

Report Highlights

Pennsylvania Game Commission Compliance With Its Strategic Plan

A 1998 amendment to the Game and Wildlife Code requires that the LB&FC conduct a performance audit every three years of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's (PGC's) compliance with its strategic plan for agency operations. This is the fourth report issued under this mandate. The report also addresses PGC revenues, expenditures, and the Game Fund financial condition.

Summary of Findings: (See pp. S-1 to S-10.)

➤ **Implementation Progress.** Since 2006, the Commission has made additional progress in integrating the strategic planning process into overall agency operations and establishing a traceable link between the plan and the budget. We found that program activities and agency initiatives are underway in each of the Plan's broad goal and strategic objective areas.

➤ **Implementation Accountability.** In accordance with required accountability provisions, the PGC has structured its annual reports to the Legislature and the agency's stakeholder groups around the Strategic Plan's six major goals and 34 strategic plan objectives. These reports result from a strategic measurement process that the PGC has employed since 2006. Measurements are based on a series of output and outcome measures that have been established for the strategic objectives.

➤ **Strategic Plan Performance Measurement System.** It is not possible to assess implementation activity for some Strategic Plan objectives due to the absence of data on various output and outcome performance measures. Overall, we found the PGC's current measurement system is not conducive to quantifiable measurements, does not measure activity/progress in relation to "baseline" figures or "targets," and relies heavily on lengthy narrative to demonstrate Strategic Plan implementation compliance.

➤ **Factors Affecting Plan Implementation.** Despite the progress that has been made, several factors continue to affect the pace of plan implementation. For example, it is evident that the agency's current fiscal constraints and uncertainties, combined with a high staff vacancy rate, makes full adherence to the plan difficult. Also, the incorporation and agency-wide acceptance of planning principles has required a change in organizational culture, which, to a large extent, remains an ongoing process.

➤ **Unfunded Plan Requirements.** Due to ongoing fiscal and staffing constraints, various programs and

projects in the Strategic Plan do not receive the anticipated resources. Although the planning guidelines provide for the maintenance of an "unfunded requirements document," the PGC does not currently have such a report.

➤ **License Increase.** The agency's position is that a license fee increase and restored staffing levels are necessary to accomplish what needs to be done to achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan, as well as meet public and stakeholder expectations.

➤ **Plan Update.** The PGC is currently in the process of revising and updating its strategic plan. The updated plan is to be posted on the Commission's website sometime in March 2009 for final review and public comment. Final printing is planned in May 2009.

Recommendations: (See page S-11.)

To further develop and refine its strategic planning process and to promote and monitor plan implementation, the PGC should:

- As soon as possible, fill the vacant Strategic Planner and Human Dimensions Specialist positions on its staff complement.
- As part of the current update of the Strategic Plan, ensure that:
 - quantifiable output and outcome measures are established for all of the Plan's strategic objectives.
 - annual benchmarks and targets are established for each PGC organizational unit; and
 - the process take into account and report on performance in relation to each of the individual established output and outcome measures.
- Develop and maintain the "Unfunded Requirements Document" that is described in the Strategic Plan and guidelines and include a copy of it in the annual report on Strategic Plan implementation that the PGC presents to the House and Senate Game and Fisheries Committees.