

LB&FC Report on Pennsylvania Game Commission Compliance With Its Strategic Plan

Report Highlights

A 1998 amendment to the Game and Wildlife Code requires the LB&FC to conduct a performance audit every three years of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's compliance with a strategic plan for agency operations. This is the second report issued under this mandate.

Summary of Findings: (See pp. S-1 to S-9.)

- 1. PGC Compliance With Its Strategic Plan. As was the case in 2000, strategic planning is not yet a significant factor in guiding Game Commission operations, programming, and fiscal decision-making. However, the PGC is now closer to reaching this goal than at any other time in the past.
- 2. The Current Status of Strategic Plan Development. In 2001, the PGC hired a full-time strategic planner and discontinued the use of the initial plan it had adopted in 1998. The PGC has since conducted a complete overhaul of its strategic planning process and expects to finalize a new five-year plan by May 2003.
- 3. Program Performance Measurement. The PGC has not yet initiated a formal system to measure agency performance against the strategic plan but plans to do so when it implements the new strategic plan.
- 4. PGC Financial Condition. During FY 2001-02, PGC expenditures exceeded revenues by \$4.1 million, and the Game Fund balance declined by 14 percent to \$23.2 million.
- 5. PGC Financial Projections. The PGC has outgrown the capacity of its existing revenue base, and annual operating deficits are progressively reducing the reserves available in the Game Fund. While further license increases may provide temporary relief, other revenue enhancements and alternative revenue sources need to be identified.
- 6. Prospects for Plan Implementation. Although the PGC now appears ready to make a serious attempt at implementing a strategic plan, aggressive implementation will be constrained by continued Game Fund operating deficits and renewed consideration of a possible merger of the PGC and the PA Fish and Boat Commission.
- 7. 1999 MAT Recommendations. The PGC has given ongoing attention to recommendations made in 1999 by the federal Management Assistance Team (MAT); however, several "core areas" of agency operations are still in need of improvement.
- 8. PGC Compliance With Other Related Provisions. The PGC is in compliance with statutory provisions relating to the maintenance of a citizen complaint handling system; minimum mandated spending for habitat improvement and restoration; the implementation of policies and programs to improve its relationship with the general public and its licensees; and annual reporting to the General Assembly.

Recommendations: (See pp. S-9 to S-10.)

1. The PGC Commissioners should adopt a formal policy statement affirming the agency's commitment to the strategic planning process and to monitoring and reporting on plan implementation.
2. Upon its finalization, the PGC should provide a copy of the Strategic Plan to pertinent committees of the House and Senate along with an explanation of the internal performance measurement and tracking system that will be used to monitor plan implementation.
3. The PGC should provide an annual status report on Strategic Plan implementation to pertinent legislative committees and stakeholder groups.
4. The PGC should continue to implement recommendations relating to "core areas" of agency operations as identified in 1999 by the federal Management Assistance Team.
5. The PGC should better publicize the availability of its WCO complaint handling system and fully comply with statutory provisions relating to youth hunter projects.