

Little Juniata River Association Meeting
February 8, 2024

The Little Juniata River Association met at Marzonis Restaurant on February 8, 2024 for their regular monthly meeting. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Bill Anderson, President. Directors present were: Bill Anderson, Dennis Johnson, William King, Sr, Gary Miller, Carl Reed, Angie Spagnoli, Logan Stenger and Lee Pryor.

Introduction of new Water Conservation Officer, Brock Bensen

Brock is the new WCO who now covers our area. Brock told the group of his background and gave a brief description of his duties and answered questions. He said that today he was driving down route 453 going to Huntingdon and the river was grey as far down as the Grier School. He went back and found that New Enterprise Stone and Lime had dumped concrete into the river at the quarry. They had to clean it up and pay a fine. If any type of violation is seen, take pictures, videos or license plate numbers. The best way to contact him is to call his office.

Rutters Project

Bill gave an update on the Rutters Project. DEP fined Rutters and an excavation contractor for \$73,000 for violations of the Clean Streams Law. These violations were discovered by members of the LJRA who took samples of the run off from the site and by further inspections by the Blair County Conservation District. Because of these actions, Rutters has made improvements to ensure that they remain in compliance with the regulations as stipulated in their permit for effluent coming off the project site. Our intent is to sample every major rain event by taking samples from the culvert pipe that drains the entire site. Thanks to Angie for obtaining an additional grant which will help pay for additional testing from the site.

Catch and Release Signs

Bill is asking for volunteers to help replace “catch and release” signs that are getting old and missing in some places. See Bill after the meeting if you are willing to help out.

Interactive River Map

The interactive river map is still in the works. A board meeting was held to decide what we will and will not put on the map. The map will be available by going on the LJRA website to find a link and use that link to access the map. Pins will be dropped along the map that can be clicked on to obtain information about that specific location. It was decided not to put on pins for private property where we do not have formal approval to park or fish. At this point we will post sites that are not private such as PennDOT and our easement sites.

Brian Chikotas, Fisheries Manager for Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, South Central District

Brian included a lot of information and data in his presentation. These minutes include a brief synopsis of some of the key points that he went over. Brian is the South Central Manager which includes approximately 20 counties. He explained the sectioning strategy for the Little Juniata and went over the criteria for a Class A wild brown fishery. To be considered Class A, the surveyed area must have a wild trout biomass of greater than 40 kg/ha.

The Little Juniata is broken down into eight separate management sections.

Section one starts at the headwaters and goes to Sandy Run. Section one when surveyed in July, 2021 was found to have 70 brown trout and the biomass was 17.98 kg/ha which classified it as Class C.

Section two was surveyed in June, 2016. They sampled two locations and found 370 brown trout which is 71.6 kg/ha which is considered Class A.

Section three was surveyed in 2017. This section was a former special regulations area that was stocked and was in a delayed harvest artificial lures only program. They found 98 trout or 44 kg/ha which was considered Class A.

Section four was getting farther away from the cold water influence of Sandy Run with water temperatures of 64 to 65 degrees in June. They sampled two sites. One at the mouth of Tipton Run and another downstream. They found 66 trout which was a class B biomass.

Section five was sampled summer 2019. They did three sites. One where Bald Eagle Creek comes in, one at Snell Run, and one at the route 453 bridge. They found this area to contain a Class B biomass.

Section 6 starts at the railroad bridge in Ironville and goes to Spruce Creek. This was sampled in August 2010. They did two sites. One downstream from Babe Road and one at the Quarry. They caught 1,510 brown trout combined in those two sites which was 180 kg/ha. The water temperature was 65 to 67 degrees in August. The estimated number of trout per mile was almost 8,000. The majority were under 7 inches long.

Section 7 which goes from Spruce Creek to the Barree Bridge was done in August 2010. They did one sampling site at the Barree Bridge and found 646 trout which is 160 kg/ha and is Class A. The water temperature was 66 degrees.

Section 8 goes from the Barree Bridge to the mouth of the river. They found 320 trout which were 2 to 19 inches in length. This area contained 109kg/ha and is considered class A. The water temperature was 63 degrees in mid-June. They were finding bigger and better quality of fish in this section.

In 2024 they plan to again survey sections 6 and 7. They would also like to do section 4. They are also planning to do an angler use survey in 2024.

A question was raised as to why they would survey in summer when the water is warm and low and you are not getting the big picture of the fish population. Brian responded that they like to go in when the conditions are the worst. If a stream can meet Class A in July or August they definitely know it is a good stream. There were questions and discussion concerning "catch and release" on the upper river. Brian stated that there are no plans at this time to include the upper river as a "catch and release" stream. Brian stated that the rationale for this at this time is to include all types of anglers and not to put regulations in place that would make it exclusive.

The group thanked Brian for a very informative presentation.

With no other business to be discussed a motion for adjournment was made and approved by unanimous vote. The meeting ended at 8:45 p.m.

Lee Pryor
Secretary