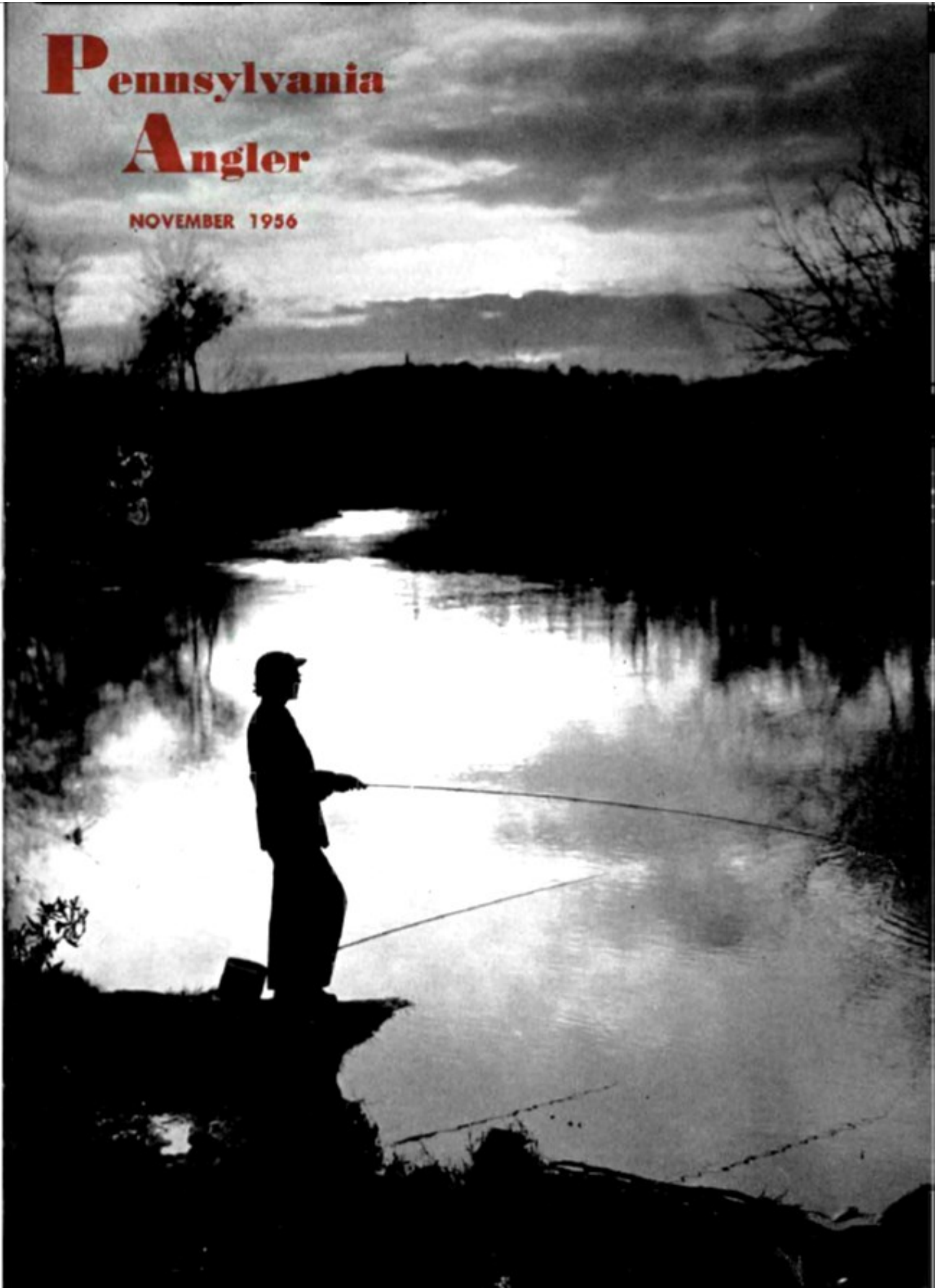


# Pennsylvania Angler

NOVEMBER 1956



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# PENNSYLVANIA ANGLER

NOVEMBER 1956



VOL. 25, NO. 11

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J. Allen Barrett, Editor

The PENNSYLVANIA ANGLER is published monthly by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, South Office Building, Harrisburg, Pa. Subscription: \$1.00 per year, 16 cents per single copy. Send check or money order payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. DO NOT SEND STAMPS. Individuals sending cash do so at their own risk. Change of address should reach us promptly. Furnish both old and new addresses. Entered as Second Class matter at the Post Office, Harrisburg, Pa., under Act of March 3, 1872.

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VIEW OF THE Lake Somerset site two years ago.

## Lake Somerset Makes It Four

by C. Robert Glover, Chief  
Conservation Education  
Pennsylvania Fish Commission

"The Roof Garden of Pennsylvania," as the vicinity of the Borough of Somerset is billed by its Chamber of Commerce, now has a lake.

At the time of its mid-October dedication it was only a semblance of what it will be when Dame Nature spills another twelve inches of moisture on its water-shed. Right now it is one-fourth full. If normal precipitation prevails, along about mid-Spring, 1957, should see the first trickle lap over the spillway. And when that happens, the 1,600 foot dam breast re-

cently completed by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission will back up 253 surface acres of water within the total 468 acre plot. The lake will be approximately  $1\frac{3}{4}$  miles long,  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile across at its widest point, with an average depth of 15 feet, 26 feet at its deepest point and present  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles of shoreline. As it fills, 5,000 largemouth bass and 20,000 bluegill sunfish also will be adding to their proportions. The introduction of these fishes capped the dedication ceremony which saw Pennsylvania's

**SPILLWAY** and dambreast. When full, and flowing over spill, water level will be approximately three feet up the stone rip-rap of the breast.





PRESENT VIEW looking toward the dam breast.  
IN THE background is Somerset Borough.

Lt. Governor Roy E. Furman deliver the main address and head a distinguished list of attending dignitaries, representing Federal, State and local governments and agencies and sportsmen's groups.

It was a big moment for the people of Somerset and environs—the fruition of a dream that presented itself no less than 18 years ago.

In that regard, and sounding the keynote of the project on the occasion of the dedication, C. H. Tennent, President of the Somerset Chamber of Commerce and Master of Ceremonies, said, "Lake Somerset is the result of the joint efforts of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission, our Chamber of Commerce and the Somerset County Sportsmen's League over a period of many years. The thoughts, plans and hopes of achieving this project can be traced back to 1938. It required the efforts of a great many people, both individually and collectively as groups and organizations.

"I BRING greetings and best wishes to you from his excellency, the Governor of Pennsylvania, the Honorable George M. Leader . . . You have taken an idea and an inspiration—and converted it into a reality . . . I congratulate you . . ."—Lt. Governor Roy E. Furman, at the podium. Seated left to right: R. Stanley Smith, Commission president; John Grenoble, commissioner, William Volgt, Jr., executive director of the Fish Commission; Charles C. "Jack" Houser, commissioner. Commissioner J. M. Critchfield also was present.



"Since three years ago, when it appeared that finally this lake would become a reality, there were long hours of planning and meeting, miles and miles of legwork and contacts too numerous to mention.

"Our local Junior Chamber of Commerce was contacted initially by the Fish Commission. Their proposal was referred to the Senior Chamber, which undertook, among other things, to negotiate with property owners at the lake site for options to purchase the land required.

"During these negotiations it was learned that the \$200 per acre maximum to which the Fish Commission was limited would not be sufficient to purchase many of the required acres. The problem was resolved by a fund drive undertaken by our Chamber of Commerce, which, thanks to the civic mindedness of many of our businessmen and other citizens,

resulted in sufficient funds to make up the difference."

In total, the amount raised by the Somerset people amounted to approximately \$50,000. The cost of the land to the Fish Commission over and above that amount was \$101,042.60. Another \$152,629 was expended in the construction of the dam and the development of the site. The latter includes the construction of an access road, of parking and sanitary facilities and of a concession building.

In addition to the cooperation lent the Fish Commission and the performances of the folks of Somerset Borough, the officers of Somerset Township planned to institute zoning that would bar for all time any development in the lake's relatively small watershed that would decrease the quality of the area for family enjoyment.

The minimum of erosion occurring in the watershed—a circumstance that will present a silt-free lake for many years to come, plus the assurance that such a zoning ordinance would be forthcoming, were important factors in the Commission's belief that this will prove a most worthwhile project.

It is to be noted that Lake Somerset was a Dingell-Johnson project whereby the Fish Commission will, upon the project's total completion and approval, be reimbursed to the extent of 75% of the total cost to the Commission out of the fund created by the existing Federal excise tax on fishing tackle.

Other vital statistics of Lake Somerset are: located in Somerset County in the Township of Somerset, ½ mile north of Somerset Borough and the Pennsylvania Turnpike between Rt. 53 and U. S. Rt. 219, 65 miles east of Pittsburgh, 28 miles south of Johnstown on the East Branch of Coxe's Creek, tributary to the Casselman River; land acquisition initiated in September, 1954; dam construction started in August, 1955; dam completed in September, 1956; dedicated on October 11, 1956; it is a fishing lake only—swimming and motorboats will not be permitted.

Lake Somerset is a total Fish Commission project, in that its every department—real estate, administrative, engineering, biological, hatchery and education played a role. From this point on the fisheries management division takes over completely, and will manage it as a warm water fishing facility. The groundwork for that activity was laid several months ago



AFTER A LOT of work and a lot of talk came the fish. Sharing the introduction honors were the Honorable Roy E. Furman, Lt. Governor of Pennsylvania and R. Stanley Smith, president of the Pennsylvania Fish Commission.

when the feeder streams and the marsh area the lake now covers were chemically treated to kill off all fish life. A new population was established when that dedication day stocking, mentioned earlier, was made.

By next Spring it is expected that the bluegills of that stocking will be of catchable size. It could be that some of the bass may likewise be suitable for the pan. But to make sure, adults of both species are scheduled for release therein next Spring and will be supplemented by walleye, black crappie and brown bullheads.

Thus Lake Somerset makes it four—the fourth fishing lake and largest to date constructed by the Pennsylvania Fish Commission in its program of creating new fishing waters.

Earlier lakes constructed were Virgin Run in

Fayette County, a 30 acre body of water within a 135 acre plot, in 1951; Duman Dam in Cambria County, a 20 acre lake within a 58 acre plot, completed in 1952; Glade Run Lake in Butler County, a 60 acre body of water within a 145 acre plot, completed in 1954.

Scheduled to get under construction this year was a fifth lake at Dutch Fork in Washington County. However, the lack of funds presently available to the Fish Commission for new lake construction plus the fact that allotted but unused Dingell-Johnson money will remain available until June 30, 1957, before it would revert to the Federal treasury, prompted the deferment of dam construction at Dutch Fork until the forepart of next year.

## WHAT IS A FISHERMAN?

(With Apologies to What Is a Boy and all boys who don't fish.)

In innocent boyhood, in dignified manhood and in honored old age we find a delightful creature called a fisherman. Fishermen come in all sizes, weights, colors, autos, boats, caps and boots. They are all dedicated, enslaved and bonded to the same urge . . . To enjoy every second of every minute of every hour of every day and night beside a stream, lake or bay and to protest if there is interference by law, in-law or Nature.

Fishermen are found everywhere . . . on top of, beneath, climbing over, sitting on, standing by, shivering in, dripping with, hiding from, breathing down, two steps ahead of, getting ready, digging for, bailing out, running after fish trucks, dragging in, bragging about and smelling of. Mothers loved them, lucky girls married them, uncles and big brothers teased them, fathers and grandpas taught them. God enlisted them. The fish warden watches for them. A fisherman is a lie with a new look, a story with a new angle. All his hopes for the future are tied to tomorrow or the day when the fish will be biting and he will be there.

A fisherman is a composite. He has the appetite of a bluegill, the digestion of a shark, the energy of a muskellunge, the curiosity of a native brook trout, the lungs of a farmer bawling out a trespasser, the imari-

nation of a lure manufacturer; the irresponsibility of a frayed tippet, the usefulness of a blacklash on a dark night, the clamour of a hellgrammite and the staying power of a relative.

Nobody else is so early to rise, so ignorant of lunch, so late for supper or so luke-warm about chores. Nobody else gets so much fun out of weeds, lily pads, sunken logs, long worms, heavy rains, fresh air and stinking minnows. Nobody else can cram into one pocket two rusty knives, a piece of shriveled garden worm, 3 feet of knotted invisible leader, six split shot, a grocery order, last year's fishing button, two bottle openers, a ragged wet fly and a topographical map showing his favorite fishing holes.

A fisherman is a magic creature. You can lock him in your workshop, but his heart is dancing on a trout stream. You might as well give up—"he's got nothing to do, and it's all done." He can be captured, jailed, bossed, mastered—but only by a missing bundle of noisy small fry who perks up the hopes and shattered dreams of every "skunked" fisherman by shouting, "Hi, Dad! Catch any fish?"

*Reprinted from Oil City Derrick and the outdoor column "Toll and Uncut" by Steve Szalawicz.*