

CONSIDER THE ELEMENTS

Often we spend so much time focusing on the important work at hand that we fail to step back, take a deep breath and enjoy the fruits of our efforts. Strangely, this is often true even here at the Department of Natural Resources, despite the fact that we are surrounded daily by evidence of all the beauty, diversity and natural bounty that Maryland has to offer.

So I propose today a different message. Let's all go fishing. While spring is now past, summer offers a chance for cool respite on the water, enjoying one of the great pleasures of living in Maryland — a great diversity of fishing opportunities. These opportunities are also affordable and available to anglers of all skill levels.

Whether out on the Bay, sitting on a beach by the ocean, cruising the shoreline of a favorite lake or wading a secret trout stream, Maryland provides a great diversity of quality opportunities to catch fish. But for many of us, catching fish is just a part of the experience. Fishing forces us to slow down, observe our natural surroundings, perhaps even experience ourselves as a part of our environment rather than speeding past it on the way to work or our next engagement.

And it is even better if we share that experience with family and friends, particularly the young people in our lives. Our children, nieces,

nephews and neighbors will rarely remember days spent at home together watching television, but they will never forget time spent together on the water. At the same time, we also enjoy the benefit of knowing that we are setting them on a course of lifetime appreciation of nature and time spent outdoors.

Getting out there is not difficult, even for the novice. Visit your local tackle shop, book a charter trip, or ask a friend to take you. Online resources are available. Two of the best are our own fishing report at <http://www.dnr.state.md.us/fisheries> and information compiled by the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation at <http://www.takemefishing.org>.

We have many challenges ahead and a great responsibility to pursue that work relentlessly on behalf of our children and our children's children. But I propose that today, in the middle of another summer, we make it a point also to stop, rest and just go fishing.



John Griffin

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John R. Griffin".

John R. Griffin
Secretary