

Little Juniata River Association  
Meeting November14, 2024

The LJRA met at Marzonis Restaurant on November14, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Bill Anderson, President. Directors present were Bill Anderson, Scott Kavanaugh, Bill King, Carl Reed and Lee Pryor.

**Presentation by Penny Ayres, Chief, Division of Public Access and Property Services. Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission**

Penny reviewed the process of acquiring public fishing easements on waterways. Her organization relies a lot on groups like ours to direct them to landowners who are interested in leasing their property. They have a process they follow which includes identifying a landowner who is interested, having fishery check it out, law enforcement looks at it, and then it goes to a commissioners meeting where a price is agreed on. It then goes to a settlement agreement and is recorded. She is also working on funding to acquire access in other areas throughout the state. A question was asked as to whether there are any other property owners interested in easements on the Little Juniata River. Bill stated there are several that may have a willingness to take part in the program. We will continue to pursue these possibilities. The group thanked Penny for joining us and for her presentation.

**Status of Bells Gap Run Project**

Doug Brown, Antis Township Manager, gave an update on the Bells Gap Run Project. Antis Township is in the process of developing a Rails to Trails Project. They just had their final inspection for Phase 1. It starts on Main Street and crosses over Bells Run and goes to Becker Road. This was all funded with PennDot money. Phase 1 is now considered done. The second phase for future development will go to Lower Riggles Gap road. There are plans for a Phase 3 which would go from Lower Riggles Gap road to Ponderosa Drive near Altoona. The LJRA entered into a partnership to do some bank repair and improvement of fish habitat over by the Community Park which is expected to be completed by June 2025. This includes approximately 150 feet of stream bank.

## **Brown Trout Spawning**

Bill reported that brown trout spawning is well underway. He observed near the quarry that there were 25 to 30 fish on redds. Also, at Shoenberger there were three redds on the right side looking upstream from the bridge. Spawning will probably be occurring for another two weeks.

## **Strategic Plan for Management of Trout Fisheries in Pennsylvania 2025 - 2029**

The key features of concern to us are as follows. First is their objective to evaluate the use of regulations to increase protection and conservation of wild brook trout. Specifically we are concerned about Bells Gap Run. We would like to see the brown trout removed and the brook trout left alone.

They also may investigate the possibility of introducing the use of stocked triploid rainbow trout. These are a sterile hybrid that have a fast growth rate. They are invasive to this area and could infest brook trout streams.

The third concern is the proposal to expand the number of class A wild trout streams that are going to be stocked with hatchery fish over the wild trout population. We have expressed our opposition to this and definitely don't want to see it happen in the Little Juniata.

The fourth item of concern is the potential for a slot limit. This would mean that trout within a certain size, such as 7 to 12 inches, could be killed. We sent a letter to the commission expressing our opposition to killing any wild trout in the Little Juniata River.

This plan will be finalized and voted on in December. It may be downloaded from [pafishandboat.com](http://pafishandboat.com).

## **New Company Sponsor – NES&L**

Mike Clark, VP Operations, and Stephanie Stewart, Land Manager, from New Enterprise Stone and Lime were present to address the group. NES&L previously donated a check to the LJRA in the amount of \$5,300 to offset the annual lease payment for the Pemberton Quarry river access. Mike said he appreciated what the LJRA has done to improve the river. The \$5,000 that was paid by LJRA in previous years was strictly for liability insurance. He said that NES&L is family owned and they like to support community needs. The LJRA definitely qualifies as a candidate for their support and they are happy to be included as a corporate partner with the LJRA. They are also going to offer us special pricing on quarry products. The LJRA thanks Mike and Stephanie and NES&L for their great support.

An expression of thanks was given to Bill for his leadership and persistence to accomplishing so many beneficial improvements to the river over the years that have made the LJRA a valuable resource.

A question was asked as to whether there were any results from the fish survey that was conducted in July. Bill said he would have Brian Chopka, District Fisheries Trout Manager, come to a meeting soon to compare the current survey with the one that was done around ten years ago.

With no other business to be discussed, a motion for adjournment was made and approved by unanimous consent. The meeting ended at 8:16 p.m.

Lee Pryor  
Secretary