



## Exotic mussels in tow?

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— LAKE GORDON, Pa. – Boat launching at Lake Gordon has been made easier and more environmentally friendly because of a partnership between the Pennsylvania Fish Commission and Bedford Reinforced Plastics Inc.

“We knew that fishermen really enjoy Lake Gordon, but that the ramp was getting to be in pretty bad condition,” said Kevin Giles, an engineer with the fish commission, on Tuesday at lakeside. “Besides that, there is a regulation at the lake that prohibits boat trailers from being backed into the water. That’s to keep from transferring exotic mussels from other lakes into Lake Gordon.” Concern exists that the mussels can find their way into the nooks, crannies and other openings on a boat trailer and make the trip from one waterway to another.

Zebra mussels and other invasive mussel species can impact the operations of industrial facilities and public water suppliers. Lakes Gordon and Koon are the impoundments that store the drinking water for Cumberland. Giles said he designed a ramp that would solve the problem, then got online looking for a company to manufacture what he calls a boat slide. Up popped Bedford Reinforced Plastics.

“This allows for the boat trailer to be backed close to the ramp and then the boat is slid onto it,” said Rhett A. Funston, assistant manager for fabrication and shipping. From there the launching job is easy. The boat slides along four runners coated with a substance Funston said is similar to Teflon.

Funston said the company charged the state only for materials and donated the fabrication and any transportation costs. He said Bedford Reinforced Plastics is hoping for a partnership with the agency that could lead to other contracts.

Portage area angler Bill Tremba, who has been coming to Lake Gordon to fish for 45 years, watched as state and company officials inspected the boat slide.

“I’ll bring my boat with me from now on now that launching it will be easier,” Tremba said. Tremba fishes mostly for bass and panfish at the lake, though many other species are available there as well.

Giles said he believes boat slides would be appropriate at other public boat launches throughout Pennsylvania and intends to consider them as existing concrete ramps need replaced.

“This is a special project for us because a lot of our employees are also fishermen and now they can enjoy something they actually worked on,” said Doug Bussard, fabrication/shipping manager.

Funston said about 30 percent of the anglers using Lake Gordon and nearby Lake Koon come from Maryland. The ramp is reached by driving two miles north of the Maryland state line on U.S. Route 220 and turning right at a Pennsylvania Fish Commission directional sign. The ramp is a few hundred yards on the left.

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Fabrication/shipping assistant Manager Rhett Funston, left, of Bedford Reinforced Plastics, Inc., and Kevin Giles of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission get a look at the finished and installed boat launch on Lake Gordon Tuesday morning. Concern exists that exotic mussels from other lakes can find their way into the nooks, crannies and other openings on a boat trailer and make the trip from one waterway to another.