

## Little Juniata River Association Meeting

A meeting of the LJRA was held on September 8, 2022 at Marzonis Restaurant. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 P.M. by Bill Anderson, President. The meeting started by those present introducing themselves. Several new members were present.

Bill gave an update on the River Road site. After years of delay by PFBC, Andrew and Jessica Walker signed up for a Public Fishing easement on their River Road property near New Pig. The Walkers were very patient, waiting more than 3 years for the state to act. This is a real success story because the Walkers initially posted the property, fearing trashing by the public. After commitments were made by LJRA to keep the property trash free, the postings were removed. The property includes 3600 feet of river frontage. With this acquisition LJRA has helped to permanently secure a total of nearly 5 miles of river access for public fishing. In the past LJRA found ways to come up with money for the easements (nearly \$200,000). This time Pa. Fish and Boat Commission came up with the money through a special fund they have. We assured the Walkers that we would keep it clean and free of trash. This summer, the son of member Steve Lewis, Colson Lewis, patrolled the Walker property and other public access points to remove trash as part of a community service assignment as a student at Juniata College.

There was some discussion on the Ormsby property. The Ormsby's were paid \$53,000 by LJRA for a permanent public fishing easement which PFBC manages. A Mr. Wingate bought the Ormsby farm but the river frontage was bought by a Mr. Hartman is complying with the approximately one mile public easement along that stretch of river. The bus hole, a small triangle shape piece of land, is not part of the easement due to a previous property ownership dispute. We thank Mr. Hartman for taking actions to prevent further erosion of the bank at the Bus Hole.

A question was asked concerning the Pemberton area. The LJRA again paid the lease to New Enterprise for this year which is \$5,000. We have paid the lease for three years in a row which includes almost two miles of river. This is the only arrangement they will accept. We offered them \$75,000 (PFBC funds) for a one-time payment but they are not interested. Fish and Boat is aware but have not stepped up to pay the annual lease. We have received donations from LJRA members to cover about half the cost for this year. We will continue to push Fish and Boat to assume this cost.

Gary Miller gave an update on Rutters and voiced some of our concerns for this project. There will be as many as fifty three semis parked there at one time. The area underneath is limestone which would require blasting resulting in possible sink holes and surface runoff leaching into groundwater. Potential leaks into Sandy Run wetlands and Sandy Run, a Class A Wild Brown Trout stream that supports spawning trout from the Little Juniata, are possible from vehicles and underground storage tanks. Sandy Run is also a cold-water source and refuge for trout during hot summer months. Some LJRA members recently gave testimony at a hearing with DEP voicing our concerns that this is not a good plan and requires a lot more work including monitoring and testing before they permit this to go through. We look forward to the PADEP response regarding the Rutter's proposal following the recent public hearing. At this point it's in DEP's hands.

Bill spoke on the Altoona's CSO (combined sewer overflow) arrangement. Altoona has a combined system meaning that the storm water and sewage goes into the same pipes which go into the sewage treatment plant. Some LJRA members a few years ago visited and did a tour of this combined system. What we learned that day was alarming. Anytime we have a rainfall exceeding one half inch it overwhelms their system and they throw a switch which puts that mixture of sewer/storm water right into the river. In 2018, a very wet year, they had fifty bypass events which dumped millions of gallons of this mixture

into the river. Now AWA has have commissioned a study to determine what impact this has on the river. This study will take up to five years to complete. In the meantime, this practice will continue. There is nothing left, in terms of impact, on the Little Juniata that comes close to this combined system issue where raw sewage is dumped in the river. There are fixes that have worked in other municipalities. You don't have to tear up the streets to put in new pipes. What other cities have done is to put in a holding facility where they store that mixture until it can be processed. We can't stand by and wait four or more years for something to be done. We must keep pressing the water authority to do something about this now.

### **Questions from members present:**

- Any problem on the Little Juniata River with acid mine drainage?  
Answer is no.
- Any problem with the dredging in Tyrone? LJRA President defended the river at a recent Tyrone Borough meeting. The dredging of the stream bed was unnecessary and will have no positive impact on flooding in Tyrone. It will take time to see negative impacts on the fishery. We will stay in touch.
- What's going on with the Indian Caverns? Fish and Boat manages a catch and release fishery for 800 feet of stream there. All buildings are gone. Major fish habitat improvements have been completed by the PFBC Habitat Management group. LJRA has offered to help WPC with replanting the riparian buffer there on October 8<sup>th</sup>.

- Anything new with the Paper Mill Dam? Bill has been in contact with Paper Mill management. The plant superintendent will meet with Bill concerning this in the near future.

The next meeting will be on October 13, 2022. Notice will be sent via email.

A motion for adjournment was made and seconded. The meeting ended at 8:50 P.M.

Lee Pryor, Secretary