

Little Juniata River Association Meeting June 13, 2024

The LJRA met at Marzonis Restaurant on June 13, 2024. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Bill Anderson, President. Directors present were: Bill Anderson, Scott Kavanaugh, Angie Spagnoli, and Lee Pryor.

Blair County Conservation District

Chelsey Weyant, Blair County Conservation District representative, gave a presentation on the need for volunteers for water quality monitoring. They want to develop baseline data and use that data to make informed decisions for improving the streams and quality of the water. They also want to screen for other problems that may arise. An important part of their job is educating the public about environmental stewardship and also to raise awareness about how the public can impact our water quality. The majority of the previous monitoring was done in the northern part of the county. There is a need to encompass the entire county. The chemical parameters to check are water temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, and conductivity. Physical characteristics to check are water appearance, water odor, stream type, and erosion. They would also do biological surveys for macroinvertebrates, which would be conducted in October and May. Teams will be formed which will be sampling on a quarterly basis. Each team will have a set location and will not overlap. There would be in classroom training and training in the field. The training will probably be late winter of next year and start the program next Spring. Chelsey is looking for input from our group for suggestions for locations or for data that could be collected. Several suggestions were given to Chelsey as a source for team volunteers. Chelsey asked those present who may be interested to give her their names and she would contact them or call the district office to sign up.

Mud in the River

Bill informed the group of two incidents that caused mud in the river. The first was a 12 inch water main break under the Little Juniata just upstream from the lower Riggles Gap Bridge. The Altoona Water Authority repaired it quickly and did a good job of restoring the appearance of the site. We need to add this to our list of projects for riparian buffer site work. Chelsey informed the group that the Conservation District has funding available for such programs. She has an open application for projects to be done in the Fall. The application is on the

Conservation District's website or she could send it. She would need to receive it by the beginning of July.

The next incident involved a 24 inch sewer line under Sandy Run near Pinecroft that was sagging and needed replaced. Bill happened to be in the area and observed that the contractors had constructed a soil coffer dam road across Sandy Run with 2 small pipes under the coffer dam for the flow of the stream. This area was where we did our fish habitat and streambank improvement several years ago. We planted trees along the southern side to reshade the bank which was altered when the new bridge was constructed. This was all taken out by the sewer main replacement. The following day, after Bill talked to the engineer, there was a rainstorm that wiped out a lot of the coffer dam. Then they put a plastic channel along the coffer dam to direct the flow. Bill contacted DEP who investigated and found that there was an improper permit issued and the work was stopped. DEP then worked with the contractor to ensure that things were done right and the problem was resolved. The contractor will be required to reconstruct the original fish habitat that was implemented by LJRA. Fish and Boat designed the plan for LJRA. Bill has a copy on file and will provide it to the contractor.

Rutters Update

So far nothing bad has been found draining off of the Rutters site. There is underground storage that may be receiving it. Angie noted that we still have the \$5,000 from a grant we received. This can be used anywhere in the watershed. This is the 2nd \$5,000 grant for water quality testing. Bill stated that Rutters was fined \$76,000 during the construction phase for not following these permit guidelines. Bill is going to see if we can get that money for LJRA programs.

Summer Banquet

A vote of thanks was given to Angie, Joe, Eric and especially the Green family, who provided their streamside property free of cost to LJRA. The pig roast provided by Holand Bros was delicious!

With no other business to be discussed, a motion for adjournment was made and approved by unanimous consent.

Lee Pryor
Secretary