nine percent. Although, as shown in strategic objective 5.7, the number of General Hunting licenses sold has declined, apart from FY 2019-20. This increase among license sales category may be a result of marketing efforts, the COVID-19 pandemic, or a combination of the two. Nationally there was an increase in wildlife activities such as hunting and fishing during the pandemic, so it may be the case that Pennsylvanians became more engaged in wildlife sports during this period as well.<sup>53</sup> A more in-depth review of license sales trends would be needed during the next three-year strategic plan review to see if this trend continues.

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## **Recommendation**

We recommend:

The PGC's next strategic plan reduce the number of core goals allowing the Commission to focus more intently on recruiting new hunters and bringing lapsed hunters back to the sport.

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<sup>53</sup> Hayes, John. Pittsburg Post-Gazette. September 2020. < <https://www.post-gazette.com/life/outdoors/2020/09/17/Hunting-Pennsylvania-COVID-19-license-sales/stories/202009170033> >

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## SECTION III PGC FINANCIAL ANALYSIS UPDATE



### Fast Facts...

- ❖ *Revenues determine the ability of the PGC to spend the appropriate funds to provide services necessary to fulfill its mission.*
- ❖ *Expenditures are an approximate measure of the PGC's service output.*
- ❖ *Operating position refers to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's ability to maintain reserves for emergencies and maintain sufficient cash to pay short-term obligations and bills.*

## Overview

As noted in our October 2020 report entitled, *Financial Analysis of the Pennsylvania Game Commission*, the financial condition of the Pennsylvania Game Fund is important to ensure the Commission can fulfill its mission. For our purposes, financial condition is defined as the ability of the Commission to maintain existing service levels, withstand economic disruptions, and meet the demands of the public and the General Assembly.

In this section we update our October 2020 report to include FY 2019-20 and expand the report to incorporate FY 2010-11 through FY 2013-14. Doing so provides an opportunity to analyze trends over a ten-year period rather than the previous five (See Appendix B for more information on financial trends monitoring).

As before, for this analysis, we chose 17 financial indicators based on the availability of data and the appropriateness for the PGC. The indicators are grouped into three areas: revenues, expenditures, and operating position.

We Found:

- The PGC heavily relies on the sale of natural resources to fund its operations.
- Fringe benefit and retirement costs continue to be a concern.

## Issue Areas

### A. Financial Indicators

We identified 17 indicators for the analysis of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's fiscal condition as shown in Exhibit 19.

Exhibit 19

**Financial Indicators**

Category	Financial Indicator	Trend
Revenues	Revenues per Capita	Favorable
	Revenues per Licensee	Favorable
	Revenues by Source	Caution
	License Revenues per Licensee	Favorable
	Intergovernmental Revenues	Caution
	Actual vs. Budgeted Revenues	Caution
	Revenues vs. Expenditures	Favorable
Expenditures	Expenditures per Capita	Caution
	Expenditures per Licensee	Caution
	Expenditure by Function	Caution
	Employees per Capita	Favorable
	Employees per Licensee	Caution
	Personnel Costs as Percent of Expenditures	Favorable
	Fringe Benefits as a Percent of Wages and Benefits	Warning
Operating Position	Retirement Costs as Percent of Wages and Benefits	Warning
	Fund Operating Surplus or Deficit	Favorable
	Fund Balance as a Percent of Expenditures	Favorable

Source: Developed by LBFC staff.

Overall, the revenue condition of the Game Fund is favorable. The data shows that revenues per capita and revenues per licensee are not, currently, placing an undue burden on hunters. Further, revenues consistently exceed expenditures. That said, the sources of revenue are trending towards an over reliance on extraction of natural resources. Further, the Game Commission’s revenue predictions often miss the mark. This can cause the Commission to unnecessarily cut back on services.

Expenditures per capita and licensee are a concern. As the number of licensees decrease and expenditures increase, the cost of services per licensee will put a strain on the Game Fund. Additionally, fringe benefit costs – specifically retirement costs – will cause financial difficulties for the Fund over the long term unless services are cut, or revenues increase.

## B. Revenues

Revenues determine the Game Commission’s ability to spend the appropriate funds to provide the services necessary to fulfill its mission.

The Pennsylvania Game Commission receives no funding from the Commonwealth’s General Fund. Revenues for the Game Commission include

hunting and furtaker license sales, timber, mineral, and oil/gas revenues, and a federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition.

When required for analysis, adjusting for inflation converts current dollars into constant dollars. The conversion from current dollars to constant dollars allow for analysts to consider the appearance of growth due to inflation. For this report, we used the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for goods and services used by average wage earners as our measure of inflation.

The conversion factor is equal to the 2010 CPI divided by the CPI of the next four years. We used the following formula to calculate constant dollars:

$$\text{Current Dollars} \times \frac{2010 \text{ CPI}}{CPI_{2010 \dots 2020}}$$

Exhibit 20 shows the CPI conversion factor used for each year and the percentage change from the previous year. Exhibit 21 shows Game Commission Revenues in Constant Dollars.

Exhibit 20

**CPI Conversion Factor  
 (by Fiscal Year)**

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Consumer Price Index	236.887	243.742	247.527	251.020	252.121	253.132	257.486	262.224	267.166	271.316
FY 2010-11 Conversion Table	1	0.972	0.957	0.944	0.940	0.936	0.920	0.903	0.887	0.873
Percent Change		2.89%	1.55%	1.41%	0.44%	0.40%	1.72%	1.84%	1.88%	1.55%

Source: Developed by LBFC staff with information from the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Exhibit 21

**Game Commission Revenues**  
(Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
License Revenues	\$33,694,410	\$33,709,885	\$33,487,969	\$33,542,835	\$33,118,498	\$33,254,822	\$32,515,920	\$32,634,331	\$31,925,556	\$34,176,443
Natural Resources <sup>a/</sup>	11,576,283	24,058,015	22,662,094	26,734,307	24,786,354	30,722,407	24,285,977	30,720,549	50,993,780	61,385,684
Intergovernmental Revenues	17,083,899	17,280,593	18,098,449	13,289,028	23,790,312	25,155,836	24,403,572	25,262,972	24,706,186	23,068,773
Game Law Fines	1,147,157	1,187,697	1,212,254	1,411,346	1,476,218	1,511,906	1,493,227	1,360,083	1,147,227	1,307,463
Sales of Timber	7,710,154	6,437,384	6,858,025	6,654,190	5,600,406	6,119,487	9,446,887	9,751,716	7,082,549	5,755,771
Interest Income	5,467,770	1,234,708	3,133,873	4,658,868	1,633,704	1,106,840	2,772,720	2,114,322	3,619,089	3,299,512
Game News Subscriptions	686,054	681,006	635,650	609,915	622,696	619,361	571,969	802,793	684,454	454,256
Misc.	2,477,564	5,009,292	3,871,007	3,262,928	5,328,951	2,996,503	2,833,336	3,181,914	2,877,034	7,551,018
<b>Total:</b>	<u>\$79,843,291</u>	<u>\$89,598,579</u>	<u>\$89,959,321</u>	<u>\$90,163,416</u>	<u>\$96,357,138</u>	<u>\$101,487,162</u>	<u>\$98,323,609</u>	<u>\$105,828,679</u>	<u>\$123,035,875</u>	<u>\$136,998,920</u>

Note:

<sup>a/</sup> Includes the leasing of rights-of-way.

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

## Revenues per Capita and per Licensee

Revenues per capita and licensee illustrate how revenues change relative to the change in those categories over time, showing the ability of the Game Commission to maintain service levels. For example, if revenues per licensee are decreasing, it could be expected the Game Commission would be unable to maintain existing service levels unless it were to find new revenue sources, reduce expenditures, or cut services.

### Formulas.

Revenues per Capita:

$$\frac{\text{Revenues}_{(constant)}}{\text{Total Pennsylvania Population}}$$

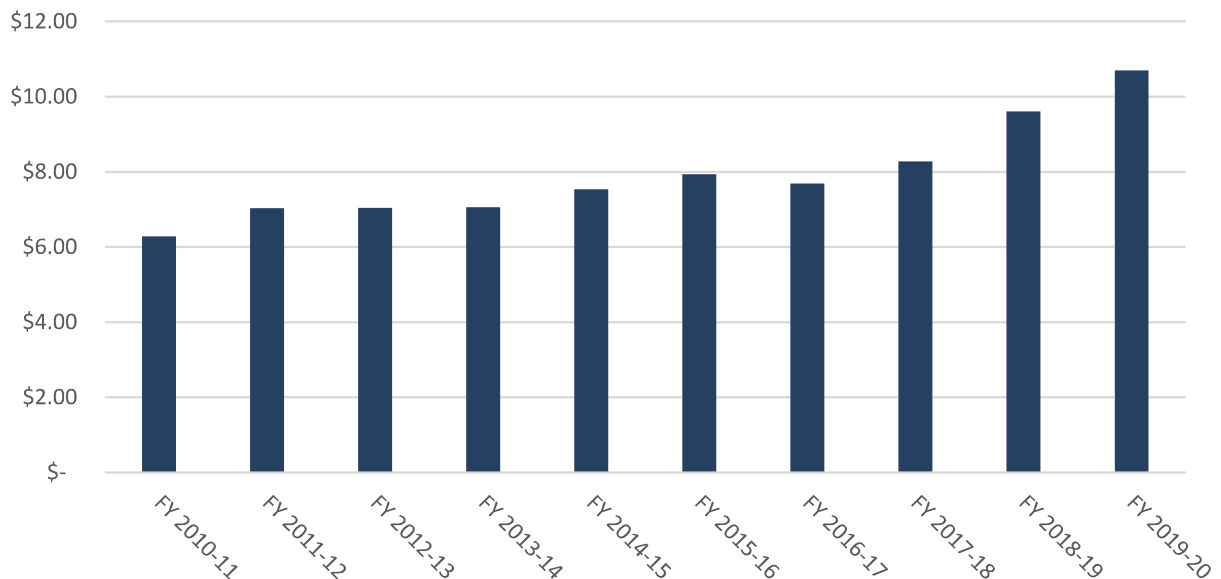
Revenues per Licensee:

$$\frac{\text{Revenue}_{(constant)}}{\text{Individual Licensees}}$$

**Trend per Capita – Favorable.** From FY 2010-11 to 2019-20, total revenues per capita increased \$23.66 per capita in constant dollars. This equates to a 70 percent increase in per capita revenues in constant dollars. Please see Exhibit 22 for additional detail.

### Exhibit 22

#### Revenues Per Capita (Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)

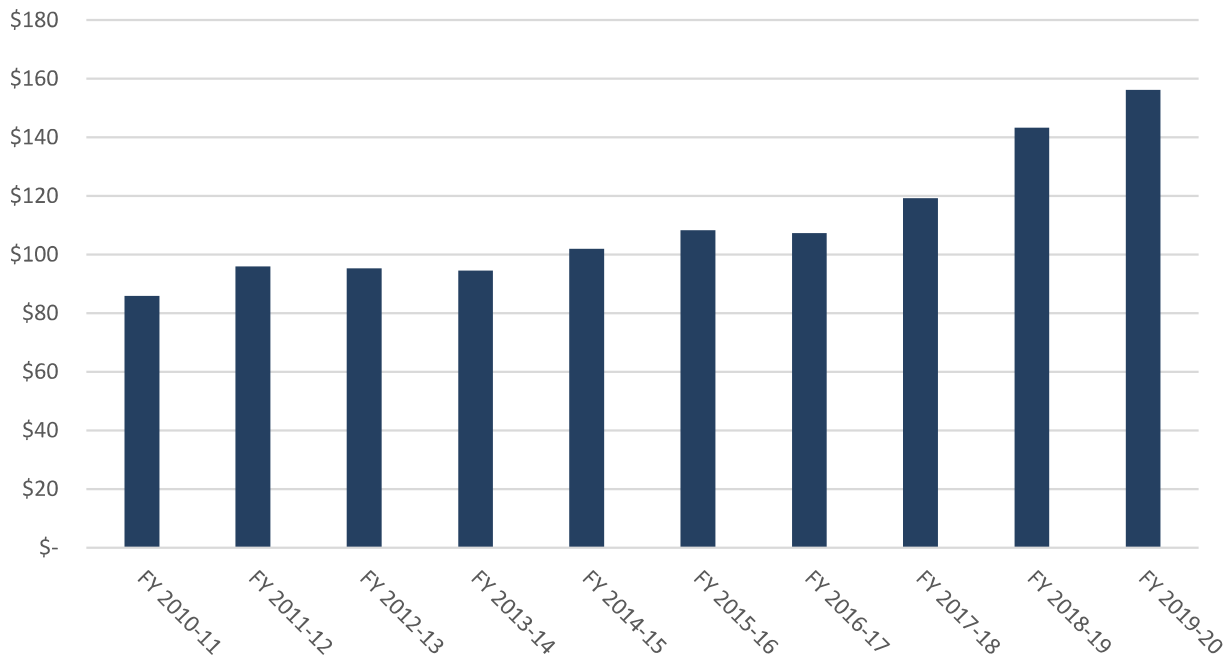


Source: Developed by LBFC staff with information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Trend per Licensee – Favorable.** In the same period, revenues per licensee have increased by \$70 to \$156 from \$86 – an increase of 82 percent. While revenues have increased, the number of unique individuals purchasing a license from the Game Commission has decreased by 6 percent. Please see Exhibit 23 for additional detail.

Exhibit 23

**Revenues per Licensee  
(Constant Dollars)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** The population of Pennsylvania has been relatively stagnant during the scope of our study – increasing only 0.72 percent. Additionally, the number of individuals buying a Game Commission license has decreased by 6 percent. At the same time, Game Commission revenues have increased by roughly 97 percent over the same period. As the population increases, it might be expected that the need for services would increase proportionately. Thus, the level of per capita revenues would ideally remain at least constant in real terms. Because per capita and per licensee revenues are increasing, it is expected that the Commission will be able to maintain existing service levels.

## License Revenues per Licensee

Licensees are the number of individuals who have purchased a Pennsylvania Game Commission hunting license of some kind. It is different from the total number of licenses sold, in that an individual may, and often does, purchase more than one license. This measure gets to the level at which individual hunters support the agency.

### Formula.

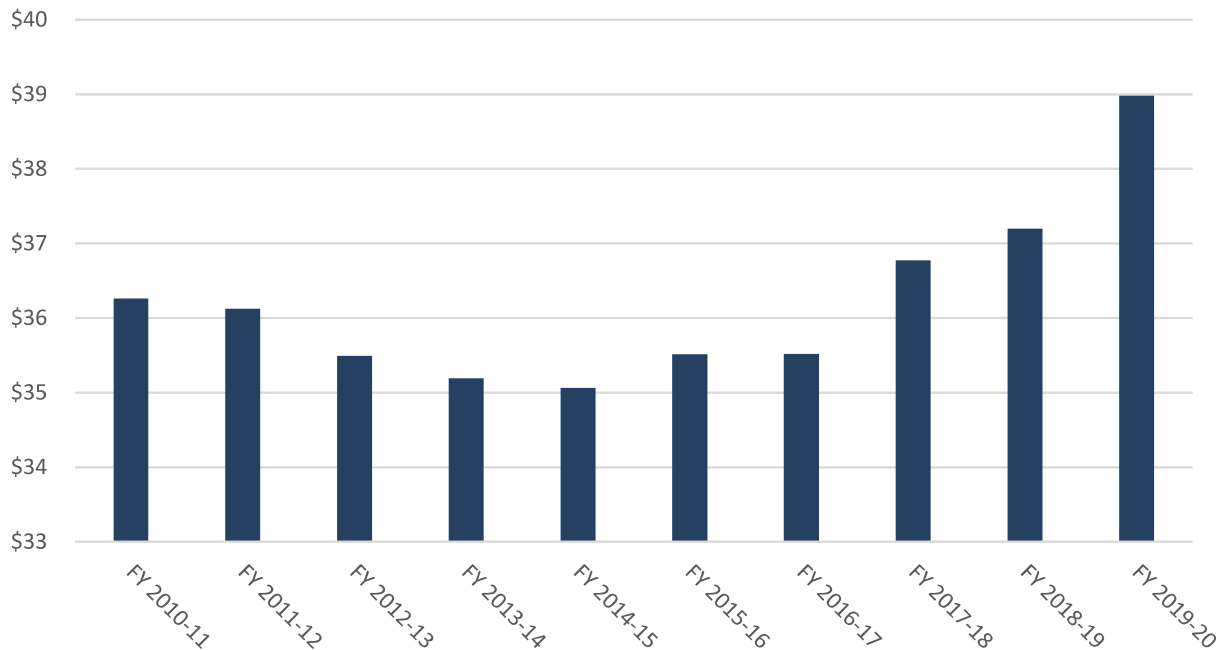
$$\frac{\text{License Revenue}_{(\text{constant})}}{\text{Licensees}}$$

**Trend – Favorable.** Looking only at Game Commission revenues from licenses sold, we see that in constant dollars, license revenues increased from \$33 million to \$34 million.

While license revenues, in constant dollars, increased from FY 2010-11 to FY 2019-20 by 1.4 percent, the number of licensees decreased. The result shows license revenues in constant dollars per licensee increased over the scope of our study from \$36 to \$39. See Exhibit 24.

Exhibit 24

## License Revenues per Licensee (Constant Dollars)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** Revenues from the sale of licenses has increased by only 1.4 percent over ten years in constant dollars. Further, the number of licenses is declining. The result is an increase in per licensee revenues. While this is a favorable trend, it is certainly a mixed bag. At some point, if the Game Commission wishes to stabilize the level of revenues from licenses, it may seek an increase in the cost of a license and find the price is beyond what hunters are able or willing to pay – especially if the cost of a license increases at a rate faster than the increase in personal income of hunters. However, it should be noted the cost of a license has not increased since 1999.

### **Revenues by Source**

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At the same time, overall revenues for the Pennsylvania Game Commission have grown. The result is the Game Commission is less reliant on hunters for funding and more reliant on revenues from other sources – specifically from the sale of natural resources.

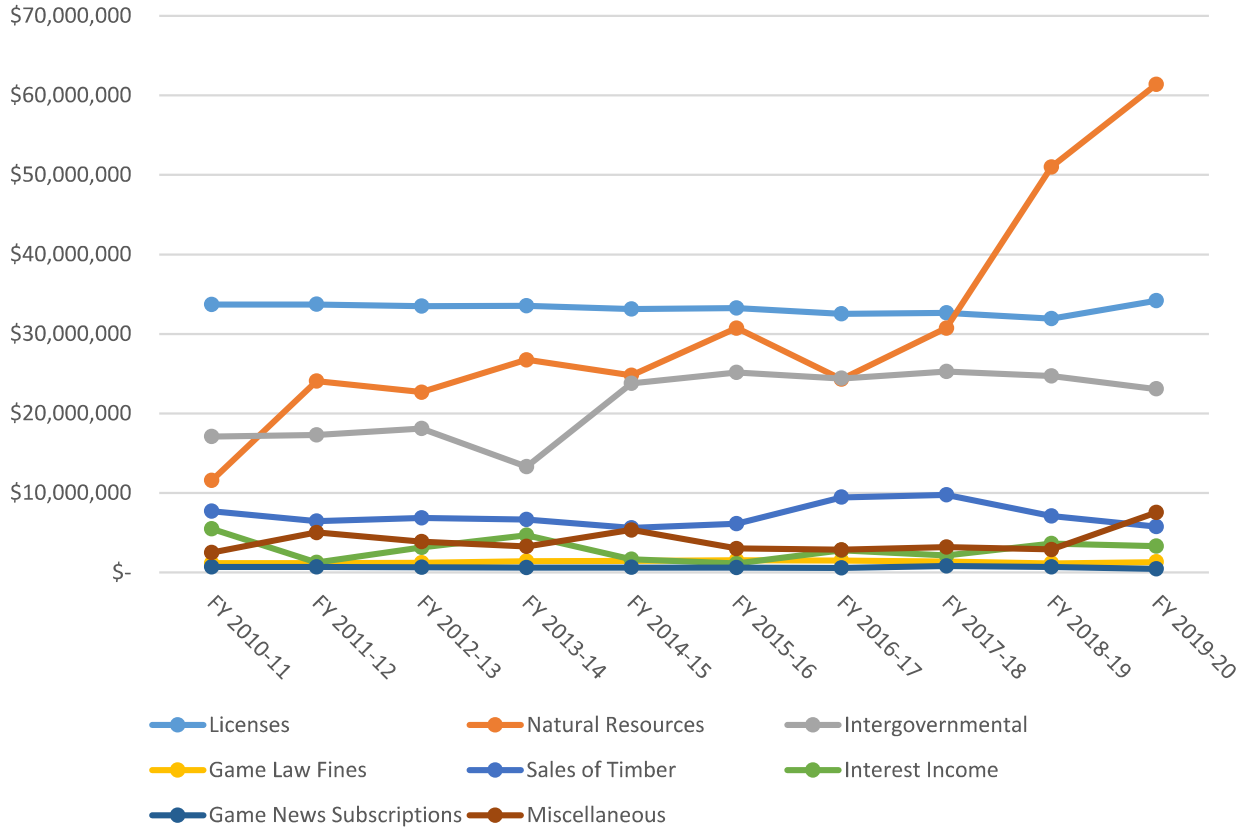
#### **Formula.**

$$\frac{\text{Revenue Source}}{\text{Total Revenues}}$$

**Trend – Caution.** Revenues from the sale of licenses were roughly \$33 million in FY 2010-11 and increased to a little more than \$34 million in FY 2019-20 (constant dollars). Revenues from natural resources and right-of-way increased from \$11.5 million to \$61 million (constant dollars) over the same time period. In FY 2010-11, revenues from the sale of licenses were 42 percent of total Game Commission revenues. By FY 2019-20, that number dropped to 25 percent. The inverse is true for revenues from natural resources and right-of-way. In this category, revenues were 14 percent of Game Commission revenues in FY 2010-11 and increased to 45 percent of revenues by FY 2019-20. See Exhibits 25 and 26 for a complete breakout of these revenues.

Exhibit 25

**Breakout of Game Fund Revenues  
 (Constant Dollars)**

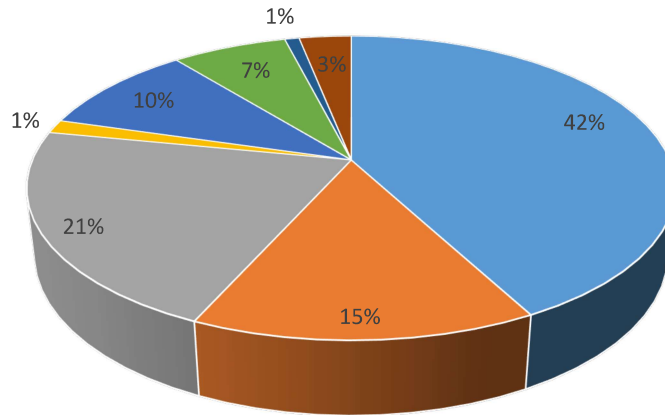


Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Exhibit 26

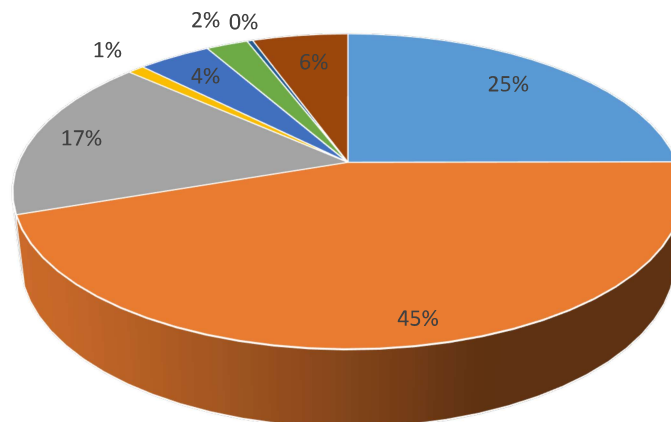
**Breakout of Game Fund Revenues  
 FY 2010-11 and 2019-20  
 (Percent of Total)**

2010-11



- Licenses
- Natural Resources
- Intergovernmental
- Game Law Fines
- Sales of Timber
- Interest Income
- Game News Subscriptions
- Miscellaneous

2019-20



- Licenses
- Natural Resources
- Intergovernmental
- Game Law Fines
- Sales of Timber
- Interest Income
- Game News Subscriptions
- Miscellaneous

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

## **Intergovernmental Revenues**

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An over dependence on Intergovernmental Revenues could have an adverse impact on the financial condition of the Game Fund. For example, the conditions the federal government attaches to these resources could prove to be too restrictive, especially if the conditions change in the future and the Game Commission has developed a dependence on the program for functions of the Commission. Further, as the federal government struggles with its own budgetary challenges, it could choose to withdraw or decrease the funds and leave the Game Commission in the position of cutting its budget, asking for an increase in license fees, increasing the sale of natural resources, or seeking additional sources of revenues.

### ***Formulas.***

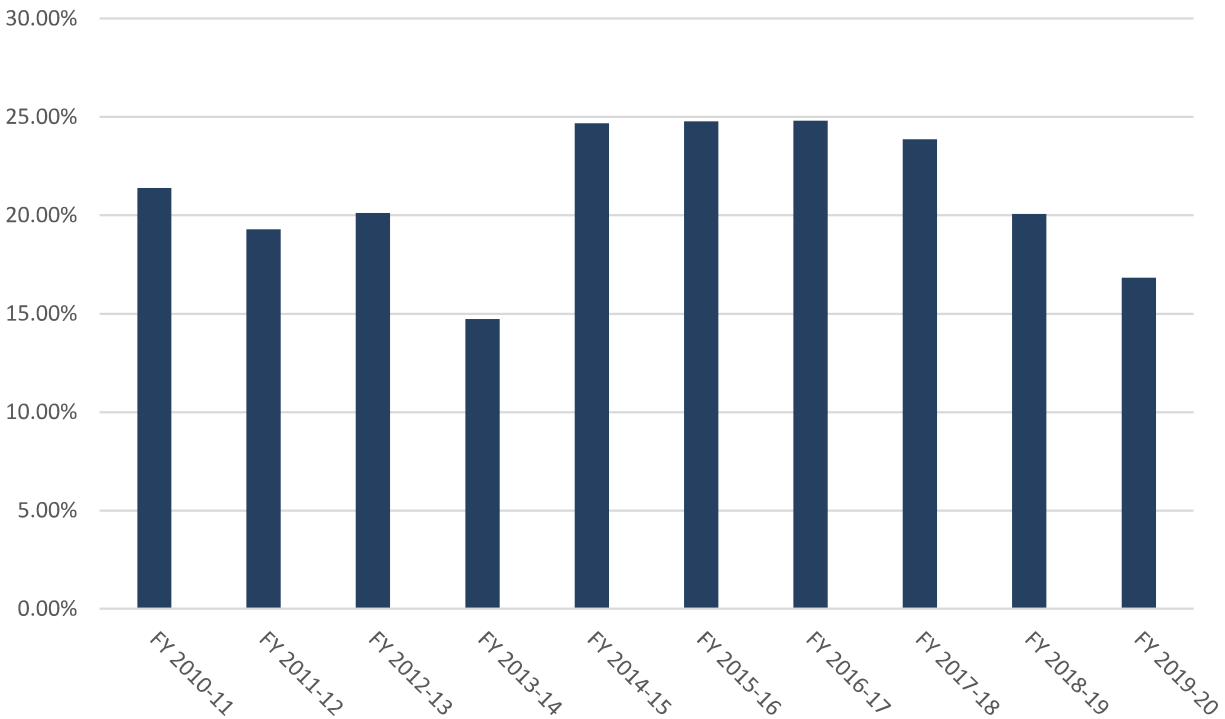
Intergovernmental Revenues Percentage:

$$\frac{\text{Intergovernmental Revenues}}{\text{Total Game Fund Revenues}}$$

**Trend – Caution.** The Game Commission's Intergovernmental Revenues as a percentage of Game Fund revenues is the Commission's third largest revenue category. Only license revenues and revenues from the sale of natural resources are greater. After hovering around 25 percent of Total Game Fund Revenues (constant dollars), the percent of Intergovernmental Revenues began to decline in FY 2017-18. In that year, Intergovernmental Revenues were nearly 24 percent of the Game Commission's total. In FY 2019-20, that percentage dropped to just under 16 percent. This was the result of a slight decrease in aid from the federal government and a significant increase in the sale of natural resources. Please see Exhibit 27 for additional details.

Exhibit 27

**Intergovernmental Revenues as a Percent of Game Fund Revenues  
(Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** The Pennsylvania Game Commission relies heavily on Intergovernmental Revenues for operating purposes. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has restricted the options for the Commission to generate additional direct revenues from increased license fees.

In constant dollars, revenues from licenses have only increased \$482 thousand since FY 2010-11. If Intergovernmental Revenues continue to decline, the Commission will be in the position of needing to cut spending, increase the sale of natural resources, or generate new and unknown sources of revenues, given the restrictions on license fees.

**Game Fund Revenues: Actual vs. Budget**

This indicator examines the differences between revenue estimates and revenues actually received by the Game Fund. Major discrepancies in revenue estimates can be an indication of a declining economy, inefficient collection procedures, or inaccurate estimating techniques.

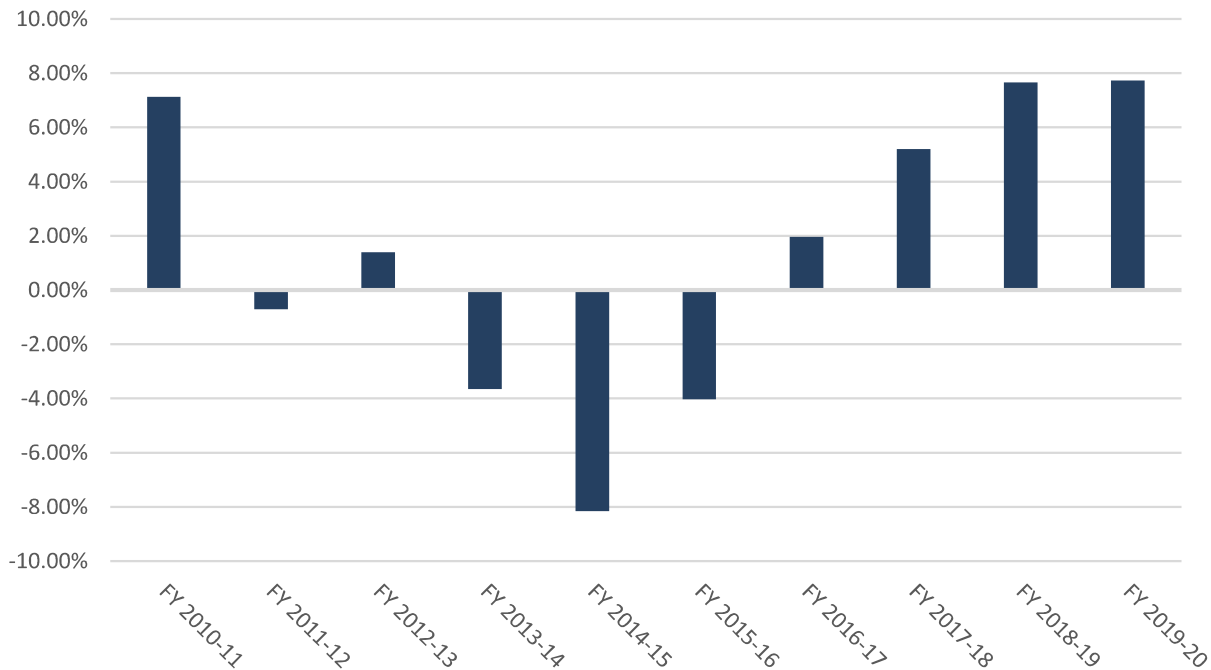
**Formula.**

$$\frac{\text{Actual Revenues} - \text{Budgeted Revenues}}{\text{Actual Revenues}}$$

**Trend – Caution.** In FY 2010-11 Game Fund revenues were \$5 million above estimate or 7.14 percent. By FY 2019-20, revenues were \$12 million above estimate, or 7.73 percent. Only in FYs 2012-13 and 2016-17 were actual revenues within two percent of budgeted revenues. See Exhibit 28 for additional details.

Exhibit 28

**Game Fund Revenues - Actual vs. Budget  
(Current Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** While it is certainly better to underestimate revenues, there is cause for concern with this trend. An under estimation of revenues means the Commission may decide to ask for an increase in fees or attempt to sell additional natural resources such as timber or natural gas. An overestimation of revenues can result in unnecessary constraints on services or capital projects in subsequent years. Therefore, the difference between actual and budgeted revenues should be minimized as much as possible.

### C. Revenues vs. Expenditures

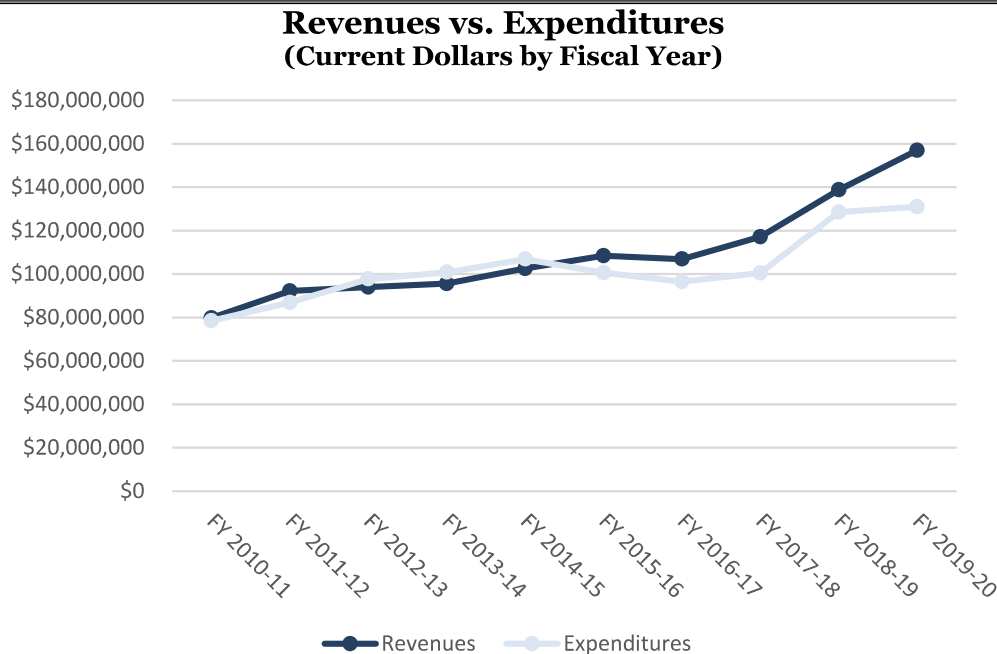
Revenues vs. Expenditures depicts how revenues and expenditures change over time relative to each other.

**Formulas.** None used.

**Trend – Favorable.** Pennsylvania Game Commission expenditures exceeded revenues in FY 2012-13 through 2014-15. However, the Commission cut spending to bring revenues in line with expenditures. Beginning in FY 2015-16, revenues exceeded expenditures and have continued to do so.

As shown on Exhibit 29, revenues and expenditures have changed, virtually in tandem, beginning in year two of our review.

Exhibit 29



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from data provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

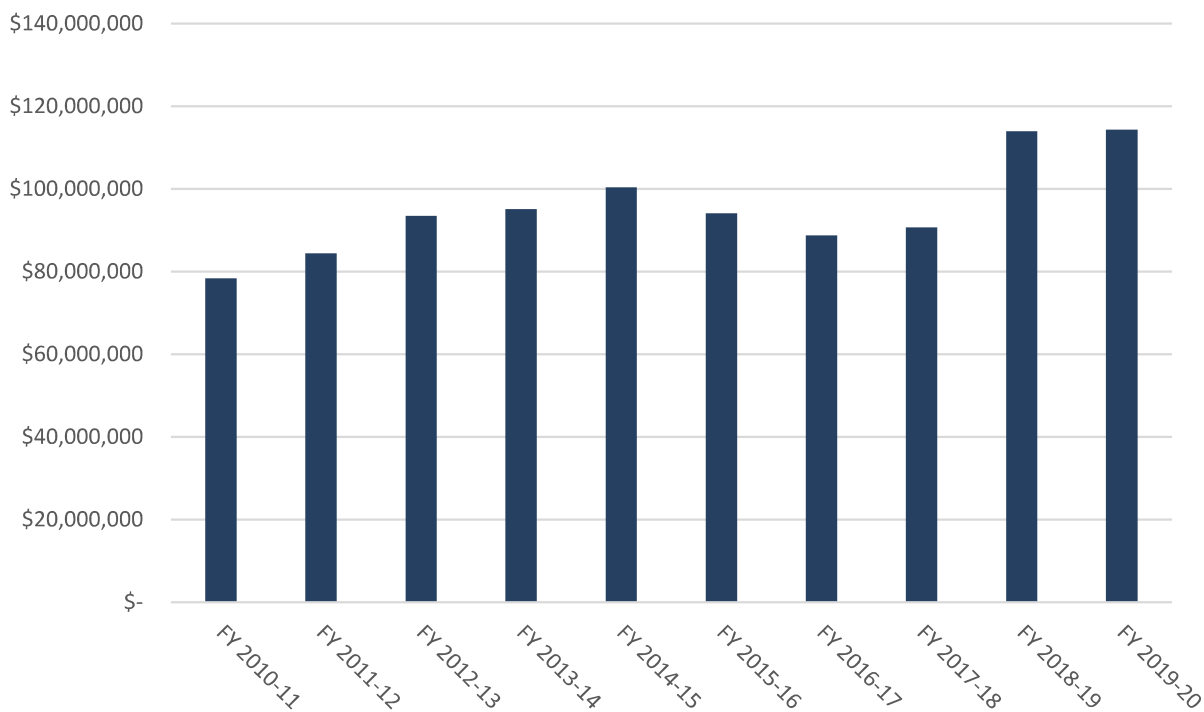
**Analysis.** Revenues have exceeded expenditures in every year of our review, except for FY 2012-13 to FY 2014-15. From FY 2010-11 to FY 2019-20, revenues increased by 97 percent and expenditures increased by 67 percent.

## D. Expenditures

Expenditures are an approximate measure of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's service output. An ideal situation would be that expenditure growth rate does not exceed the revenue growth rate and will have maximum spending flexibility to adjust to changing conditions. See Exhibit 30.

Exhibit 30

### Pennsylvania Game Commission Expenditures (Current Dollars by Fiscal Year)



Source: Developed by LB  
FC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Wildlife habitation management is the largest category of expenditures for the Game Commission (43 percent) and has remained remarkably stable over the scope of our study. Wildlife protection and administration are the next highest expenditures at 18 and 16 percent respectively. See Exhibit 31.

Exhibit 31

**Pennsylvania Game Commission Expenditures**  
 (Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)

	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20
Wildlife Habitat Management	\$32,578,885	\$34,468,285	\$40,099,063	\$39,994,555	\$43,292,640	\$40,705,585	\$38,590,100	\$38,746,951	\$48,477,275	\$49,702,823
Wildlife Protection Administration	14,290,873	15,523,980	16,299,108	15,571,494	17,809,633	18,968,825	17,395,520	17,651,940	20,970,939	20,035,050
Wildlife Management	10,854,594	10,683,431	13,662,548	15,036,515	12,260,385	11,490,252	12,433,841	15,410,039	19,647,582	18,265,630
Information & Education	9,684,050	10,314,390	10,921,712	11,791,951	12,421,758	11,473,331	10,002,131	8,754,586	11,360,543	12,796,459
Automated Technology Services	4,043,254	4,008,564	4,069,581	4,767,447	5,407,742	4,686,845	3,791,668	3,914,821	4,681,733	5,621,750
Executive Offices	2,977,852	2,983,685	3,347,356	3,501,273	3,740,907	3,362,735	3,328,062	3,352,986	4,284,689	4,445,364
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$78,403,304</b>	<b>\$84,403,610</b>	<b>\$93,533,416</b>	<b>\$95,163,090</b>	<b>\$100,420,423</b>	<b>\$94,124,560</b>	<b>\$88,791,856</b>	<b>\$90,719,575</b>	<b>\$113,931,502</b>	<b>\$114,356,825</b>

Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

## **Expenditures per Capita and per Licensee**

---

Expenditures per capita and expenditures per licensee reflect the changes of expenditures relative to Pennsylvania's population and the number of licenses sold. As the population or number of licensees increases, it would be reasonable to expect the need for services would increase proportionately. Therefore, the level of per capita and per licensee expenditures should ideally remain constant in real terms, unless the Game Commission adds programs or services.

However, an increase in per capita spending may indicate the cost of providing services is exceeding the public's or licensee's ability to pay. If the increase in spending is greater than would be expected from continued inflation and cannot be explained by the addition of new services, it can be an indicator of declining productivity, whereby the Commission is spending more to support the same level of services.

### ***Formulas.***

Expenditures per Capita:

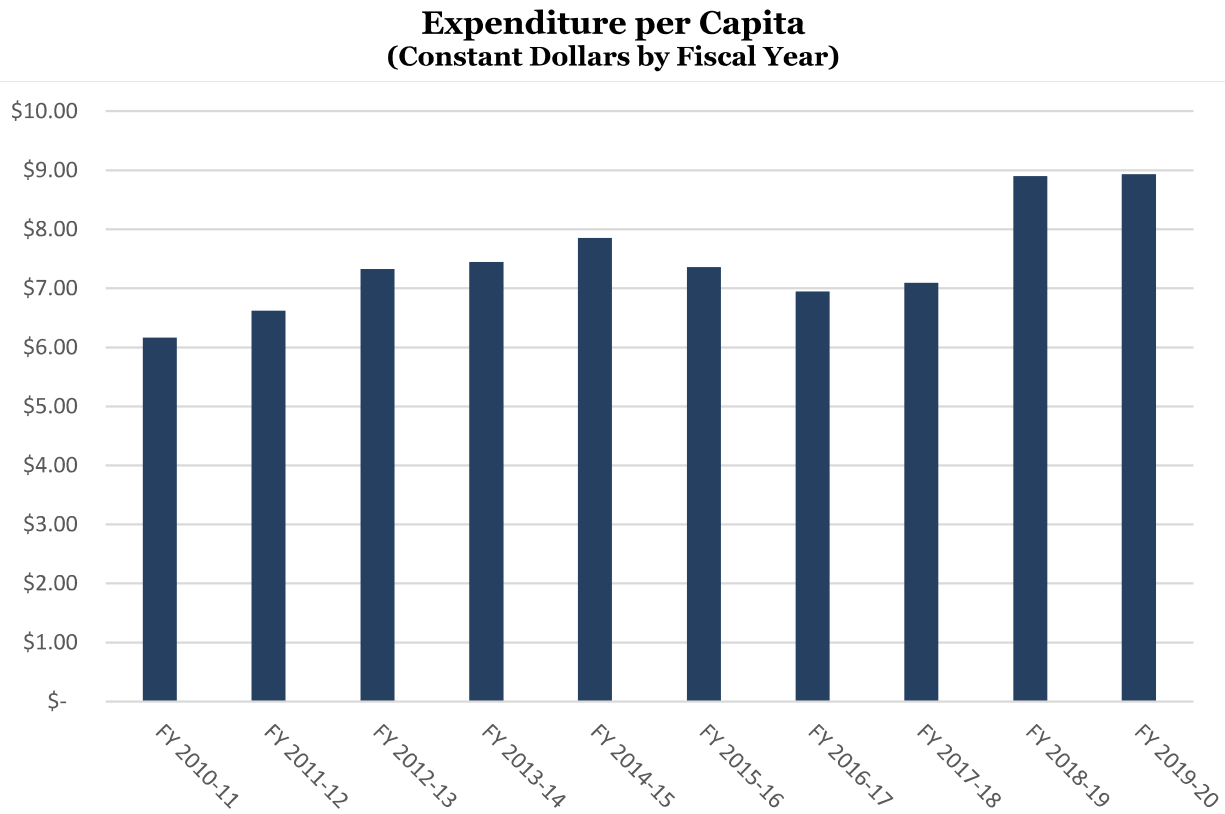
$$\frac{\textit{Expenditures}_{(Constant)}}{\textit{Pennsylvania Population}}$$

Expenditures per Individual Licensee:

$$\frac{\textit{Expenditures}_{(Constant)}}{\textit{Licensees}}$$

***Trend per Capita –Caution.*** The overall per capita expenditures (constant dollars) of the Game Fund increased from \$6.17 to \$8.93, or 45 percent from FY 2010-11 through FY 2019-20. Beginning in FY 2017-18, per capita expenditures began to increase from \$7.09 to \$8.93, or a 26 percent increase. See Exhibit 32.

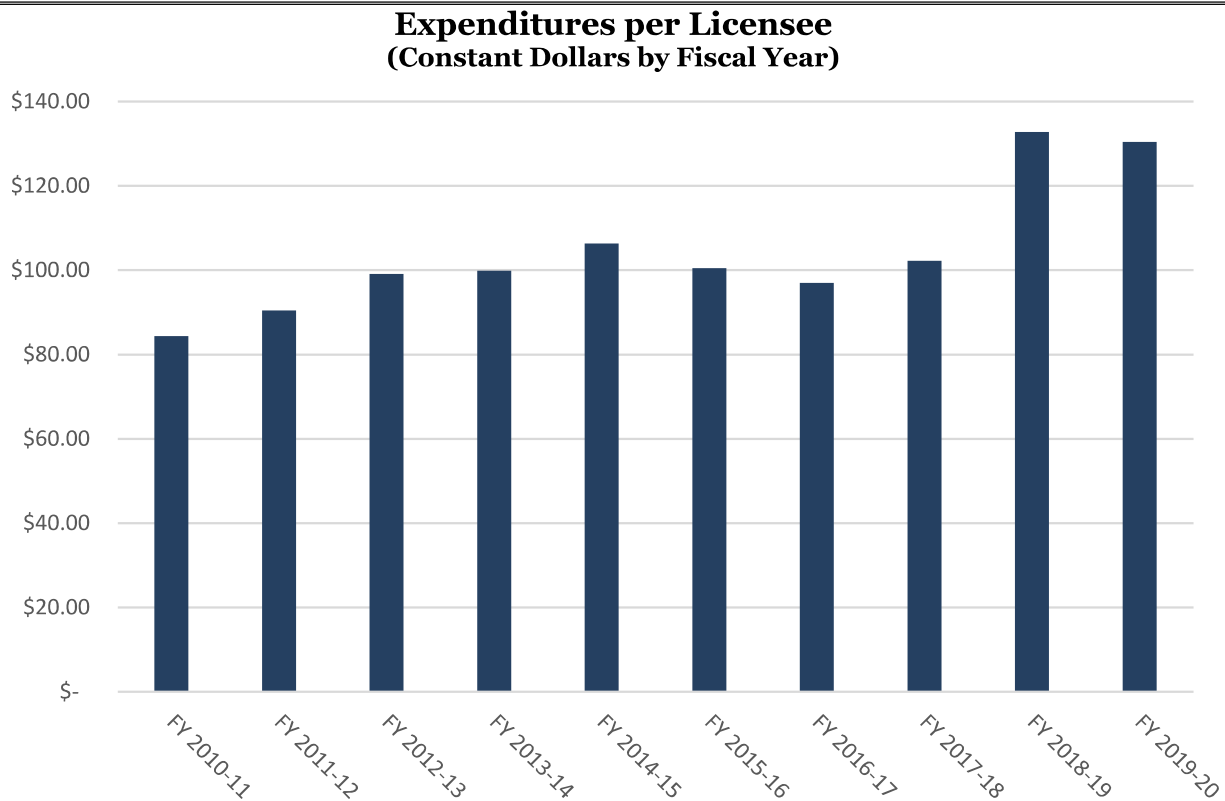
Exhibit 32



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information obtained from the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

***Trend per licensee – Caution.*** The expenditure trend per licensee in constant dollars is like the per capita trend. The difference is in the degree. Expenditures per licensee from FY 2014-15 to FY 2016-17 decreased from \$106.32 to \$96.99, or 9 percent. From FY 2016-17 to FY 2019-20, spending per unique licensee increased to \$130.43, an increase of 34 percent. Over the entire scope of our study, expenditures per licensee in constant dollars increased 43 percent. See Exhibit 33.

Exhibit 33



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** The overall expenditure trend is concerning. Per capita and per licensee expenditures have grown during the scope of our study. However, the significant increase in PGC expenditures for FY 2018-19 included planned infrastructure initiatives such as building projects with the Department of General Services and capital asset purchases for replacing fully depreciated machinery and equipment beyond their useful life. However, expenditures do not appear to be a one-time spike. It could be expected that the Pennsylvania Game Commission would be unable to maintain existing service levels unless it finds new revenue sources, increases revenues from existing sources, or decreases costs.

While the PGC serves the entire Commonwealth and not only those who purchase a license, the sale of licenses account for 25 percent of PGC revenue. Increasing expenditures per licensee can indicate the cost of providing services is greater than the hunting community's ability or willingness to pay, especially if spending is increasing faster than a hunter's personal income.

## Expenditures by Function

Expenditures by function show a breakdown of the Game Fund expenses. Monitoring this trend can help analyze the causes of changes in expenditures over time by Commission function or department. The Pennsylvania Game Commission operates with seven primary expenditure areas – wildlife habitation management, wildlife protection, administration, wildlife management, information and education, automated technology services, and executive offices.

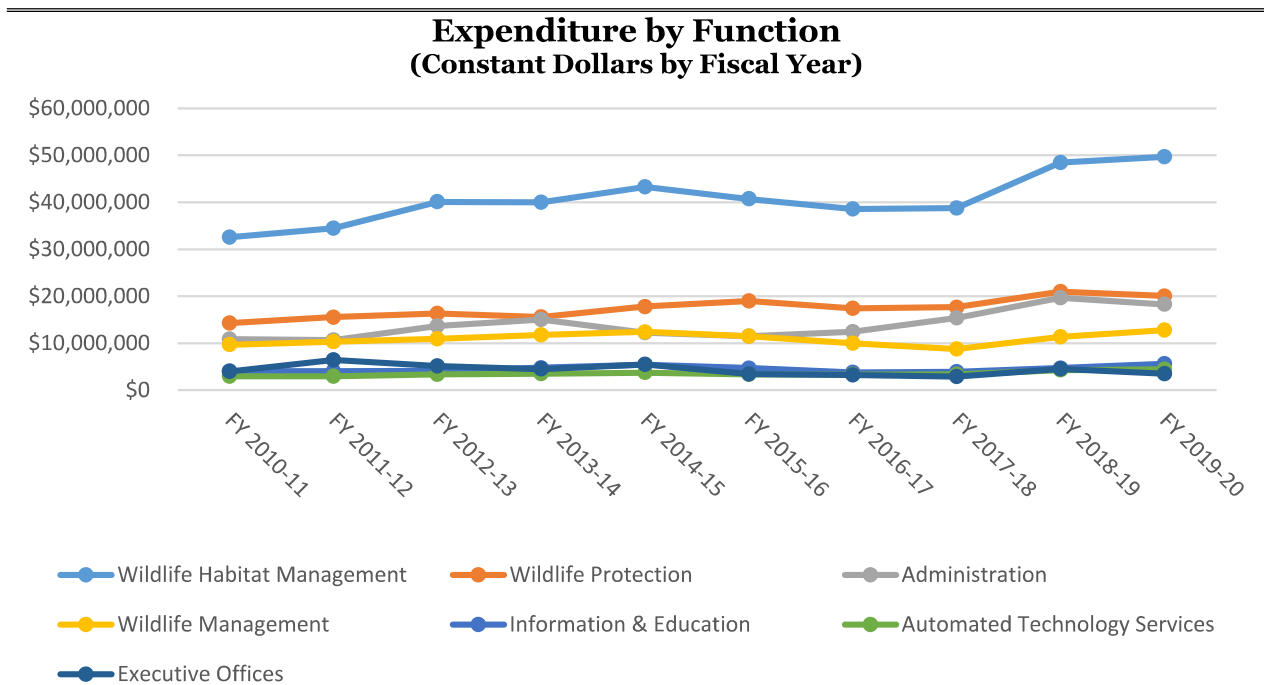
### Formula.

Expenditure by Function:

$$\frac{\text{Function Expenditure}}{\text{Total Expenditures}}$$

**Trend – Caution.** Except for the Executive Office, all areas of Game Commission operations saw an increase in expenditures from FY 2010-11 to FY 2019-20 in constant dollars. However, from FY 2015-16 to FY 2017-18, the Game Commission cut spending from \$100 million to approximately \$91 million (constant dollars). See Exhibit 34 for additional detail.

Exhibit 34



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** The overall expenditures of the Pennsylvania Game Commission have been unstable over the course of our study. For the first four years of our review, spending decreased an average of six percent. For the next two years, spending decreased an average of six percent. Per year. Finally, for the final three years of our review, spending increased an average of nine percent.

### **Employees per Capita and Licensee**

---

Personnel costs are a major portion of the Game Commission's budget. Plotting changes in the number of employees per capita and per licensee is another way to measure changes in expenditures. An increase in employees per capita and per licensee may indicate that expenditures are rising faster than revenues, Commission services are becoming more labor intensive, or personnel productivity is declining.

#### **Formulas.**

$$\frac{\text{Number of Game Commission Employees}}{\text{Population of Pennsylvania}}$$

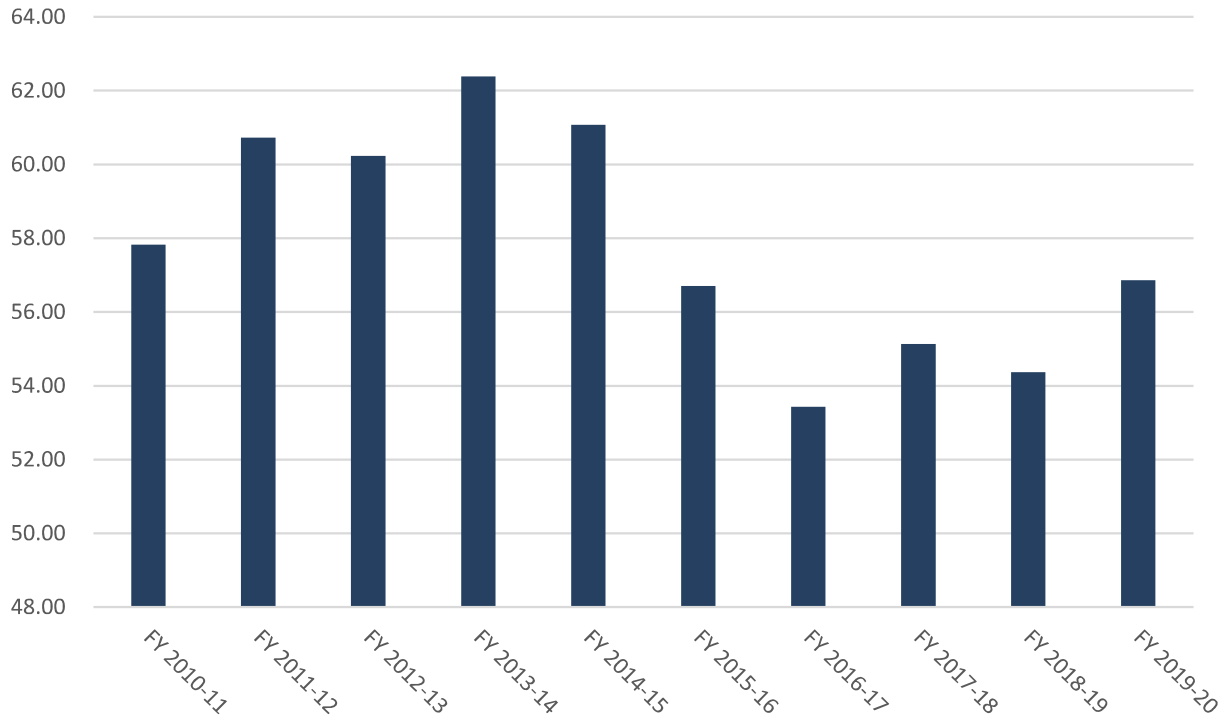
-or-

$$\frac{\text{Number of Game Commission Employees}}{\text{Number of Licensees}}$$

**Trend per Capita – Favorable.** The number of Game Commission employees per capita decreased slightly from FY 2010-11 to FY 2019-20 – 58 to 57 employees per 1,000,000 state residents. The maximum number of employees per capita was FY 2013-14. In that year, the Game Commission employed 62 individuals for every 1,000,000 residents of Pennsylvania. From FY 2013-14, the number of employees per capita began to decrease, reaching a low of 53 in FY 2016-17 before beginning to increase again. Please see Exhibit 35 for additional details.

Exhibit 35

**Game Commission Employees per Capita  
(Per 1,000,000 residents)**

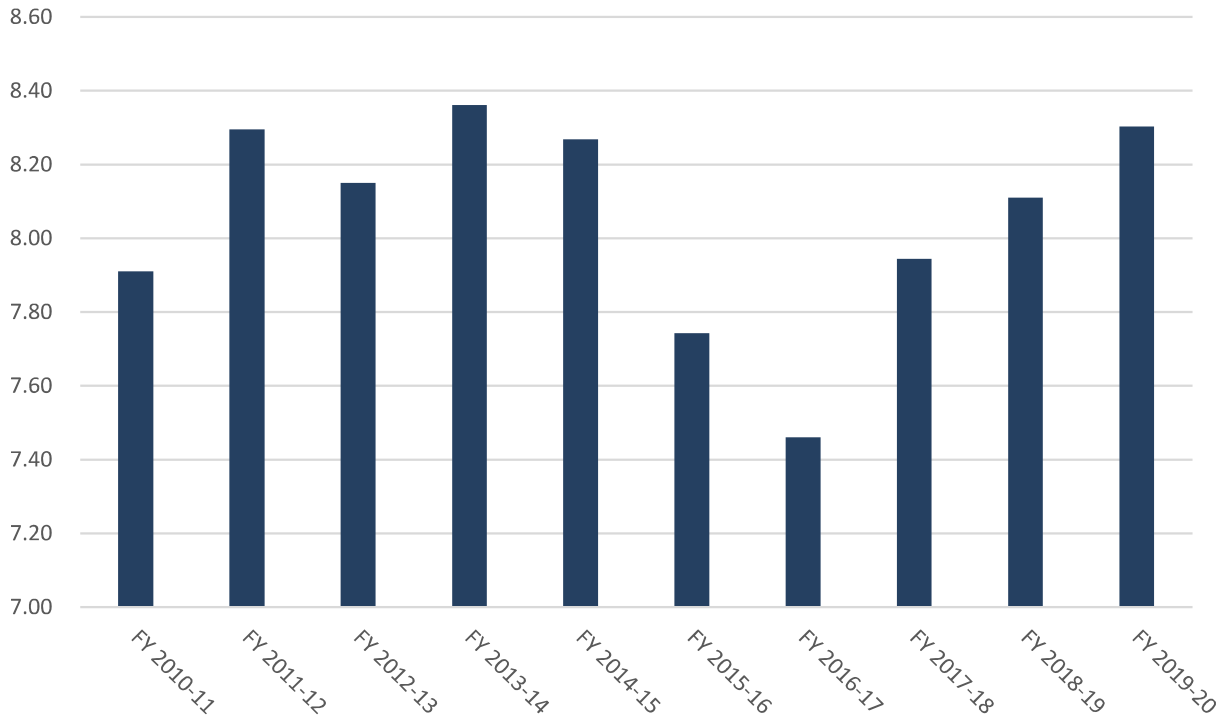


Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

***Trend per Licensee –Caution.*** From FY 2010-11 to FY 2013-14, the number of game commission employees per licensee increased by nearly 6 percent. However, from the period FY 2013-14 to FY 2016-17, the number of Game Commission employees decreased by just under 10 percent before increasing 11 percent by the end of our study period. Please see Exhibit 36 for additional details.

Exhibit 36

**Game Commission Employees per Licensee  
(Per 10,000 Licensees by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC Staff with information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** In response to revenues not meeting projections in FY 2014-15 and FY 2015-16, the Commission began eliminating positions. The Game Commission reversed this trend beginning in FY 2016-17 as revenues began to exceed expectations. While employees compared to the population of Pennsylvania declined in FY 2018-19, the number of employees compared to the number of licensed hunters continues to climb.

The need to cut employees and then reversing that action and adding employees, illustrates the importance of accurate revenue projections. Except for FY 2016-17, revenues for the Game Commission have risen in every year of our study. However, basing its budget on inaccurate revenue projections required the Commission to rapidly decrease the number of employees.

## Personnel Cost as a Percentage of Expenditures

As part of Game Fund expenditures, personnel costs reflect the ability of Pennsylvania's population and/or the number of licensees to pay for the services the Commission provides.

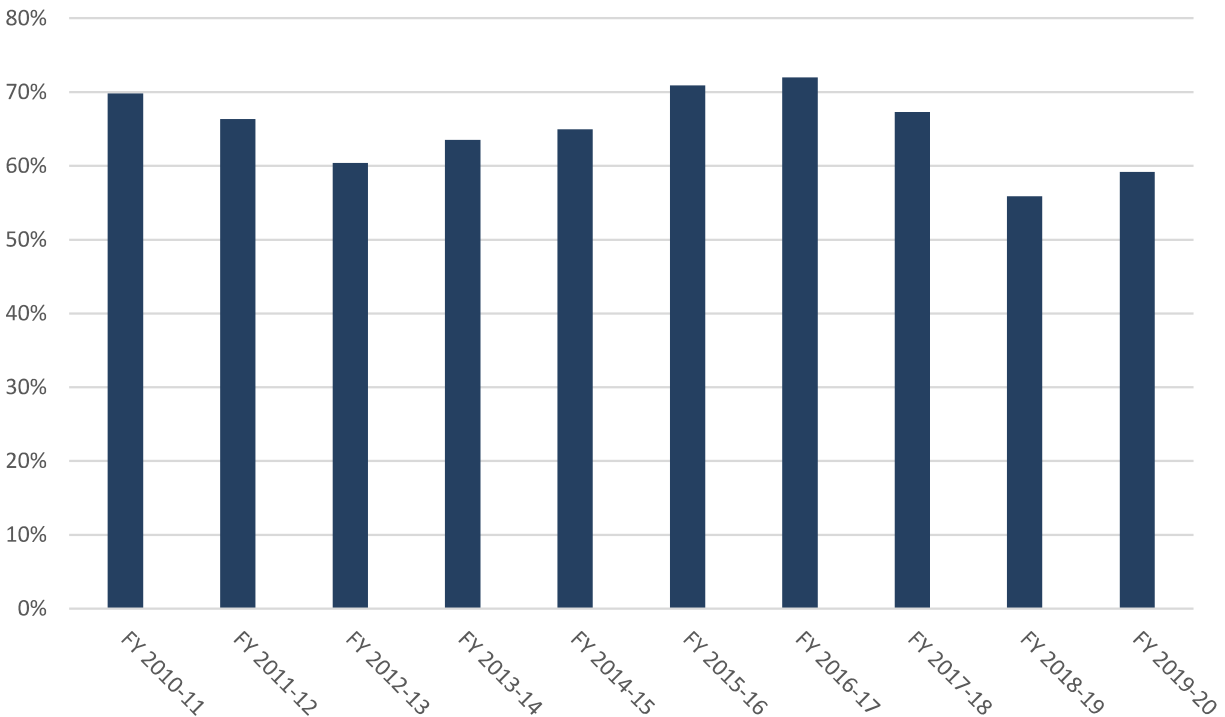
### Formula.

$$\frac{\text{Wages and Benefits}_{(constant)}}{\text{Expenditures}_{(constant)}}$$

**Trends – Caution.** From FY 2010-11 to FY 2012-13, personnel costs decreased from 70 percent of expenditures to 60 percent before rising again and peaking at 72 percent in FY 2016-17. In FY 2016-17 employee costs declined from 72 percent of expenditures to 60 percent in FY 2019-20. Please see Exhibit 37 for additional detail.

### Exhibit 37

#### Total Personnel Cost as a Percent of Expenditures (Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** Rising personnel costs put pressure on the ability of Pennsylvania taxpayers and/or licensees to pay for the services provided by

the Game Commission. While personnel costs as a percentage of expenditures declined in two of the final three years of our review, this is primarily the result of a 28 percent increase in spending in FY 2018-19. If spending had increased at the same rate as the previous year (4 percent), this indicator would have begun to rise earlier. As such, this is an area that the Commission should continue to watch closely as costs appear to be establishing an upward trend.

### **Fringe Benefits as a Percent of Wages and Benefits**

The fringe benefits measured in this indicator are retired employee health insurance, Social Security, Medicare, State employee retirement, State Worker Insurance Fund, employee group life, and active employee health insurance. The level of benefits included here are beyond the control of the Game Commission. Charting these costs is valuable as they can escalate and place a financial strain on the Commission.

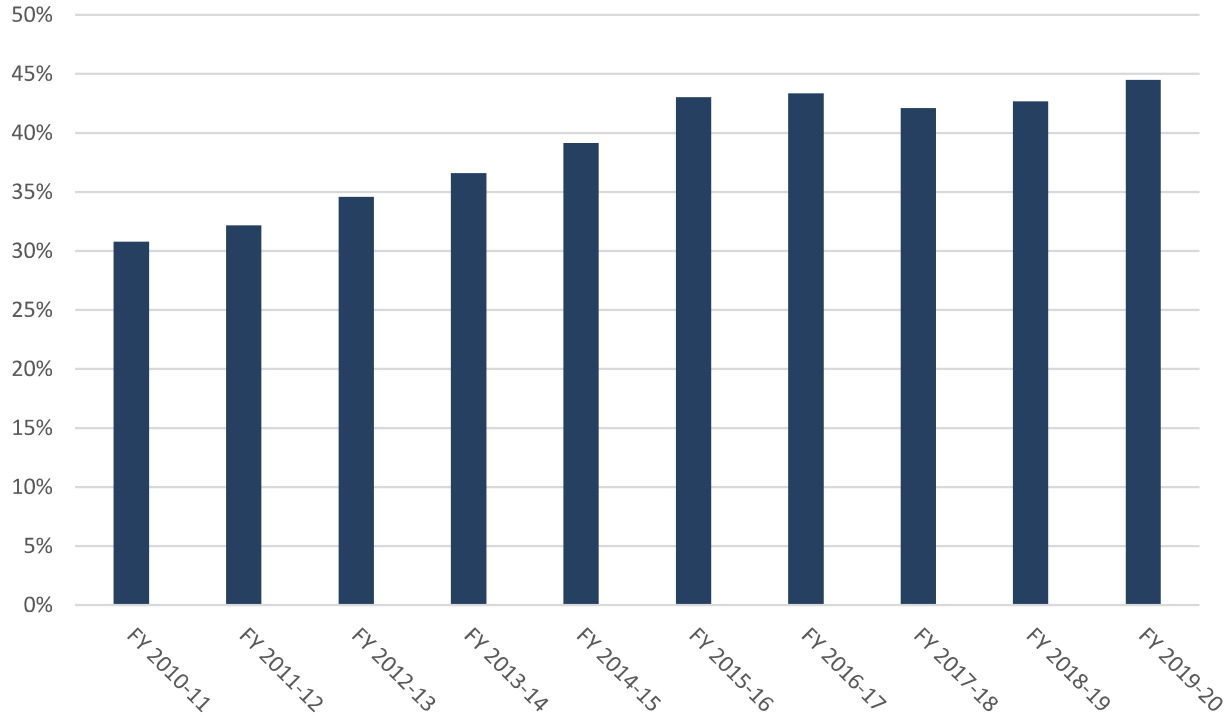
#### ***Formula.***

$$\frac{\text{Fringe Benefit Expenditures}_{(Constant)}}{\text{Wages and Benefits}_{(Constant)}}$$

***Trend – Warning.*** Fringe benefit expenditures increased from \$17 million in FY 2010-11 to \$30 million in FY 2019-20 in constant dollars (\$17 million to \$34 million in current dollars) – an increase of 79 percent. Over the same time period, wages and benefits increased from \$55 million to \$68 million in constant dollars (\$55 million to \$78 million in current dollars) – an increase of just 24 percent. The fringe benefit to wages and benefits ratio increased from 31 percent to 45 percent over the period. Please see Exhibit 38.

Exhibit 38

**Fringe Benefit Expenditures as a Percent of Wages and Benefits  
(Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** Fringe benefit expenditures as a percent of wages and benefits rose over the period of our study. As the cost of benefits increases more rapidly than wages and benefits, the Commission’s finances will come under strain if action to restrict costs is not taken.

**Retirement Costs as a Percent of Wages and Benefits**

Pension costs are beyond the control of the Game Commission. Charting these costs as a percent of wages and benefits, if they are escalating, show a financial strain on the Commission – and hinder its ability to continue to provide services to licensees and the general public.

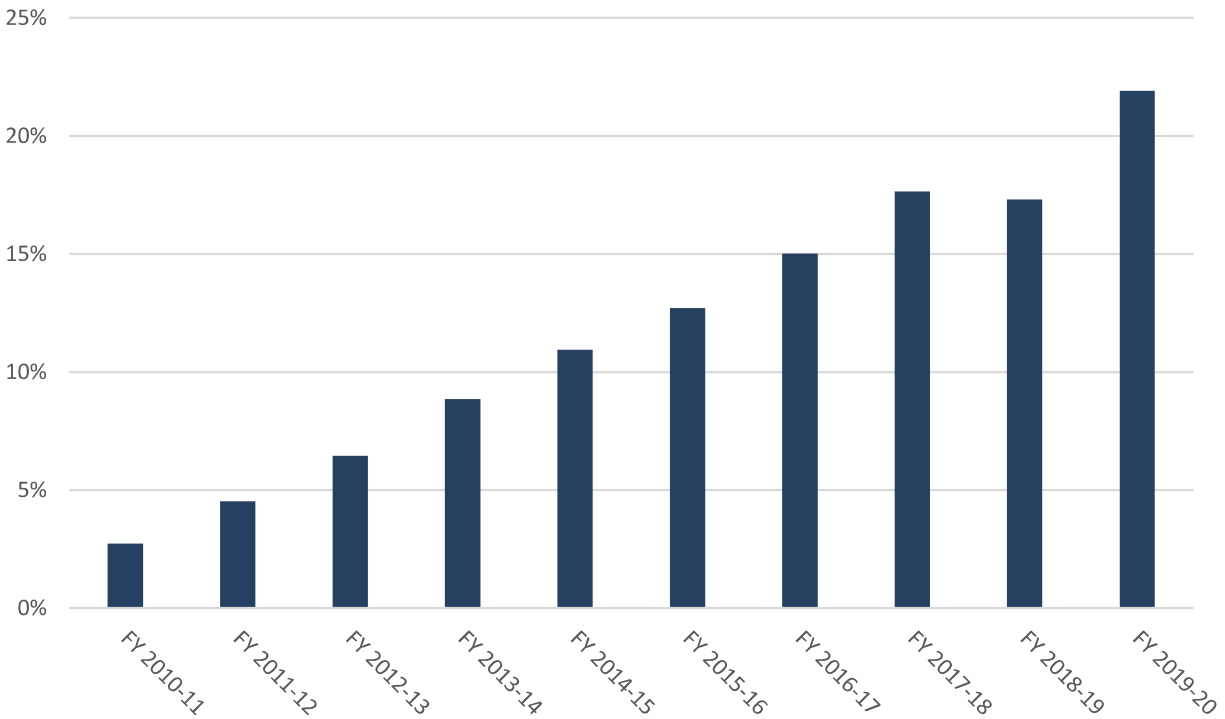
**Formula.**

$$\frac{\text{Pension Costs}_{(Constant)}}{\text{Wages and Benefits}_{(Constant)}}$$

**Trend – Warning.** The pension ratio was 3 percent in FY 2010-11. In FY 2019-20 the ratio was 22 percent. The trend is anticipated to continue. Please see Exhibit 39 for additional details.

Exhibit 39

**Pension Costs as a Percent of Wages and Benefits  
(Constant Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** As stated earlier, pension costs are largely outside the Commission's control. We note with concern the rising costs related to State Employees Retirement System benefits. If pension costs continue to increase, the result will be a significant strain on the Game Commission.

## E. Operating Position

Operating position refers to the Pennsylvania Game Commission's ability to maintain reserves for emergencies and maintain sufficient cash to pay short-term obligations and bills. The Commission will generate an operating surplus (revenues exceed expenditures) or deficit (expenditures ex-

ceed revenues), which are created from policy decisions by the Commissioners or unintentionally from imprecise forecasted revenues and expenditures. Reserves are built through the accumulation of annual operational surpluses. These are maintained for a financial safety net in the case of a loss of a revenue source or economic downturn.

### **Game Fund Operating Surplus or Deficit**

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An operating surplus occurs when current revenues exceed current expenditures. If the reverse is true, it means that at least during the current year, the Game Commission is spending more than it receives. This can occur because of an emergency such as a natural catastrophe that requires a large immediate outlay or severely restricts revenues. It can also occur as a result of a conscious policy to use surplus fund balances that have accumulated over time. The existence of an operating deficit in any one year may not be cause for concern, but frequent occurrences may indicate that current revenues are not supporting current expenditures and serious adjustments such as cutting costs or decreasing levels of service may be required.

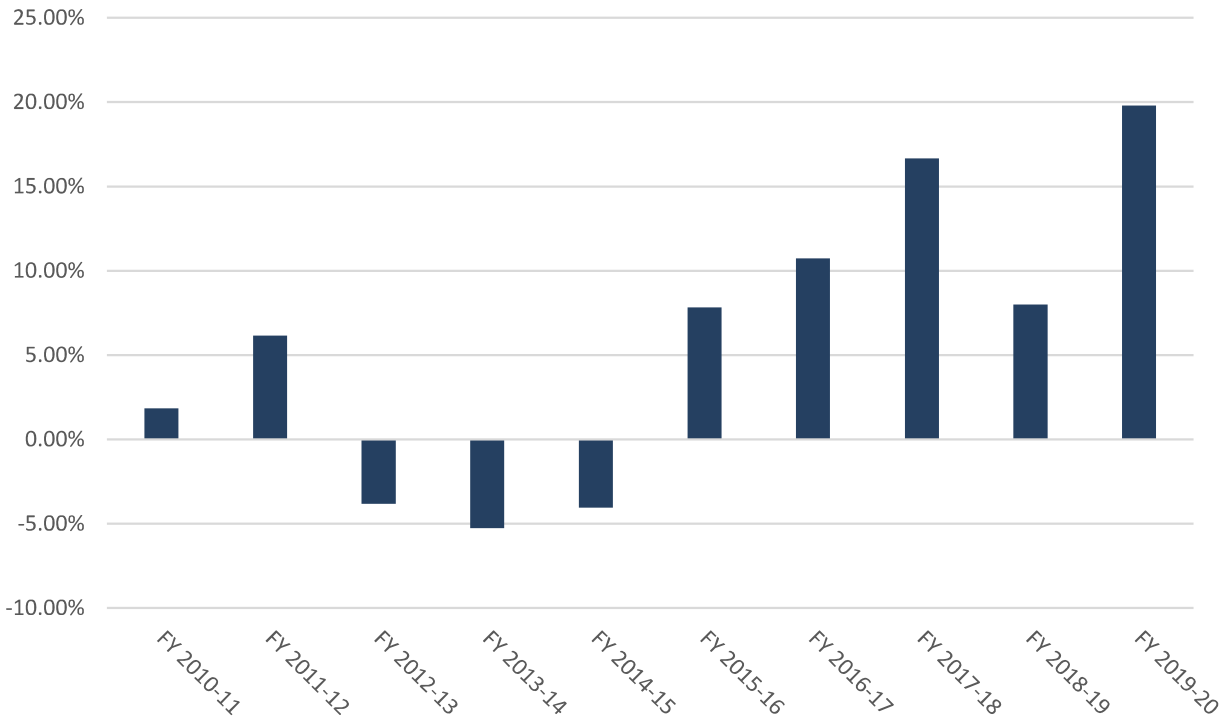
#### ***Formula.***

$$\frac{\text{Game Fund Revenues} - \text{Game Fund Expenditures}}{\text{Game Fund Revenues}}$$

**Trend – Favorable.** From FY 2012-13 to FY 2014-15 the Game Commission experienced an operating deficit of 4, 5, and 4 percent respectively. However, because of significantly improved revenues and cost cutting, FY 2015-16 showed an operating surplus. The Game Fund has maintained an operating surplus since that time. In FY 2019-20, the operating surplus of the Game Commission was 20 percent. Please see Exhibit 40 for additional detail.

Exhibit 40

**Game Fund Surplus/Deficit as a Percent of Revenues  
(Current Dollars by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff from information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis.** The Game Fund's operating position improved since FY 2013-14. However, FY 2018-19 shows a decrease in the Fund's operating surplus. It appears this is a one-year event.

**Fund Balance**

The level of the Game Commission's fund balance may determine its ability to withstand unexpected financial emergencies, which may result from natural disasters (or a pandemic), revenue shortfalls, or steep rises in inflation. It also may determine the Commission's ability to accumulate funds for large-scale one-time purchases without having to incur debt.

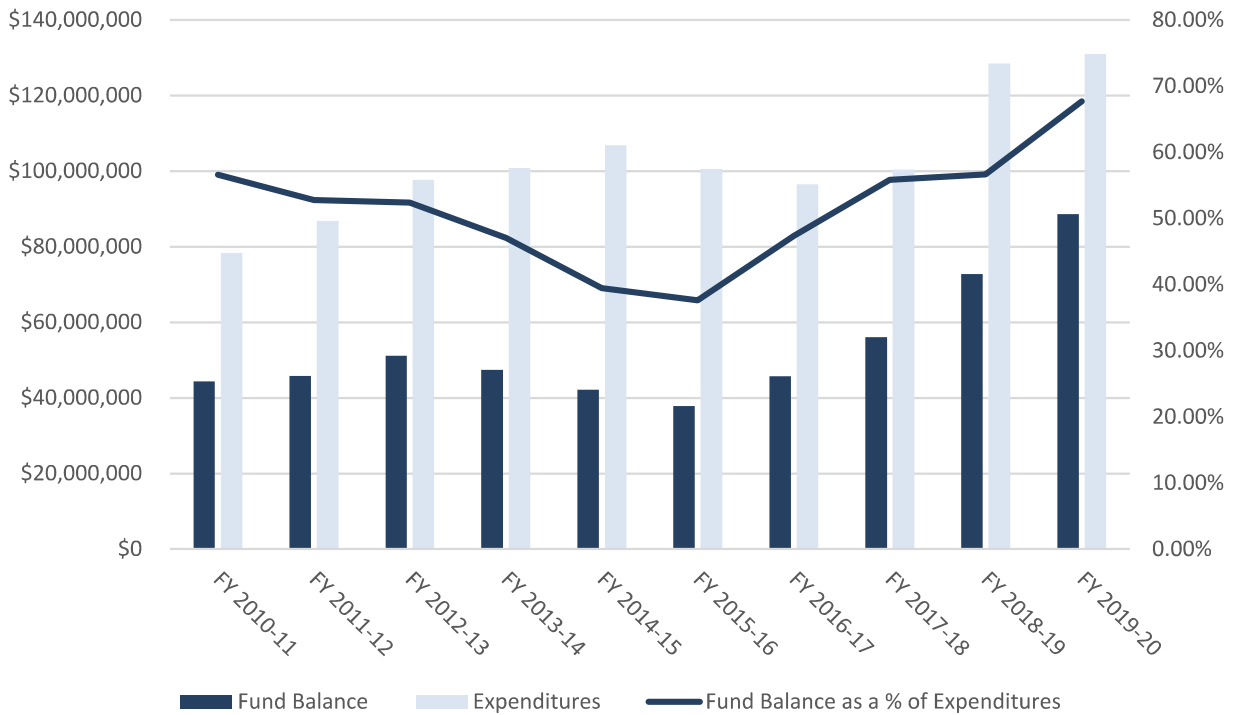
**Formula.**

$$\frac{\text{Game Fund Balance}}{\text{Game Fund Expenditures}}$$

**Trend – Favorable.** The Commission’s Fund Balance as a percent of expenditures in FY 2010-11 stood at 57 percent. It decreased to 38 percent in FY 2015-16 before rebounding significantly to 68 percent in FY 2019-20. Please see Exhibit 41 for additional details.

Exhibit 41

**Game Fund Balance as a Percent of Expenditures  
(by Fiscal Year)**



Source: Developed by LBFC staff with information provided by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

**Analysis** - Given the size of its fund balance, the Game Commission is in a strong position to weather the challenges it faces in the near term (decreasing number of hunters, COVID-19 recession, and pension costs). However, the cushion will not last forever. Of these three areas, the Game Commission’s policies can only reasonably influence the number of hunters. As such, it is critical that the Commission focus on this area.

## **Recommendation**

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The PGC's next strategic plan reduce the number of core goals allowing the Commission to focus more intently on diversifying the Commission's revenues to rely less on the sale of natural resources given the instability of that source of revenue.

## SECTION IV BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE PGC



### Fast Facts...

- ❖ *The Pennsylvania Game Commission is an independent public wildlife protection agency established in 1895.*
- ❖ *The PGC is comprised of eight citizens of the Commonwealth appointed by the Governor.*
- ❖ *The mission of the PGC is to protect, propagate, manage, and preserve the game or wildlife of Pennsylvania.*
- ❖ *PGC's, 2015-2020 Strategic Plan has five-core goals: (1) Wildlife 1<sup>st</sup>; (2) Improve wildlife habitat; (3) Serve as a leader in wildlife conservation; (4) Sound business practices; (5) Improve support for hunting/trapping.*

### Overview

Act 1998-166 directs the LBFC to conduct a performance audit of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's compliance with its Strategic Plan.

This section provides an overview of the Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC), agency composition, organizational structure, staffing, the Game Fund, and the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

### A. Agency Mandate and Mission

The Pennsylvania Game Commission (PGC) is an independent public wildlife protection agency established by Act 1895-187. This act created the Board of Game Commissioners to "protect and preserve the game, song and insectivorous birds and mammals of the state..." and to "enforce the laws of this Commonwealth relating to the same." Act 1897-103 set forth the actions prohibited by law and the penalties for such actions. Act 1937-316 consolidated the game laws and changed the name of the Board of Game Commissioners to the PA Game Commission. Act 1986-93, which became effective on July 1, 1987, codified the game laws into the Game and Wildlife Code.

### Powers and Duties

As directed in the Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa.C.S.A. §322(a), the Game Commission is:

... to protect, propagate, manage and preserve the game or wildlife of this Commonwealth and to enforce, by proper actions and proceedings, the laws of this Commonwealth relating thereto.

The Game Commission "has the power and duty to take all actions necessary for the administration and enforcement" of the Game and Wildlife

Code. As stated in the Code, 34 Pa.C.S.A. §322(c), the Commission has the following specific powers and duties:

- To fix seasons, daily shooting or taking hours, and any modification thereof, and daily, season and possession limits for any species of game or wildlife.
- To remove protection, declare an open season or increase, reduce or close a season.
- To increase or reduce bag limits or possession limits.
- To define geographic limitations or restrictions.
- To fix the type and number of devices which may be used to take game or wildlife.
- To limit the number of hunters or furtakers in any designated area and prescribe the lawful methods of hunting or taking furbearers in these areas.
- To govern the use of recorded calls or sounds or amplified calls or sounds of any description for taking or hunting game or wildlife.
- To add to or change the classification of any wild bird or wild animal.
- To prohibit the possession, importation, exportation or release of any species of birds or animals which may be considered dangerous or injurious to the general public or to the wildlife of this Commonwealth.
- To manage and develop its lands and waters and other government or private lands and waters under agreement with the owners as it considers advisable and, by proper action and proceedings, enact and enforce regulations to insure the prudent and proper use of these lands.
- To collect, classify and preserve such statistics, data and information as in its judgment will tend to promote the object of the Game and Wildlife Code and take charge of and keep all reports, books, papers, and documents which shall, in the discharge of its duties, come into its possession or under its control.
- To take any necessary action to accomplish and assure the purposes of the Game and Wildlife Code.
- To serve the interest of sportsmen by preserving and promoting our special heritage of recreational hunting and furtaking by providing adequate opportunity to hunt and trap the wildlife resources of this Commonwealth.

## **B. Pennsylvania Game Commission Board of Commissioners**

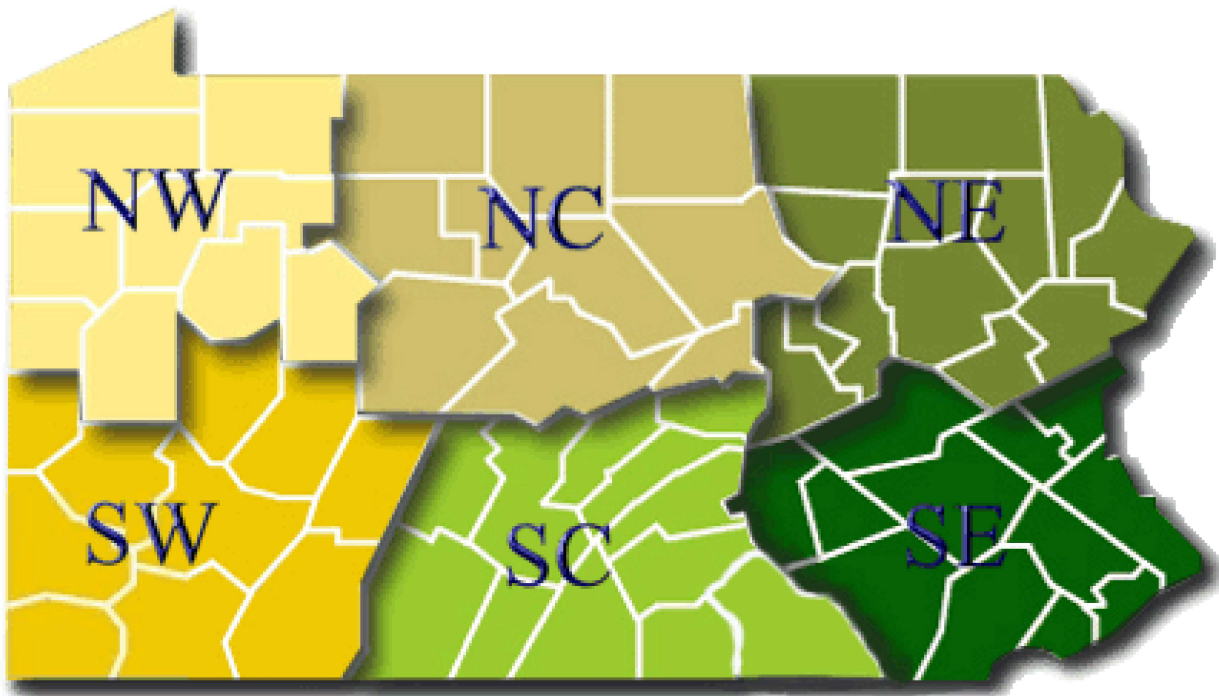
The Commission is comprised of eight citizens of the Commonwealth appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of two-thirds of the Senate.<sup>54,55</sup> Commissioners are appointed from various geographical districts of the state and serve a term of four years with the potential to be reappointed for up to three terms.

These districts are not the same as Game Commission agency regions.<sup>56</sup> Exhibits 42 and 43 show PGC region offices, commissioner districts and terms.

### Exhibit 42

#### **PGC Region Offices**

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Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

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<sup>54</sup> The Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S.A § 301, provides that members of the commission shall hold office for terms of four years each and may continue to hold office for a period of time not to exceed six months or until a successor is appointed and qualified, whichever occurs first. A member of the commission who serves three consecutive terms shall not be eligible for reappointment to the commission.

<sup>55</sup> District VIII is currently vacant.

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.pgc.pa.gov/InformationResources/AboutUs/Commissioners/Pages/default.aspx>

Exhibit 43

**PGC Districts, Commissioners, and Terms**  
 (as of December 2020)

District	Counties	Incumbent	Term
I	Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango and Warren	Kristen Schnepf-Giger, Secretary Warren County	Nov. 2019 – Nov. 2023
II	Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Washington, Westmoreland	Dennis R. Fredericks Washington County	June 2018 – June 2022
III	Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Jefferson, McKean, Potter	Scott H. Foradora Clearfield County	June 2018 – June 2022
IV	Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, Somerset	Tim Layton Somerset County	June 2013 – June 2021
V	Bradford, Columbia, Lycoming, Montour, Northumberland, Sullivan, Tioga, Union	Charles E. Fox – President Bradford County	Oct. 2012 – Oct. 2020
VI	Adams, Cumberland, Dauphin, Franklin, Juniata, Lancaster, Lebanon, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, York	Michael Mitrick, Vice President York County	July 2017 – July 2021
VII	Carbon, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Pike, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming	Stanley Knick Jr., President Luzerne County	July 2017 – July 2021
VIII	Berks, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill	Vacant	

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

Commissioners receive no compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses;<sup>57</sup> and are required by statute to hold meetings annually in Harrisburg in January and June or July and at such other times and places within the state as the Commission deems necessary.<sup>58</sup>

**C. Agency Structure, Functions, and Staffing**

The Commission recently updated its organizational chart as of May 26, 2020. As shown on the PGC organizational chart in Appendix C, the Commission has an Executive Office, six bureaus, and six regional offices. The information that follows provides information on each of these areas within the Commission.

<sup>57</sup> The Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S.A § 301(c).

<sup>58</sup> The Game and Wildlife Code, 34 Pa. C.S.A § 321, all meetings of the commission shall comply with the act of July 19, 1974 (P.L.486, No.175), referred to as the Public Agency Open Meeting Law.

## **Executive Office**

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The Executive Office is responsible for planning, directing, executing, and coordinating all PGC wildlife management programs in order to fulfill the agency's statutory and constitutional mandates. The functions of the Executive Office include developing and recommending a budget for consideration by the Commission and for presentation to the Governor as well as developing legislation to present to the General Assembly. Additionally, the Executive Office oversees the Human Resource Function and the operation of the Ross Leffler School of Conservation, evaluates existing policies, and develops new PGC policies. The Executive Office also establishes and maintains working relationships with other state, federal, and private agencies and sportsmen's groups.

***Human Resources Office.*** Develops, coordinates, administers and directs all Commonwealth Human Resource programs and activities in the following areas:

- Labor Relations: Contract Negotiations, interpretation and training as well as grievance investigation and arbitration and employee conduct and discipline.
- Classification and Pay: Advises managers and supervisors on appropriate compensation for new and reclassified employees and oversees the SAP transactions. Develops and revises Job Specifications and conducts desk audits on agency positions.
- Recruitment, Selection & Placement: Plans, develops and directs the recruitment, selection and placement programs for the entire agency. Advises and trains bureau directors and managers regarding the selection and placement of all Civil Service and Non-Civil Service employees.
- Employee Benefits and Services: Directs the Employee Benefits program and is responsible for directing employee benefits, worker's compensation, time administration, unemployment compensation, and safety programs. Coordinates leave administration, record keeping, transaction processing, affirmative action, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance and workforce analysis and planning. All the above programs and other related activities are developed, coordinated and implemented as necessary in accordance with agency policy, civil service law, Commonwealth Personnel Rules and collective bargaining agreements.

## **Deputy Executive Director for Regional Operations and Training**

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This Deputy Executive Director oversees all operations and activities for PGC regional offices and training school.

***Regional Offices.*** Game Commission field operations are administered through its six regional offices in Franklin, Bolivar, Jersey Shore, Huntingdon, Dallas, and Reading. The Regional Offices are responsible for planning, organizing, and directing the implementation of all agency programs within a specific geographic area. Each region is responsible for the administration of agency programs including: Wildlife Protection, Information and Education, Habitat Management, and Wildlife Management. To accomplish these tasks, regional office staff provides administrative services by utilizing management information systems.

***Training School.*** Under the direction of the Executive Office, the Bureau directs and manages the overall training function, with emphasis on the Ross Leffler School of Conservation. Mandatory in-service law enforcement training for State Game Wardens (approximately 200) and Deputy Game Wardens (approximately 1,100), management training, safety training, out-service training, Right-to-Know law compliance, Hazardous Material training, and other agency training is provided as required.

### **Deputy Executive Director for Administration, Communications, and Wildlife Operations**

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This Deputy Executive Director oversees the operations and activities for contracts and procurement, communications, technology, and training. Additionally, this director oversees the management, protection, propagation, and preservation of Pennsylvania's wildlife resources and habitats.

***Bureau of Wildlife Protection.*** The Bureau of Wildlife Protection is responsible for administering and coordinating the agency's wildlife law enforcement program in accordance with the statutory requirements of the Game and Wildlife Code, Title 58 of the Pennsylvania Code, other applicable state laws, federal statutes and Pennsylvania Game Commission policies and directives.

***Enforcement Division.*** The Enforcement Division oversees the day-to-day operations of the Law Enforcement Uniform System. This includes interactions with uniform equipment vendors; evaluates, purchases and maintains adequate inventories of currently issued uniform equipment; oversees agency firearms records; serves as agency liaison for ATF Federal Firearms License; coordinates the Deputy Game Warden program; reviews all subject resistance/assault on officer reports; serves as lead agency representative to the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA); and serves as agency armorer for issued handguns, shotguns, patrol rifles and other.

***Special Permit Enforcement Division.*** The Special Permit Enforcement Division manages the Agency Special Permit system; coordinates the activities of the Rehabilitation Council; acts as liaison officer to

falconers, the Department of Health, and the Department of Agriculture; reviews all disabled persons permits; oversees all special use permits; coordinates annual meetings with Sporting Dog Owners group; and reviews all law enforcement printed materials for publication in Game News.

**Administrative Division.** The Administrative Division oversees the prosecution reporting system and Incident Management System; oversees all hunting license revocations; serves as administrator for the Interstate Wildlife Violator Compact; coordinates agency shooting team activities; oversees Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network (CLEAN) operation; and supervises Justice Network (JNET) operation.

**Special Operations Division.** The Special Operations Division oversees the Special Investigations program and the K-9 Unit; coordinates the activities of the Woodland Tracking Team; researches and develops bureau policies and procedures (SOP's); plans, develops, and directs the operation of the Statewide Law Enforcement program; analyzes and makes recommendations on course of action on serious personnel issues; assists with and conducts internal investigations; serves as lead officer for the Middle-Atlantic-Great Lakes Organized Crime Law Enforcement Network; serves as Agency Homeland Security Officer; researches, applies, and acquires training and equipment through grant programs; assists with drafting of legislation for the Game and Wildlife Code and regulations as it relates to Title 58; serves as program manager for Conservation Officers Assistance program; and participates in Deputy Game Warden Trial Board hearings.

**Centralized Dispatch Operations Division.** The Centralized Dispatch Operations Division is responsible for receiving all calls for service related to wildlife issues in the Commonwealth. Additionally, the Division develops and modifies the statewide radio system, microwave, and related telecommunications systems within the Commonwealth, specifically, the Pennsylvania Game Commission Communications Network; and manages all radio applications associated with transition and operations on the statewide P25 Land Mobile Radio System (PA-STARNet).

**Bureau of Administrative Services.** The Bureau of Administrative Services manages the operations and activities for the PGC budget, contracts, procurement, office services, and the issuing of hunting licenses. This Bureau is also responsible for the procurement, maintenance, and management/disposal of the Commission's automotive fleet. Four divisions operate within this Bureau including the Fiscal Management, Contracts and Procurement, License, and Office Services Divisions.

**License Division.** The License Division oversees the administration and management of all Commonwealth hunting license issuing agent activity; oversees approximately 900 issuing agents including county treasurers, commercial agents and Game Commission offices; initiates legal

actions when necessary; and administers computer programs for the license system.

**Contracts and Procurement Division.** The Contracts and Procurement Division administers purchases for goods, services, and commodities for Commission distribution. The Division also manages the automotive fleet for permanently assigned staff vehicles.

**Office Services Division.** The Office Services Division oversees mail-room activities, storekeeping, purchasing of office supplies and equipment, mailing and duplicating activities. Additionally, the Division oversees Game Commission carpool and maintenance.

**Fiscal Management Division.** The Fiscal Management Division oversees the preparation, analysis, and control of bureau and regional budgets. The Division also provides technical advice and assistance to Commission officials in the preparation of budget requests.

**Bureau of Information and Education.** The Bureau of Information and Education is responsible for statewide information and education programs in conformation with the Pennsylvania Game and Wildlife Code and Title 58 of the Pennsylvania Code, which include the following program elements: administration, customer service, education, media relations, production, public involvement, human dimensions and training/internal communications. The Bureau is responsible for coordinating the information and education activities of regional supervisors, the agency Game Wardens, Deputy Game Wardens, and hunter-trapper education instructors throughout the commonwealth.

**Research and Education Division.** The Research and Education Division develops the curriculum and coordinates the statewide planning of hunter-trapper education programs within the Game Commission. Courses include basic hunter-trapper education, and advanced courses on subjects such as bow hunting and furtaking. The Division develops and implements programs designed to increase the number of first-time hunters/trappers within the Commonwealth; develops and implements programs designed to increase the number of individuals who participate in shooting sports in the Commonwealth through programs such as the National Archery in the School program and the Student Air Rifle program; conducts a variety of surveys with hunters/trappers and the general public to provide the Commission with a greater understanding regarding the human behavioral aspects of wildlife management and policy; and maintains network relationships with state, national and international programs, organizations and agencies involved in conservation education.

**Publications Division.** The Publications Division produces the *Pennsylvania Game News*, the agency's flagship publication, which is sent to

approximately 100,000 individuals monthly; creates the annual *Hunter-Trapper Digest* which is provided to all purchasers of hunting licenses; develops, coordinates, and approves all Game Commission news releases and responses to all news media outlets; and issues the yearly *Pennsylvania Big Game Records* book. In addition, this Division is responsible for coordinating the Commission's public relations initiatives relative to expanding the public's knowledge of Chronic Wasting Disease and increasing the public's support for the Commission's management of the disease.

**Media Services Division.** The Media Division writes, records, edits, and packages video and audio programs on agency functions and projects; provides video and photographic services for news media and agency personnel; develops, coordinates and approves information prepared for the Commission website; and responds to general public inquiries and requests for information.

**Bureau of Wildlife Management.** The bureau is responsible for directing the Game Commission's statewide wildlife conservation and management programs including comprehensive species conservation planning; investigations and research; population and harvest monitoring; harvest management programs; endangered and threatened species recovery projects and reintroductions; technical assistance in wildlife management, permitting, and habitat management; health monitoring and disease response; and data analysis and interpretation.

**Game Management Division.** The Game Management Division designs and independently conducts management-directed research studies; works with technical staff to develop management plans that are implemented at the region level; develops, implements and evaluates technical wildlife management program goals, objectives and strategies; directs the preparation, review, approval and implementation of long-range wildlife species management plans; directs the development and implementation of technical program rules and procedures and evaluates compliance; evaluates program implementation at staff and region levels to determine effectiveness and recommends appropriate remediation; and designs and coordinates statewide and regional game and furbearer population monitoring and harvest management programs; provides technical assistance on game management issues and prepares reports of findings for the Board of Commissioners, Executive Office, and senior staff. In addition, the Division develops and manages the program budget; serves as a liaison for the Penn Vet, Wildlife Futures Program that includes diagnostics and disease surveillance, applied research, communications, outreach, policy, and upholding animal welfare protocols.

**Wildlife Services Division.** The Wildlife Services Division provides coordination and support services for game management, wildlife diversity, and regional operations on all operational-related issues and needs;

assists in administration of State Wildlife Grant and Landowner Incentive Grant programs; coordinates and administers large-scale wildlife management and conservation projects in conjunction with the federal Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid-in-Wildlife Restoration Program; assists in coordination of contracts used for bureau-related activities; recommends seasons and bag limits and other regulations for game and furbearer management; provides expert testimony at various hearings, administrative and legal proceedings on wildlife management and conservation matters; coordinates and assists in wildlife staff training; coordinates national wildlife surveys; designs, coordinates and manages wildlife databases; provides technical support on wildlife research reports; produces quarterly bureau activities reports; serves as a liaison for the Penn Vet, Wildlife Futures Program; coordinates and directs propagation and release of ring-necked pheasants for increased public hunting opportunities; and provides technical support to clubs, schools and individuals in pheasant rearing.

*Wildlife Diversity Division.* The Wildlife Diversity Division designs and independently conducts management-directed research studies; designs and coordinates statewide and regional endangered, threatened, and non-hunted species population monitoring and restoration programs; develops, reviews and revises the Pennsylvania State Wildlife Action Plan; assists in the administration of State Wildlife Grant and Landowner Incentive Grant programs; receives, analyzes, and interprets wildlife data to determine population status and trends; develops and manages databases of species survey data and important habitats; provides technical assistance in wildlife impact assessments for proposed energy and development projects; provides technical assistance on non-game management issues; and serves as a liaison for the Penn Vet, Wildlife Futures Program that includes diagnostics and disease surveillance, applied research, communications, outreach, policy, and, upholding animal welfare protocols.

*Wildlife Administration Division.* The Wildlife Administrative Division works with Bureau of Wildlife Management (BWM) division chiefs and Bureau Director to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of BWM wildlife research and monitoring activities implemented by staff in the PGC's six regional offices. The division also works with staff to develop and monitor implementation of annual work plans based on the statewide research and monitoring project database; works with the Diversity Division Chief, the Game Divisions Chief, the Board of Commissioners, and the Executive Office to prioritize monitoring and research objectives and timeframes within the BWM; participates in the review process for research proposals and for new or expanded monitoring program proposals; serves as a liaison for the Penn Vet, Wildlife Futures Program; compiles quarterly reports of program-based expenditures and accomplishments from Bureau and regional biologists for Executive Office, board meetings, and legislative briefings; and assists in the planning

and directing of wildlife management bureau programs through collaboration with the Bureau Director.

***Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management.*** The Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management is responsible for managing PGC lands acquired through purchase or secured through cooperative lease arrangements. The Bureau also provides for public access to these lands for recreational pursuits, and reviews wildlife impact assessments on private and public lands. The development of comprehensive plans and the development of these lands for wildlife habitats by timber harvests and removal of oil, gas, and/or minerals is another major task assigned to this bureau. The bureau is charged with direct management of about 1.5 million acres of State Game Lands and assists with another 2.2 million acres of private land enrolled in the agency's Public Access Program. The bureau is comprised of five divisions including the Real Estate, Engineering, Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection, Habitat Planning and Development, and Forestry Divisions.

***Engineering Division.*** The Engineering Division manages infrastructure on State Game Lands; designs and constructs projects using the Growing Greener programs; conducts inspections of existing facilities and coordinates disaster relief projects and funding; maintains Game Commission headquarters building and Haldeman Island facilities.

***Habitat Planning and Development Division.*** The Habitat Planning and Development Division plans, develops, and implements wildlife management activities on State Game Lands and certain other public and private lands. The division also manages and implements the following: programs for federal and state habitat grants; GIS planning and development; public access for enhanced hunting and trapping opportunities; public and private lands habitat planning and development; and the cooperative use agreements on State Game Lands. The division coordinates State Wildlife Grants, Landowner Incentive Program Grants, and Threatened and Endangered Species Protection Grants with the Bureau of Wildlife Management.

***Forestry Division.*** The Forestry Division oversees management of the forestry program on State Game Lands. This includes all aspects of planning and development for commercial timber sales, timber management relating to wildlife habitat goals and objectives, GIS planning for forest cover types, and timber forestry inventory analysis on all State Game Lands. This division also tracks all expenditures to inventory, plan, develop, implement, and manage for sustainable and healthy timber regeneration and future commercial sale values.

***Real Estate Division.*** The Real Estate Division is responsible for acquiring land, water, building, rights-of-way, easements, oil, gas, and minerals for purposes authorized by the Game and Wildlife Code. The Real

Estate Division includes a legal section that provides legal advice, counseling, and technical services concerning all aspects of land acquisition, protection, litigation, and management.

**Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection Division.**

The Environmental Planning and Habitat Protection Division oversees program management on oil, gas, and mineral recovery operations on approximately 1.5 million acres of existing State Game Lands as well as overseeing all environmental permit reviews and authorizations.

***Bureau of Automated Technology Services.*** The Bureau of Automated Technology Services consists of three divisions and provides and manages information technology and GIS resources and services for the entire agency to include hardware, software, security, data management, infrastructure, network, telecom, web services, IT procurement and support.

**Technical Services Division.** The Technical Services Division provides desktop and mobile computing needs, network, web administration, IT procurement, database administration and help desk support services to the agency.

**Data Resources Division.** The Data Resources Division provides comprehensive applications development services to all bureaus and regions within the agency. This includes planning, design, development, testing, deployment, and maintenance in support of agency business initiatives. The division also performs data administration duties to monitor, maintain, manage, and control agency data assets.

**GIS Services Division.** The GIS Services division manages and supports projects, software, tools, applications, data and architecture related to geospatial initiatives and technologies that support and accomplish agency objectives.

***Bureau of Marketing and Communications.*** The Bureau of Marketing and Communications ensures bureau efforts are targeted at supporting all agency programs, including regional efforts. The Bureau also directs the overall marketing efforts of the PGC to ensure effective strategies are implemented that are measurable and consistent with the agency's strategic plan; and collaborates with the PA Fish and Boat Commission to coordinate marketing efforts to ensure maximum impact of marketing efforts.

**Strategic Communications and Outreach Division.** The Strategic Communications and Outreach Division directs the overall preparation of consistent messaging surrounding new and proposed regulations, frequently asked questions, and inquiries on social media and email re-

quests; directs outreach for programs to achieve hunter retention, re-cruitment, and reactivation efforts; and works with regions and bureaus to evaluate areas of communication needs, especially for controversial and complex issues.

***Marketing Division.*** The Marketing Division develops marketing initiatives and strategies to support hunting and trapping license sales, support strategic communication goals, and other agency programmatic efforts; develops and implements strategies to enhance agency brand, public image, and public trust; develops, monitors, and evaluates metrics resulting from specific marketing efforts; works with bureaus and regions to identify specific areas where marketing and strategic communication efforts are needed and develops and implements strategies to address these areas; and obtains corporate sponsorships to support other agency program efforts such as *Operation Game Thief*, *National Fishing and Hunting Day*, *Opening Day of License Sales* events, and *Statewide Go To Camp Day*, etc.

***Digital Communications Division.*** The Digital Communications Division develops and oversees overall preparation of the agency's digital media presence using audio and video technology; develops and oversees website content and design development and coordinates with Bureau of Automated Technology Services for implementation; develops content and design of digital marketing efforts to include email campaigns, digital ad campaigns, such as Google ads, Facebook ads, LinkedIn ads, radio/television advertising, and billboards; researches and develops materials to support the PGC podcast; and researches and develops a digital web series designed to promote the agency and outreach to the public on various topics including hunting, trapping, wildlife habitat management, wildlife protection, and wildlife science efforts.

## **Commission Staffing**

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As of December 2020, the PGC had an authorized complement of 721 salaried positions. At that time, a total of 633 positions, were filled, 88 were classified as vacant, and 37 were in a "vacant reserve" status. Exhibit 44 shows the distribution of the staff complement among the central office, six regional offices, and four game farms.

Exhibit 44

**Staff Complement of the PA Game Commission**  
(Filled and Vacant Salaried Positions as of December 2020)\*

	Salaried Positions		
	Filled	Vacant	Total
<b>Central Offices:</b>			
Executive Office <sup>a</sup>	19	0	19
Bureau of Administrative Services	20	17	37
Bureau of Information and Education	15	4	19
Bureau of Wildlife Management	44	0	44
Bureau of Wildlife Protection	22	1	23
Bureau of Wildlife Habitat Management	38	5	43
Bureau of Marketing	6	0	6
Bureau of Automated Technology Services	23	3	26
Subtotal - Central Offices <sup>b</sup>	187	30	217
<b>Regional Offices:</b>			
Northwest (Franklin)	80	11	91
Southwest (Ligonier)	78	4	82
Northcentral (Jersey Shore)	78	18	88
Southcentral (Huntingdon)	73	9	82
Northeast (Dallas)	83	6	89
Southeast (Reading)	62	10	72
Subtotal - Regional Offices	446	58	504
<b>Game Farms:<sup>c</sup></b>			
Loyalsock	8	0	8
Southwest	8	0	8
Subtotal - Game Farms	16	0	16
<b>Commission Total</b>	633	88	721 <sup>d</sup>

\*/ Includes salaried positions only. Does not include wage positions and Deputy Wildlife Conservation Officers.

<sup>a</sup>/ Includes Executive Director, Deputy Executive Directors, Executive Secretaries, Chief Counsel, Legislative Liaison, Training Division, Policy Analyst, and Strategic Planner.

<sup>b</sup>/ This figure includes positions that are assigned to the central office but work out of field locations.

<sup>c</sup>/ Although broken out separately on this table, the Game Farms and the positions assigned to them are part of the Wildlife Management Bureau.

<sup>d</sup>/ The PGC's total authorized complement is 721 positions. As of December 2020, a total of 88 positions were vacant. Thirty-seven positions in a "reserve" or "recruitment" category are not included in the total.

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

## **D. Game Fund**

The Pennsylvania Game Commission administers the Game Fund which is composed of all fees, royalties, fines, penalties, and other monies. The Game and Wildlife Code requires the Game Fund to be used to carry on the work of the Commission, including, but not limited to, the purchase of land, the costs of activities for the promotion of public interest in recreational hunting and furtaking, nongame species, endangered or threatened species and all other game or wildlife in the Commonwealth.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, "a minimum of \$4.25 from each resident and nonresident license and \$2 from each antlerless deer license issued shall be used for habitat improvement, development, maintenance, protection and restoration for natural propagation of game and wildlife on all lands under the control or operation of the commission including lands enrolled in the commission's public access programs and other public lands open to hunting under agreement with the commission."<sup>60</sup>

## **E. The PGC's Strategic Plan, 2015-2020**

In 1998, the General Assembly amended the Game and Wildlife Code to implement a new hunting license fee structure. In addition to changing the license fee structure, Act 1998-166 also changed the nature and frequency of legislative oversight and audit activities at the PGC and included several new public, program, and financial accountability measures. Among these is a requirement that the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (LBFC) audit the Commission's compliance with its Strategic Plan every three years. This is the eighth report issued by the Committee under this mandate.

### **Strategic Plan Overview**

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The PGC's Strategic Plan, 2015-2020, has five goals and identifies the Commission's Vision, Values, and Mission as shown in Exhibit 45.

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<sup>59</sup> See Title 34 Pa. C.S.A. § 521(b).

<sup>60</sup> Title 34 Pa. C.S.A. § 522 (b) (1).

Exhibit 45

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**Statements of the PGC's Strategic Plan  
Vision, Values, and Mission**

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**Vision:** Champion all wildlife resources and Pennsylvania's hunting and trapping heritage.

**Values:** As an agency the PGC will:

- Place wildlife first in all decision-making
- Respect the views of our various stakeholders and citizens of the Commonwealth
- Be open, honest, forthright, and ethical in all matters
- Provide quality service both internally and externally
- Carry out responsibilities in a polite, professional, and considerate manner
- Encourage the professional development of all employees
- Recognize the value of a diverse staff to accomplish the wildlife management mission
- Recognize the value of the North American model of wildlife management
- Have pride in our management heritage
- Reflect on our success and lead for the future

**Mission:** Manage Pennsylvania's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations.

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

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The Commission identified five core goals in their 2015-2020, Strategic Plan, as shown in Exhibit 46.

Exhibit 46

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**PA Game Commission  
Strategic Plan, Core Goals  
2015-2020**

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- I. Put Wildlife First
- II. Improve Wildlife Habitats
- III. Serve the Commonwealth as the leader in wildlife conservation
- IV. Follow Sound Business Practices
- V. Improve Support for Hunting/Trapping

Source: Pennsylvania Game Commission.

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Within those five-core goal(s) areas the Commission identified 34 strategic objectives as the initial basis for directing the work of the bureaus, divisions, and regions to complete each of the core goals. The strategic objectives are reviewed in Section II, with our assessment of the degree to which the PGC has fulfilled the goals and objectives of its 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

# APPENDICES



## Appendix A - ACT 1998-166

### GAME AND WILDLIFE (34 PA.C.S.) - OMNIBUS AMENDMENTS

Act of Dec. 21, 1998, P.L. 1274, No. 166

Cl. 34

Session of 1998

No. 1998-166

HB 1994

#### AN ACT

Amending Title 34 (Game) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, further providing for the director's compensation; imposing duties upon the Executive Board; providing for commission accountability; and further providing for the use of certain Game Fund revenues, for appropriation and audit of moneys, for powers and duties of enforcement officers, for jurisdiction and penalties, for acknowledgment of guilt and receipt for payment, disposition of nonresidents, for unlawful taking or possession of game or wildlife, for buying and selling of game and wildlife, for classes of licenses, for license costs and fees, for disabled person permits and for the arrows for crossbows.

The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania hereby enacts as follows:

Section 1. Section 302(b) of Title 34 of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes is amended to read:

§ 302. Director.

\* \* \*

(b) Compensation.--Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, the [commission] **Executive Board of the Commonwealth** shall fix the compensation of the director.

\* \* \*

Section 2. Title 34 is amended by adding a section to read:

**§ 328. Accountability.**

(a) **Relationship with public.--The commission shall implement policies and programs to improve its relationship with the general public and with its licensees in accordance with its strategic plan.**

(b) **Program accountability.--The commission shall require program accountability of its various functions through program performance measurement in accordance with its strategic plan.**

(c) **Financial accountability.--The commission shall improve the financial accountability of its various functions through performance measurement in accordance with its strategic plan.**

(d) **Law enforcement accountability.--The commission shall maintain a system to respond to citizen complaints against wildlife conservation officers and deputy wildlife conservation officers. The commission shall release information relating to the number and nature of complaints received on at least an annual basis. The commission may release further information related to the nature of the complaints, provided that the release of such information is not prohibited or restricted by any contract, regulation, order of court or statute to the contrary.**

(e) **Reports to General Assembly.--No later than January 31 of each year the commission through its executive director shall make annual written reports on the matters described in subsections (a), (b), (c) and (d) to the Game and Fisheries Committee of the Senate and the Game and Fisheries Committee of the House of Representatives. The commission shall meet with the respective committees of the General Assembly to receive oral testimony in relation to annual written reports when so requested.**

Section 3. Sections 521(b), 522, 901(a), 902 and 925(e) and (f) of Title 34 are amended to read:

§ 521. Establishment and use of Game Fund.

\* \* \*

(b) **Specific allocation of certain revenues.--**

(1) A minimum of \$1.25 from each resident license for which the full fee has been paid and a minimum of \$2 from each antlerless deer license issued for which the full fee has been paid shall be used solely for habitat improvement and restoration conducive to increasing natural propagation of game or wildlife on all lands under the control or operation of the commission, including lands enrolled in the commission's public access programs **and other public lands open to hunting under agreement with the commission.** The moneys collected under this paragraph shall be deposited into two separate accounts and shall be used exclusively for the natural propagation of **game and** wildlife by:

(i) Improving and maintaining any natural wildlife habitat by the production, distribution and planting of trees, shrubs, vines and forage crops.

(ii) Forest management practices related to the creation and development of food and cover.

(iii) Development and management of food and cover openings.

(iv) Purchase, construction and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas.

(v) Construction and maintenance of nesting structures.

(vi) The prorated cost for the purchase, maintenance and operation of equipment, tools and materials necessary to meet the habitat improvement objectives of this section. No moneys in these accounts shall be used for capital purchases under this subparagraph.

The commission shall submit an annual report on all expenditures from this account in the manner prescribed under section 522 (relating to appropriation and audit of moneys).

(2) Any moneys collected by or for the commission from the sale of the migratory bird hunting license shall be used solely for the purpose of migratory game bird management, habitat acquisition and improvement and related program administrative costs.

**(3) A minimum of \$3 from each resident and nonresident license for which the full fee has been paid shall be used solely for habitat improvement and restoration conducive to increasing natural propagation of game on all lands under the control or operation of the commission, including lands enrolled in the commission's public access programs and other public lands open to hunting under agreement with the commission. The moneys collected under this paragraph shall be used exclusively for the natural propagation of game by:**

**(i) Improving and maintaining any natural wildlife habitat by the production, distribution and planting of trees, shrubs, vines and forage crops.**

**(ii) Forest management practices related to the creation and development of food and cover.**

**(iii) Development and management of food and cover openings.**

**(iv) Construction and enhancement of wetlands and riparian areas.**

**(v) Construction and maintenance of nesting structures.**

**(vi) The prorated cost for the maintenance and operation of equipment, tools and materials necessary to meet the habitat improvement objectives of this section. No moneys in these accounts shall be used for capital purchases under this subparagraph.**

**The commission shall submit an annual report on all expenditures from this account in the manner prescribed under section 522.**

§ 522. Appropriation and audit of moneys.

(a) Appropriation.--[All] **Subject to an annual review and recommendations under subsection (b), all** moneys in the Game Fund are hereby appropriated to the commission and may be expended only for the purposes authorized under this title.

(b) Audit and report.--[The commission shall submit an annual written and oral report to the Game and Fisheries Committees of the Senate and the House of Representatives no later than March 31 of each year. The written report shall include complete budgets for the current fiscal year and for the fiscal year about to commence. An audit of the budget for the concluding fiscal year shall be conducted by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee and shall be submitted to the Game and Fisheries Committees no later than February 28 of each year.]

**(1) A performance audit of the commission to examine the commission's compliance with its strategic plan for the concluding fiscal year shall be conducted by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee and shall be submitted to the Game and Fisheries Committee and the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the Game and Fisheries Committee and the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives no later than February 28, 2000. After February 28, 2000, the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee shall conduct a performance audit of the commission every three years no later than February 28th.**

**(2) No later than January 31 of each year the commission through its executive director shall submit an annual written report to the Game and Fisheries Committee and the Appropriations Committee of the Senate and the Game and Fisheries Committee and the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives which shall include the complete budget for the current fiscal year and for the next fiscal year. The commission shall meet with the specified committees of the General Assembly to receive oral testimony in relation to the annual written reports and to examine the commission's compliance with section 328 (relating to accountability) when so requested.**

(c) Expenditures from Game Fund.--[The] **After review under subsection (a), the** commission shall submit to the Governor, for approval or disapproval, estimates of the amount of moneys to be expended from the Game Fund. The State Treasurer shall not honor any requisition for expenditure of any moneys in excess of the amount approved by the Governor. Moneys in the Game Fund shall be paid out upon warrant of the State Treasurer drawn after requisition by the director of the commission.

§ 901. Powers and duties of enforcement officers.

(a) Powers.--Any officer whose duty it is to enforce this title or any officer investigating any alleged violation of this title shall have the power and duty to:

(1) Enforce all laws of this Commonwealth relating to game or wildlife and arrest any person who has violated any of the provisions of this title while in pursuit of that person immediately following the violation.

(2) Go upon any land or water outside of buildings, posted or otherwise, in the performance of the officer's duty.

(3) Serve subpoenas issued under the provisions of this title.

(4) Carry firearms or other weapons, concealed or otherwise, in the performance of the officer's duties.

(5) Purchase and resell game or wildlife, or any part thereof, for the purpose of securing evidence.

(6) Stop and inspect or search, at any time, [without warrant,] any means of transportation within this Commonwealth. Any officer who stops any means of transportation shall be in uniform and present a badge or other means of official identification and state the purpose of the inspection or search.

(7) Inspect and examine or search, at any time or place, any person or means of transportation or its attachment or occupants, or any clothing worn by any person, or any bag, clothing or container when the officer presents official identification and states the purpose of the inspection or search.

(8) Inspect and examine or search, at any time, [without warrant,] any camp, tent, cabin, trailer or any means of transportation or its attachment being used when the officer presents official identification to the person in charge and states the purpose of the inspection or search.

(9) Secure and execute all warrants and search warrants for violations of this title or, with proper consent, to search or enter any building, dwelling, house, tavern, hotel, boardinghouse, enclosure, vehicle or craft or any attachments thereto, to open, by whatever means necessary, any door, compartment, chest, locker, box, trunk, bag, basket, package or container and to examine the contents thereof and seize any evidence or contraband found therein.

(10) When making an arrest or an investigation or when found in the execution of a search warrant, seize and take possession of all game or wildlife or parts of game or wildlife which have been taken, caught, killed, had or held in possession, and seize all firearms, shooting or hunting paraphernalia, vehicles, boats, conveyances, traps, dogs, decoys, automotive equipment, records, papers, permits, licenses and all contraband or any unlawful device, implement or other appliance used in violation of any of the laws relating to game or wildlife.

(11) Administer any oaths required by the provisions of this title or relative to any violation of any law relating to game or wildlife and, where game or wildlife is found in a camp or in possession or under control of any individual or hunting party, question the person or persons, under oath, relative to the taking, ownership or possession of the game or wildlife.

(12) Operate or move any vehicle, permanently or temporarily equipped with a type of flashing or rotating red light or lights or audible device or both, approved by the commission, upon any street or highway within this Commonwealth when performing duties within the scope of employment.

(13) Demand and secure assistance when the officer deems it necessary.

(14) Demand and secure identification from any person.

(15) Enforce all the laws of this Commonwealth and regulations promulgated thereunder relating to fish, boats, parks and forestry and other environmental matters, under the direction of those agencies charged with the administration of these laws.

(16) Require the holder of any license or permit required by this title or by commission regulation to sign the holder's name on a separate piece of paper in the presence of the requesting officer.

(17) When acting within the scope of the officer's employment, pursue, apprehend or arrest any individual suspected of violating any provision of Title 18 (relating to crimes and offenses) or any other offense classified as a misdemeanor or felony. The officer shall also have the power to serve and execute warrants issued by the proper authorities for offenses referred to in this paragraph and to serve subpoenas issued for examination. All powers as provided for in this paragraph will be limited by such administrative procedure as the director, with the approval of the commission, shall prescribe. The regulations shall be promulgated within 90 days of the effective date of this paragraph.

(18) When acting within the scope of the officer's employment and under the procedures outlined by the executive director, to use a facsimile in the enforcement of the provisions of this title and the regulations promulgated hereunder.

\* \* \*

§ 902. Deputy Game Commission officers.

Except for the powers conferred under section 901(17) and (18) (relating to powers and duties of enforcement officers), deputy Game Commission officers shall, unless further restricted by the director, exercise all the powers and perform all the duties conferred by this title on Game Commission officers[.], **except deputy wildlife conservation officers shall not be authorized to issue citations or field acknowledgments of guilt for violations and shall provide the information to the wildlife conservation officer. Retired wildlife conservation officers, retired waterways conservation officers, State park rangers, State forest rangers or current or retired State or municipal police officers shall exercise all powers and duties conferred on deputy Game Commission officers, including the right to issue citations and field acknowledgments of guilt for violations.**

§ 925. Jurisdiction and penalties.

\* \* \*

(e) Installment payment of fines.--[Installment payments under 42 Pa.C.S. § 9758(b) (relating to installment payment) for fines imposed for summary offenses under this title or the regulations shall not exceed a period of one year. Installment payments for misdemeanor offenses under this title or the regulations other than section 2522 (relating to shooting at or causing injury to human beings) shall not exceed a period of two years.] **Upon a plea and proof that person is unable to pay any fine and costs imposed under this title, a court may, in accordance with 42 Pa.C.S. § 9758 (relating to fine), permit installment payments it considers appropriate to the circumstances of the defendant, in which case its order shall specify when each installment payment is due.**

(f) Nonpayment of fines and costs.--Unless otherwise provided in this title, each person who fails to pay the fine imposed may, after hearing before a district justice, be

imprisoned until the fine is paid in full. [No term of imprisonment for nonpayment of fines shall exceed 90 days.] **The court may imprison the person for a number of days equal to one day for each \$40 of the unpaid balance of the fine and costs not to exceed 120 days.**

\* \* \*

Section 4. Section 926(a) of Title 34 is amended and the section is amended by adding a subsection to read:

§ 926. Acknowledgment of guilt and receipt for payment.

(a) General rule.--[A] **Except as provided in subsection (d), a person charged with violating any provision of this title which is a summary offense may sign within ten days of the commission of the offense an acknowledgment of the offense committed and pay to an officer of the commission the penalty in full, as fixed by this title, plus any costs of prosecution which may have accrued. The printed receipt for this payment shall only prove full satisfaction of the monetary fine for the offense committed and in no way shall limit the commission from further revoking hunting and furtaking privileges.**

\* \* \*

**(d) Limitations of acknowledgments of guilt.--On and after June 30, 1999, acknowledgments of guilt pursuant to this section shall be used only in such counties as the commission may designate by regulation for such use. The commission shall only designate such counties for continued use of field acknowledgment as it finds to have summary offense procedures that differ from Statewide summary offense procedures.**

Section 5. Section 931 of Title 34 is amended to read:

[§ 931. Arrest of nonresident.

(a) General rule.--Upon the arrest, apprehension or citation of a nonresident of this Commonwealth for any violation of this title that is a summary offense, any officer whose duty it is to enforce the provisions of this title shall, unless the defendant elects to acknowledge guilt in accordance with section 926 (relating to acknowledgment of guilt and receipt for payment), escort the defendant to the appropriate district justice for a hearing, posting of bond or payment of the applicable fine and costs, unless the defendant chooses to place the amount of the applicable fine and costs in a stamped envelope addressed to the appropriate district justice and mails the envelope in the presence of the officer who shall issue the defendant a citation.

(b) Procedure upon payment by mail.--If the defendant accepts the citation and mails the amount of fine and costs prescribed in subsection (a), he shall indicate the payment constitutes a bond for a hearing based on a plea of not guilty. The district justice shall then handle the case as a "plea entered by mail."

(c) Form of payment.--The amount of fine and costs shall be paid in cash, money order, certified check or guaranteed arrest bond. The commission, by regulation, may enlarge or restrict the type of payment which may be made by mail.]

**§ 931. Disposition of nonresident offenders.**

**Subject to any inconsistent regulations or rules prescribed pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 3502 (relating to financial regulations):**

**(1) Except as otherwise provided in paragraph (2), upon the apprehension of a nonresident of this Commonwealth for any violation of this title that is a summary offense, the officer whose duty it is to enforce this title shall issue a citation as provided by the Pennsylvania Rules of Criminal procedure unless the nonresident offender elects to proceed under section 926 (relating to acknowledgment of guilt and receipt for payment).**

**(2) An officer whose duty it is to enforce this title shall be authorized to arrest a nonresident for a summary offense violation of this title and escort him to the appropriate issuing authority for a hearing, posting of bond or payment of the applicable fine and costs only when one or more of the following circumstances exist:**

**(i) the nonresident offender refuses to accept a citation from the officer.**

**(ii) The nonresident offender fails to provide positive identification showing his mailing address.**

**(iii) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe the nonresident offender is a repeat offender under this title.**

**(iv) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe the nonresident offender is hunting while his hunting privileges are suspended or furtaking while his furtaking privileges are suspended.**

**(v) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe the nonresident offender has failed to respond to a citation issued under this title or to pay assessed fines or penalties for a prior offense under this title.**

**(vi) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe the nonresident offender may pose a threat of harm to another person or property or to himself or herself.**

**(vii) The officer has reasonable grounds to believe the nonresident offender will not appear as required if issued a citation.**

**The officer shall not exercise his authority to arrest a nonresident under this paragraph if the nonresident offender chooses to place the amount of the applicable fine and costs in a stamped envelope addressed to the appropriate issuing authority and mails the envelope in the presence of the officer.**

**(3) The amount of fine and costs to be mailed to the issuing authority under paragraph (2) may be paid in cash, personal or other check, credit card or guaranteed arrest bond.**

**(4) The officer shall give the nonresident offender a receipt for payment, a copy of which shall be mailed with the payment and a copy retained by the officer.**

Section 6. Section 2307(b) and (d) of Title 34 are amended and the section is amended by adding subsections to read:

§ 2307. Unlawful taking or possession of game or wildlife.

\* \* \*

(b) [Retention of game or wildlife lawfully taken.--Except as fixed by regulation of the commission, game or wildlife lawfully taken within this Commonwealth during the open season may be retained by residents until the end of the license year in which taken.] **Reserved.**

\* \* \*

**(d) Exceptions.--This section shall not apply to authorized individuals who euthanize critically injured game or wildlife, which shall be permitted when it is reasonable to believe that the chance of survival of the injured game or wildlife is minimal or the injured game or wildlife poses a threat to human safety.**

[(d)] **(e) Penalties.--**A violation of this section relating to:

- (1) Threatened or endangered species is a misdemeanor of the third degree.
- (2) Elk or bear is a summary offense of the first degree.
- (3) Deer is a summary offense of the second degree.
- (4) Bobcat or otter is a summary offense of the third degree.
- (5) Wild turkey or beaver is a summary offense of the fourth degree.
- (6) Any other game or wildlife is a summary offense of the fifth degree.

**(f) Definition.--As used in this section, the term "authorized individual" means any person who:**

- (1) Has 18 Pa.C.S. (relating to crimes and offenses) enforcement powers.**
- (2) Is a currently employed waterway conservation officer or deputy waterway conservation officer.**
- (3) Is a currently employed wildlife conservation officer or deputy wildlife conservation officer.**
- (4) Is a currently employed State park ranger or a State forest ranger.**
- (5) Is a veterinarian licensed to practice in the United States.**

Section 7. Section 2312(c) of Title 34 is amended to read:

§ 2312. Buying and selling game.

\* \* \*

(c) Exception.--

**(1)** Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent the purchase or sale of game raised under authority of a propagating permit in this Commonwealth or the capture and sale of game or wildlife after securing a permit from the director and payment of any fees established by the commission or the purchase or sale of the tanned, cured or mounted heads or skins, or parts thereof, of any game or wildlife not killed in a wild state in this Commonwealth, or the sale or purchase of any inedible part thereof, from game or wildlife lawfully killed, if such parts are disposed of by the original owner within 90 days after the close of the season in which the

game or wildlife was taken. Prior to selling parts of game or wildlife under the provisions of this subsection, all edible parts shall be removed.

**(2) The commission may by regulation authorize the buying and selling of inedible parts of game and wildlife as it deems appropriate.**

**(3)** This subsection shall not be construed to permit any individual or agency other than the commission to sell the skins or parts of game or wildlife killed as a protection to crops, or accidentally killed upon the highways, or seized as contraband.

\* \* \*

section 8. Section 2705(7) of Title 34 is amended and the section is amended by adding paragraphs to read:

§ 2705. Classes of licenses.

Unless otherwise provided, any person wishing to exercise any of the privileges granted by this title shall first secure the applicable resident or nonresident hunting or furtaker license as follows:

\* \* \*

(7) [(Reserved).] **Senior lifetime resident combination hunting and furtaking license, including archery and muzzleloader privileges, to residents who have reached or will reach their 65th birthday in the year of the application for the license. The commission shall develop, implement and administer a system to provide tags, report cards and applications to those residents who hold a senior lifetime resident hunting license issued under this paragraph. The system shall require the applicant or license holder to pay any approved fee assessed by the issuing agent.**

**(7.1) Junior resident combination hunting and furtaker license, including archery and muzzleloader privileges, to residents who have reached or will reach their 12th birthday in the calendar year of application for a license but who have not reached their 17th birthday prior to the date of the application for the license and who present a written request, containing the signature of a parent or guardian, for the issuance of a license. The actual privileges granted to the holder of a junior resident combination license shall not be exercised until that person in fact is 12 years of age.**

\* \* \*

**(11.1) Junior nonresident combination hunting and furtaker license, including archery and muzzleloader privileges, to nonresidents who have reached or will reach their 12th birthday in the calendar year of application for a license but who have not reached their 17th birthday prior to the date of the application for the license and who present a written request, containing the signature of a parent or guardian, for the issuance of a license. The actual privileges granted to the holder of a junior nonresident combination license shall not be exercised until that person in fact is 12 years of age.**

\* \* \*

Section 9. Sections 2709 and 2923 of Title 34 are amended to read:

§ 2709. License costs and fees.

(a) License costs.--Any person who qualifies under the provisions of this chapter shall be issued the applicable license upon payment of the following costs and the issuing agent's fee:

(1) (i) Junior resident hunting - \$5.

(ii) **Junior resident combination hunting and furtaker - \$8.**

(2) Adult resident hunting - [~~\$12~~] **\$19.**

(3) (i) Senior resident hunting - [~~\$10~~] **\$12.**

(ii) Senior lifetime resident hunting - \$50.

(iii) **Senior lifetime resident combination hunting and furtaker - \$100.**

(4) Bear hunting:

(i) Resident - [~~\$10~~] **\$15.**

(ii) Nonresident - [~~\$25~~] **\$35.**

(5) Antlerless deer[,]:

(i) **Resident**, including resident military, resident disabled veteran and landowner - \$5.

(ii) **Nonresident - \$25.**

(6) Archery deer [- \$5.]:

(i) **Resident - \$15.**

(ii) **Nonresident - \$25.**

(7) Muzzleloader deer [- \$5.]:

(i) **Resident - \$10.**

(ii) **Nonresident - \$20.**

(8) [(Deleted by amendment)] **(Reserved).**

(9) Adult nonresident hunting - [~~\$80~~] **\$100.**

(10) (i) Junior nonresident hunting - \$40.

(ii) **Junior nonresident combination hunting and furtaker - \$50.**

(11) Seven-day nonresident small game - [~~\$15~~] **\$30.**

(12) Junior resident furtakers - \$5.

(13) Adult resident furtakers - [~~\$12~~] **\$19.**

(14) (i) Senior resident furtakers - [~~\$10~~] **\$12.**

(ii) Senior lifetime resident furtaker - \$50.

(15) Adult nonresident furtaker - \$80.

(16) Junior nonresident furtaker - \$40.

(17) Resident disabled veteran hunting or furtaker under section 2706(b) (relating to disabled veterans) - no cost.

(18) Replacement license - \$5. Antlerless deer and bear licenses shall be replaced by the original issuing agent only.

(19) Owners or possessors of land open to public hunting under section 2706(d) (relating to owners or possessors of land open to public hunting) - \$3.

(20) Migratory game bird hunting license [- issuing agent fee only.]:

**(i) Resident - \$2.**

**(ii) Nonresident - \$5.**

(b) Refunds.--Except as provided in section 501 (relating to refund of moneys paid erroneously or unjustly), license fees are not refundable.

(c) Agent fee.--Issuing agents shall be entitled to and may retain as full compensation for their services an additional sum of [75¢] **\$1** for each license or replacement license.

§ 2923. Disabled person permits.

(a) Use of vehicle as a blind.--

(1) Unless further restricted by commission regulation, a permit to hunt from a stationary vehicle may be issued to a person with permanent disabilities who qualified for a hunting license pursuant to Chapter 27 (relating to hunting and furtaking licenses) **or who possesses a junior resident license under section 2705(2) (relating to classes of licenses)** and who meets any of the following requirements:

(i) Has paraplegia and has permanent paralysis of both legs and lower parts of the body.

(ii) Has hemiplegia and has permanent paralysis of one leg and one arm on either side of the body.

(iii) Has both feet or one hand and one foot amputated.

(iv) Is permanently confined to a wheelchair or must use crutches or a walker as a means of support to pursue daily activities.

(v) Presents an affidavit and doctor's certificate stating the applicant is physically unable to walk 25 yards off the roadway.

(2) Unless further restricted by commission regulation, a permit to hunt from a stationary vehicle may be issued to a person who qualified for a hunting license pursuant to Chapter 27 and presents an affidavit and doctor's certificate stating the applicant is unable to walk 25 yards off the roadway due to a temporary injury or condition and may require an external means of support to ambulate. This permit is only valid for the license year in which issued.

(3) Permittees shall carry the permit upon their person while hunting. Any person named on this permit may hunt while using an automobile or other vehicle as a blind. The permittee shall not use the vehicle to flush or locate game. The vehicle may be used only as a blind or platform from which to shoot. The firearm shall be unloaded at all times while the vehicle is in motion.

**(4) Any person who possesses a junior resident license under section 2705(2) and otherwise qualifies for a disabled person permit must comply with section 2711(a)(8) (relating to unlawful acts concerning licenses). Any parent or person 18 years of age or older serving in loco parentis or as guardian or some other family member 18 years of age or older shall not use a vehicle as a blind unless that person meets the requirements of this section.**

(b) Regulated hunting grounds.--A permit may be issued to hunt on a regulated hunting ground to any person who presents a doctor's certificate showing that the person is physically unable to walk for an extended period of time, authorizing him to hunt for, pursue and kill from an automobile or other vehicle on regulated hunting grounds those species of game authorized for release on such areas, subject to rules and regulations prescribed by the commission. The permittee shall carry the permit while hunting on regulated hunting grounds.

(c) Bow and arrow or crossbow.--A permit shall be issued to any person who presents a doctor's certificate showing that the person is, because of a permanent physical condition, unable to hunt with a conventional bow and arrow, authorizing that person to hunt by the use of:

(1) A bow and arrow which is held in place by a brace secured around the body of the hunter or is triggered with the aid of a mechanical device.

(2) A crossbow subject to the following restrictions:

(i) When hunting deer, bear or turkey, the crossbow must have a draw weight of not less than 125 pounds nor more than 200 pounds.

(ii) The arrows for the crossbow must be tipped with [a broadhead of not less than seven-eighths of an inch wide and have a minimum of two nonmoving, exposed cutting edges] **broadheads of a cutting edge design.**

The permittee shall carry the permit upon his person at all times while hunting.

(d) Penalty.--A violation of this section is a summary offense of the fifth degree. Section 10. This act shall take effect as follows:

(1) The amendment or addition of 34 Pa.C.S. §§ 328, 522, 901 and 2307 shall take effect immediately.

(2) The amendment of 34 Pa.C.S. §§ 521, 902, 925, 926, 931, 2705 and 2709 shall take effect July 1, 1999.

(3) This section shall take effect immediately.

(4) The remainder of this act shall take effect in 60 days.

APPROVED--The 21st day of December, A. D. 1998.

THOMAS J. RIDGE

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## Appendix B – Financial Trends Monitoring

### **Fast Facts...**

- ❖ *Financial management is a key function of any responsible entity in which public money is involved.*
- ❖ *Due to the unique operating environment of government, the PGC has a responsibility to be accountable for the use of funds in ways that differ from the accountability of other business enterprises.*
- ❖ *Financial ratios provide valuable insight into the financial performance of a government agency or fund.*

## **Overview**

Financial trends monitoring is a method for monitoring the financial condition of the funds of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In this case, the Game Fund. The purpose of this report is to comprehensively examine the financial trends of the Pennsylvania Game Commission. It is hoped this information is useful to the PGC in making any financial policy adjustments to improve its overall financial condition.

In completing this analysis, an extensive review of the PGC's financial history over the preceding five fiscal years is performed using a series of key budgetary factors. By reviewing historical actuals over a period of time, financial impacts may be reviewed for validity to current conditions and variables.

## **Issue Areas**

### **Financial Trend Monitoring/Analysis**

Financial management is a key function of any responsible entity which involves money. Governments differ from businesses in goals and accountability; therefore, governments follow different standards for financial planning, recording, and analysis. Generally speaking, the overall goal businesses have in common is to make a profit. While a business has oversight and accountability, it is not to the degree of accountability of a government. For example, a business may be accountable to a board of directors and/or shareholders, whereas a government is accountable to all citizens within its jurisdiction. The Government Accounting Standards Board explains this difference as follows:

Separate accounting and financial reporting standards are essential because the needs of users of financial reports of governments and business enterprises differ. Due to their unique operating environment, governments have a responsibility to be accountable for the use of resources that differs significantly from that of other business enterprises. Although businesses receive revenues from a voluntary exchange between a willing buyer and seller, most governments obtain resources primarily from the involuntary payment of taxes. Taxes paid by an individual taxpayer often bear little direct relationship to

the services received by that taxpayer. Overall, taxpayers collectively focus on assessing the value received from the resources they provide to a government.<sup>61</sup>

Financial trend monitoring and analysis is an important part of financial management in government. Ideally governments have both retrospective and prospective analysis systems in place to monitor internal controls over public finances. The type of analysis contained in this report is retrospective, meaning analysis that uses past data to determine the overall health of a government or particular fund. This type of analysis can include:

- Information from audited financial statements.
- Financial information condensed into summary measures, usually in the form of mathematical ratios.
- A comparison of ratios across governments with similar population, wealth, and other characteristics.
- A grade or other summary measure.<sup>62</sup>

While retrospective trend monitoring is very effective and widely used it is important to note some limitations. It is important to remember that the data and ratios presented are for past fiscal years. This type of financial analysis is not in real time numbers, so it does not speak to real time financial health. Additionally, it cannot be used to make absolute predictions for the future. While a trend can be used to make projections about the future, there is no guarantee the projections will be completely accurate.

### **PGC Financial Ratios**

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It is often thought the PGC is accountable to hunting license holders, because the PGC does not receive General Fund appropriations (often referred to as "tax dollars") and instead receives a large portion of its funding from hunting and furtaker license sales. The PGC also receives funding from State Game Lands timber, mineral, and oil/gas revenues, and a federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. While the PGC does not expend taxpayer dollars, it is still a public agency with a mission to manage wildlife resources for all Pennsylvanians.

Financial ratios provide insight and analysis into the financial performance of a government agency and/or fund. These ratios revolve around three key concepts: financial position, financial condition, and economic condition. These three concepts are defined by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board as follows:

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<sup>61</sup> Government Accounting Standards Board. Why Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting is – and Should Be – Different. September 2017.

<sup>62</sup> "Guide to Financial Literacy: Managing Your Jurisdiction's Financial Health" Governing. Volume 2. 2015.

- Financial Position: the status of a government's asset, liability, and net asset accounts, as displayed in its basic financial statements.<sup>63</sup>
- Financial Condition: the probability that a government will meet both its financial obligations to creditors, consumers, employees, taxpayers, suppliers, constituents, and others as they become due and its service obligations to constituents, both currently and in the future.<sup>64</sup>
- Economic Condition: a composite of a government's financial health and its ability and willingness to meet its financial obligations and commitments to provide services.<sup>65</sup>

Ratios can be used by the PGC while planning and managing Commission resources and also by legislators to help determine the Commission's stewardship of their financial resources. It should be noted that financial ratios alone do not tell the whole financial story of an agency nor should they be used alone, however, they are helpful to note variances and potential issues that may require further investigation.

Below, we highlight the financial indicators most appropriate to the PGC. These indicators reflect the condition of the Commission's internal finances, and they are a result of the influence of public and legislative requirements and organizational factors. For example, if the public makes greater demands than resources available and if the PGC is not effective in making a balanced response, the financial factors would show signs of cash flow or budgetary problems.

***Revenues/Capita & Revenues/ Licensee.*** These ratios, particularly compared over time, show the ability of the agency to maintain service levels. Revenues for the PGC include hunting and furtaker license sales, State Game Lands timber, mineral, and oil/gas revenues, and a federal excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition. Comparing revenues to licensees gives insight into whether the license fees are appropriate for the number of license holders and service levels required.

***Revenues by Source.*** The sources of revenue are important to any government or agency, but especially so to the PGC. Most revenue sources are outside the control of the Commission. The General Assembly determines the cost of a hunting license. The federal government

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<sup>63</sup> Governmental Accounting Standards Board. *Analyzing the Financial Health of Governments after Statement 34*. [https://www.gasb.org/cs/ContentServer?c=Document\\_C&cid=1176156742290&d=&page-name=GASB%2FDocument\\_C%2FDocumentPage](https://www.gasb.org/cs/ContentServer?c=Document_C&cid=1176156742290&d=&page-name=GASB%2FDocument_C%2FDocumentPage)

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Governmental Accounting Standards Board. *Economic Condition Assessment*. <https://www.gasb.org/jsp/GASB/Page/GASBSectionPage&cid=1176156742174>

determines the size of grants sent to the various states. This indicator shows the change in the size of different funding streams to the Commission over time.

***License Revenue per Licensee.*** Licensees are the number of individuals who have purchased a PGC hunting license of some kind. It is different from the total number of licenses sold, in that an individual may, and often does, purchase more than one license. This ratio shows the level at which individual hunters support the agency.

***Actual/Budget Revenues.*** This ratio shows the ability of the agency to accurately predict revenue compared to revenues actually brought in during the fiscal year. In the case of the PGC, a large portion of their revenues are outside the agency's control. For example, according to a 2019 Auditor General report on the PGC, oil/gas revenues on State Game lands are unpredictable.<sup>66</sup> Unpredictable revenues can make accurate budgeting more difficult.

***Intergovernmental Revenues/Total Revenue.*** This ratio shows the percent of revenue that comes from other governments, or agencies. For the PGC this is typically the federal government through grants and tax revenues on sporting arms and ammunition.

***Revenues vs. Expenditures.*** Revenues vs. Expenditures depicts how revenues and expenditures change over time relative to each other.

***Expenditures/Capita & Expenditures/Licensee.*** These ratios, particularly compared over time, show the increase or decrease in services. They also show the changes in spending compared to each license holder. Increases and decreases in expenditures should be closely comparable to the percent change (increase or decrease) in population and/or license holders.

***Expenditures by Function.*** Expenditures by function show a breakdown of PGC expenses by major category or function. Monitoring this trend helps analyze the causes of changes in overall expenditures over time by the Commission.

***Employees per Capita & Licensee.*** Personnel costs are a major portion of the Game Commission's budget. Plotting changes in the number of employees per capita and per licensee is another way to measure and explain changes in overall expenditures.

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<sup>66</sup> "Performance Audit Report: Pennsylvania Game Commission." *Pennsylvania Department of the Auditor General*. May 2019. <https://www.paauditor.gov/Media/Default/Reports/PA%20Game%20Commission%20Audit%20Report%2005-30-19.pdf>

**Personnel Costs as a Percent of Expenditures.** This ratio gives insight into the percent of the agency costs associated with personnel versus the expenditures related to the agency's services.

**Benefits as a Percent of Total Compensation.** This ratio shows how much of employees' compensation is benefits. Comparing this ratio over time can show any changes in benefit costs that may need to be adjusted. It can be used to compare the agency's averages over time or compare to other public agencies to benchmark how the Commission compares to other agencies. For example, in December 2019 the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that for state and local government workers employers' costs for compensation averaged 62.3 percent in wages and salaries, compared to 37.7 percent in benefits.<sup>67</sup>

**Fund Deficit/Surplus as a Percent of Revenues.** This ratio shows the percent of expenditures that were spent over the amount of revenue received (deficit), the excess of revenue over expenditures (surplus), or whether revenues received, and expenditures spent were relatively balanced. If an agency continually runs a deficit there would be serious concerns about why expenditures exceed revenues. If an agency continually runs a surplus, there could also be concerns that service levels do not appropriately match incoming revenue; however, another explanation could be the agency is planning to have a surplus to save money for future adverse economic conditions (i.e., a rainy day fund).

**Fund Balance/Fund Expenditures.** The fund balance is the difference between assets and liabilities compared with expenditures. This ratio expresses the long-term health of the fund and the ability of the agency to properly plan/budget.

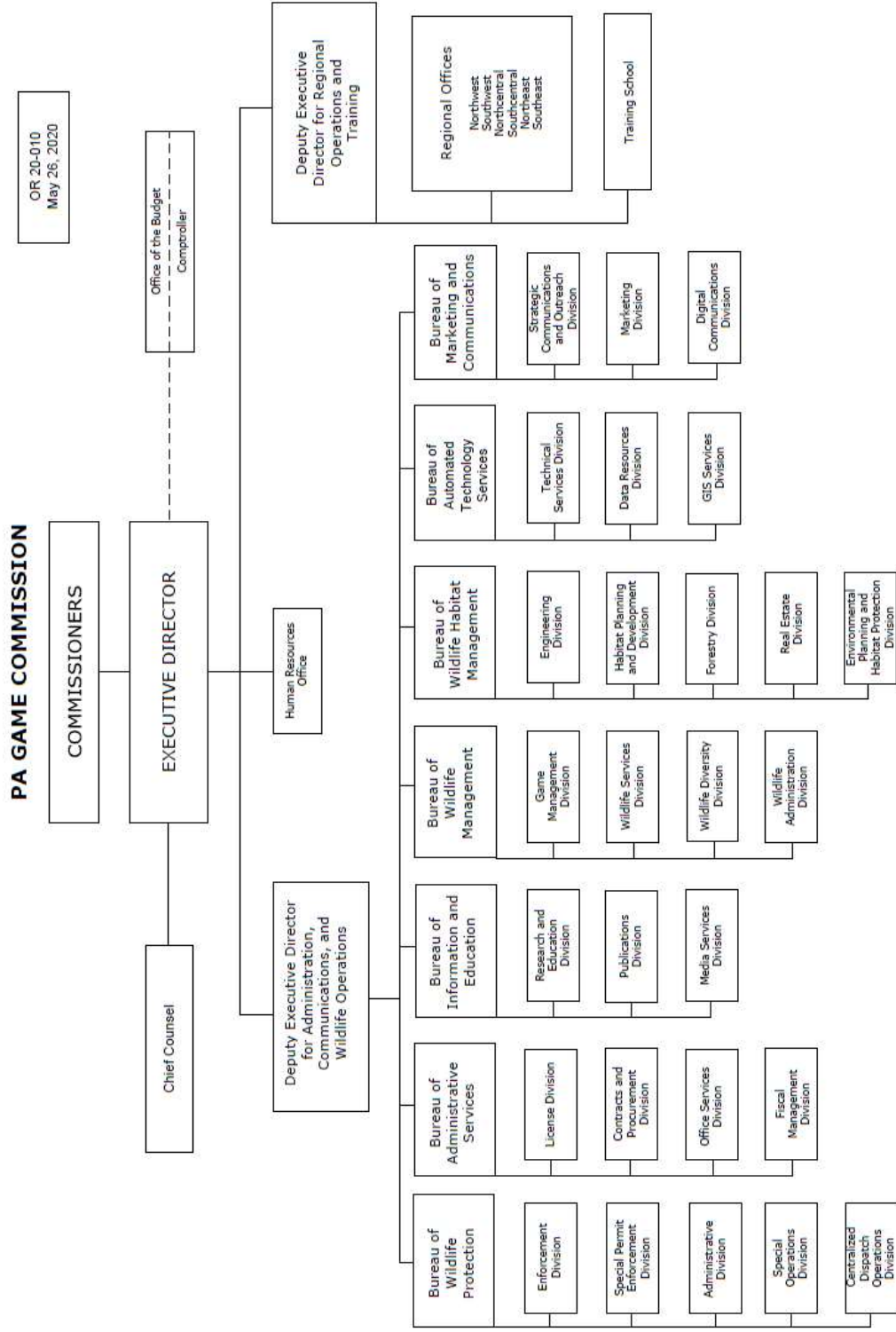
**Pension Obligations/Salaries and Wages.** This ratio compares PGC mandatory payments to the State Employees Retirement System (SERS) with total salaries and wages. Charting these costs is valuable as they can inadvertently escalate and place a financial strain on an agency and its ability to provide services. An increasing pension obligation is a negative signal that should be investigated to determine if the trend is expected to continue.

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<sup>67</sup> U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Employer Costs for Employee Compensation – December 2019*. <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/ecec.pdf>

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# Appendix C – PGC Organizational Chart



Source: The Pennsylvania Game Commission.

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## Appendix D – PGC Response



May 5, 2021

Dear Chairman Mensch,

This letter is in response to the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee's Report on the *PA Game Commission's Compliance with Its Strategic Plan* pursuant to Act 1998-166.

First, we would like to thank Patricia Berger and her staff, specifically, Chris Latta, Shanika Mitchell-Saint Jean, Stevi Sprenkle, and the entire LBFC team for their diligent work and dedication to this report. It is always a pleasure to work with such a great and professional team.

One of the biggest challenges that the PGC, and most wildlife agencies across the nation, continue to face is declining license sales. Survey after survey, report after report all point to the same limiting factor for why people stop hunting...lack of time. The PGC has made pointed strides over the past two or three years to create more opportunities for people to get out and hunt. Some of those include: Saturday opener for rifle deer season, a new muzzleloader bear season, increased archery season lengths, early start for squirrel season, increase pheasant stockings, and most recently three Sundays to hunt, just to name a few. I believe these efforts are paying off. We have seen an increase in license sales both of the past two years. Time will tell if that becomes a trend, but so far, it seems to be working.

In early 2015, former Executive Director Matt Hough wrote in the opening letter of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan:

"The Pennsylvania Game Commission exists to manage the Commonwealth's wild birds, wild mammals, and their habitats for current and future generations, a mission we have followed faithfully since 1895. Although our focus has remained static since the agency was created, the suite of challenges and opportunities facing the agency are fluid and dynamic."

The past year or so of the Covid pandemic has certainly proven the last part of that statement, and I am proud of the work that the agency has accomplished given the circumstances. We look forward to implementing the new strategic plan and the overall direction that the PGC is heading.

In summary, we would like to thank the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee for the review and analysis of the PGC Compliance with Its Strategic Plan. We believe that these results reflect the great work that is being done managing the wildlife resources and PGC assets for all citizens of this great Commonwealth.

Respectfully,



Bryan J. Burhans  
Executive Director