

Little Juniata River Association
Meeting September 12, 2024

The LJRA met at Marzonis Restaurant on September 12, 2024. The meeting was called to order by Bill Anderson, President. . Directors present were: Bill Anderson, Scott Kavanaugh, Dennis Johnson, William King, Ronald Kuntz, Joseph Reese, Logan Stanger, and Lee Pryor.

Presentation by Isaac Caracilo Penn State Researcher

Isaac Caracilo gave a presentation on the use of riparian buffer best management practices to reduce thermal stress on brown trout populations. He along with other researchers are currently conducting a study assessing riparian buffers of different ages to investigate how riparian buffer development influence brown trout stress. They have identified ten riparian buffer sites, these being three young, four intermediate and three mature riparian buffer sites in central Pennsylvania. Brown trout will be sampled at three time points: summer, fall and spring to assess population status and non-lethally sample gill tissue. Gill tissue samples will be used to assess individual fish stress through quantifying the expression level of genes; which are analogous to the dimmer light switch: the higher the expression, the more the product of that gene is produced. Some genes are already known to be turned up when fish are thermally stressed. They hypothesize that riparian buffer age will be associated with reduction of stress as indicated by gene expression levels. Overall their goal is to address a critical gap in understanding how riparian buffers influence brown trout, a key biological component of Pennsylvania streams and the driver of a popular recreational activity.

Sale of Greene Hills Property

Bill and Lee attended the Greene Hills Methodist Camp auction sale on Thursday, August 29th. Bill reported that the asking price was \$2.5 million. There were 2 registered bidders. The final bid was \$2.1 million. This would need to be approved by the Methodist Church Conference. It was reported by some members present that another group bought the property for \$2.25 million. More details will be made available as they are made known.

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Trout in the Classroom

The Grier School has asked again if we would participate in the Trout in the Classroom Program. We will be looking for volunteers for some time in the first week of May for the trout release. In the past we have done fly tying, casting, birding, bug identification and plant identification. These are all good candidates for what we may do.

Squatters Hole

John Gatto who has been monitoring the “squatters hole” for some time gave a report on his latest finding concerning ownership and what has been going on at that location. The “squatters hole” is located on route 453 going south. To find it you will drive past the Irish Flats Bridge and then past the Grier School on the left. After passing the Grier School, you will go about 100 yards and pass through a rock cut. Immediately after passing the cut, there is a sharp right turn to a dirt road. You must access it coming from the other direction. This has been for many years a dump and party site along the river. After many hours of research and money spent with lawyers, it has been found that the owners are probably the Game Commission. It is now in the hands of a real estate lawyer in Harrisburg that works for the Game Commission who will do all of the background studies to see if it is their property. John will have more details as they come available. The group thanked John for all the time and work he has put into this project.

Tree Planting

This past weekend LJRA did a tree planting project on two different sites. One site was on Water Authority property where they replaced a section of 12 inch water main. They did a good job of grading it but they didn't replace any trees. The second site was at Pinecroft where we had done a fish habitat project along Sandy Run in 2016. The Northern Blair Sewer Authority replaced a large sewer main under Sandy Run which was not done properly. The trees we had planted were taken out in the process of doing the replacement. DEP was notified and the contractor was required to reconstruct the original fish habitat which was done by LJRA. LJRA will be reimbursed through grants and DEP for this work. All in all there were 14 large trees planted by 13 volunteers. Thanks to all who helped.

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Interactive Stream Map for the Little Juniata River

Bill gave an update to the group on the interactive stream map. The map has been finished from the mouth of the river to above Tyrone. The map shows where class A waters, fishing easements, and public access parking for boating and fishing are located. There will be a link on the LJRA website for all to use and may be accessed by cell phones. Kurt Wagner was instrumental in helping Bill construct the map.

New Enterprise Stone and Lime

For four years LJRA has been paying NESL \$5,000 per year to keep the site near the Pemberton quarry open to the public for fishing and boat access. Bill talked with Mike Clark, the vice president of ops for NESL and they now want to be a corporate sponsor with LJRA. We will still have to make a check out for \$5,000 for the lease but they will then make a donation to LJRA for the same amount of \$5,000. They will also give us a discount on the stone that will be needed for the Antis Township project. The cost of the stone would be \$14,000. However, they will discount that by 50% down to \$7,000. We thank New Enterprise Stone and Lime for helping us with these expenses.

Fish and Boat Commission Survey

The Fish and Boat Commission resurveyed the Shoenberger, Pemberton Quarry and Barree Bridge sites for brown trout. These areas were previously surveyed in 2014. They also did a survey of anglers on the Little Juniata. These surveys appear to be an effort to substantiate the need for slot limits to kill fish of a certain size. The LJRA, of course, is opposed to the killing of any trout in the river. The Fish Commission will not share the data with us until the survey is complete. A representative from Fish and Boat will at some point come and present the results of this survey along with a comparison of the survey that was done in 2014.

Bells Gap Run Trail Project

The Bells Gap Run Trail Project is a bank protection, riparian buffer type project for improvement of fish habitat that is located on the boundary of the new Bells Gap Trail behind the community park in Antis Township. This will probably have to be tabled until next spring when the approved permit and money for the project will be available.

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