



# Lehigh River Watch

## Our 2017 Outlook and Seasons Greetings! By Matt MacConnell

**LRSA's Running Total:  
Trout Stocked: 349,900**

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Happy New Year Everyone! We hope that everyone is having a great start to the new year. Thanks as always for your support for the Lehigh River trout fishery. You may have noticed that our mailing address has changed slightly, same PO Box but now in Lehighton. Nothing has changed with the club other than the we transferred the membership management duties from Matt MacConnell over to Steve Chuckra, thank you Steve! This is actually a big job when you consider how many mailings and database entries are required.

The LRSA is gearing up for pretty much the same stocking program as last year. We have taken out a cash advance and have prepaid \$25,000 for trout so that we can save 7% on trout cost (saving nearly \$2,000!). The March newsletter will reveal the detailed stocking plans so please get your sponsorship funds in soon. The new policy starting last year is to only send the March newsletter to folks with up to date paid membership dues. The LRSA plans to continue our large trout that put PFBC plantings to shame. We also plan a number of trophy trout releases in memory of loved ones that have passed. If you and your family would like to release a memorial trout please contact us and we are happy to accommodate this—it is a meaningful, heartfelt event that is win-win for everyone.

Our planning for the 7th Annual Lunckerfest contest is in full swing and scheduled for Saturday May 13th, so please mark you calendar. We will be releasing \$6,000 worth of trophy trout for the contest, including ten 26"+ lunkers, compliments of an anonymous \$1,000 donation! We are grateful that our trout supplier Big Brown can accommodate our hefty orders for BIG FISH.

Over the winter the LRSA continues our planning efforts to expand our club sponsorship roles. We will be tabling at as many sportsman's shows as we can. You will see us there with our chilled aquarium sporting brook, brown and rainbow trout. Please stop by the table and say hello and better yet, try to make it a point to come to one of our monthly meetings at Sliders Pub in Schnecksville the last Tuesday of every month at 7pm.

This is the time of year where our planning for conservation activity on the Lehigh for next season are in development. We are considering locating the water quality probe in the Triechlars area for 2017. This will provide comparative information to that obtained from upriver, including 2 years in Slatington, 2 years in Palmerton and 4 years in Jim Thorpe. We will also conduct the annual tributary survey and will continue efforts to improve performance of the Lausanne Tunnel mine drainage remediation system in Jim Thorpe.

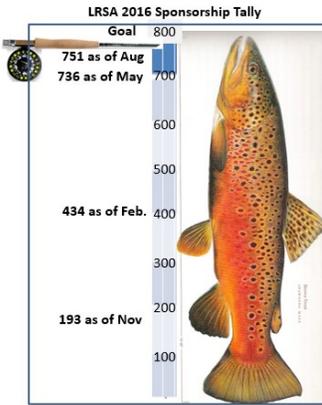
As you probably know, the LRSA has a very active facebook page. Please check this out to find out the trout fishing action folks are reporting on the river. We also post our famous stocking videos on our facebook page so you all can take a look at the gorgeous rainbow and brown trout we are introducing to the Lehigh and where. Please feel free to write to us at our email as well if you like. We would love to hear from you.



**We love our trout. Matt could not help but plant a kiss on this 17" brown during stocking the riffles in Palmerton last April**



**An angler lands a great trout at**



LRSA stocks trout in four main areas along the 29 miles of river between Northampton and Jim Thorpe. A listing of most popular spots are:

**Jim Thorpe**—use the train station parking lot where the rafters put in (it is just below the 903 bridge). Or, you can walk up river a bit. Also try Glen Onoko—follow 903 over the river and stay left into the park. There is a great trout pool a short walk from the parking lot, or you can walk or ride a bike upstream into the gorge to Park Bench, Bear Creek trib area is also very good.

**Packerton**—pull off 209 where the road dips down steeply between Lehighton and Jim Thorpe. You can park and walk straight back to the river, lots of good access there. Head down river about 100 yards to pump house and you will find a riffle with a deep pool behind it.

**Lehighton**—Make a right off of 209 at Dunbar's Beverages and take the road all the way back to the rocky beach near the river. Or, drive down stream on the access road that runs parallel to route 209 and walk in.

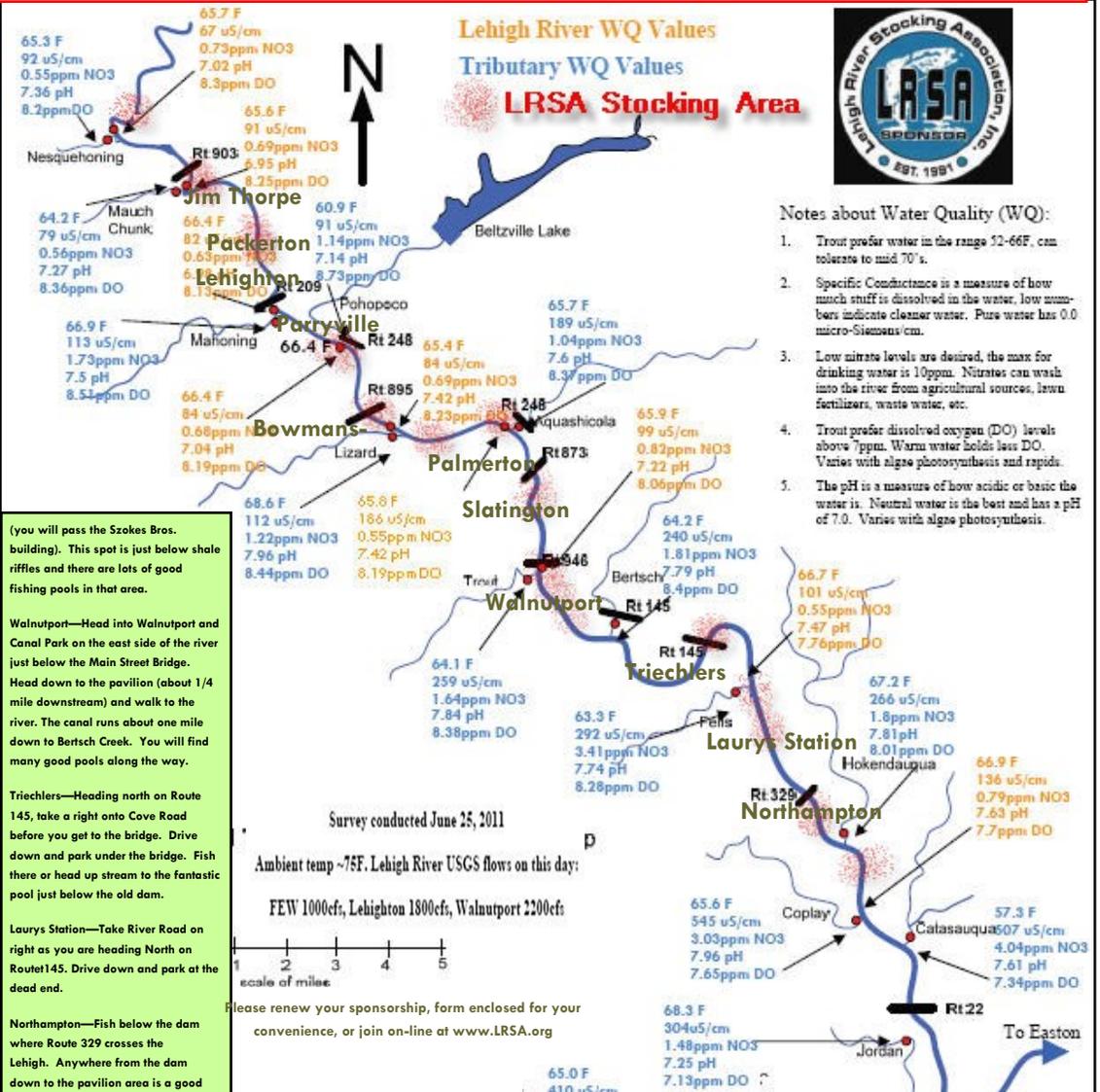
**Parryville**—Pull off route 248 at the Rock Hill Cement Company and park at the Canal Park area. The Pohopoco Creek confluence with the Lehigh provides very good, cold, conditions for trout. The Pohopoco holds fish too, particularly below the dam.

**Bowmanstown**—Fishing is good above or below the Route 895 bridge. You can park under the bridge. Or, drive down to the new boat ramp about 1/2 mile south of Lizard Creek, on west side of river: we call the large pool "the Musky Pool" and it is where we hold Lunkefest.

**Palmerton**—Head south on 248 and take the Palmerton exit. Take the second dirt road to the right and head down to the "horseshoe." The river forms a big bend in that area and there is a pool just below the rapids.

**Slatington**—Heading east on 248, take a right over the 873 bridge and you will see Slatington Fabricators on your left. You can find a place to park along the road at that point and walk-in access to the river

**Monthly Meeting Location**—Meetings now held at Sliders Pub in Schnecksville, 46650 Main St. (Rt 309). 610-769-4004. Meetings 7-9 pm the last Tuesday of each month. Please visit us, we would like to meet you and get your input!



- Notes about Water Quality (WQ):**
1. Trout prefer water in the range 52-66F, can tolerate to mid 70's.
  2. Specific Conductance is a measure of how much stuff is dissolved in the water, low numbers indicate cleaner water. Pure water has 0.0 micro-Siemens/cm.
  3. Low nitrate levels are desired, the max for drinking water is 10ppm. Nitrates can wash into the river from agricultural sources, lawn fertilizers, waste water, etc.
  4. Trout prefer dissolved oxygen (DO) levels above 7ppm. Warm water holds less DO. Varies with algae photosynthesis and rapids.
  5. The pH is a measure of how acidic or basic the water is. Neutral water is the best and has a pH of 7.0. Varies with algae photosynthesis.

(you will pass the Szokes Bros. building). This spot is just below shale riffles and there are lots of good fishing pools in that area.

**Walnutport**—Head into Walnutport and Canal Park on the east side of the river just below the Main Street Bridge. Head down to the pavilion (about 1/4 mile downstream) and walk to the river. The canal runs about one mile down to Bertsch Creek. You will find many good pools along the way.

**Trichlers**—Heading north on Route 145, take a right onto Cove Road before you get to the bridge. Drive down and park under the bridge. Fish there or head up stream to the fantastic pool just below the old dam.

**Laurys Station**—Take River Road on right as you are heading North on Route 145. Drive down and park at the dead end.

**Northampton**—Fish below the dam where Route 329 crosses the Lehigh. Anywhere from the dam down to the pavilion area is a good area for fishing.

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## Porpoising Trout - By John Mosovsky

June 2<sup>nd</sup> was an unusually hot and sunny spring day. The thermometer read 84°F and I was on the river at two o'clock in the afternoon. Just as I had planned. Two weeks earlier I was at the same location at the same time of day and experienced similar weather and water conditions. I got skunked, but then I was ill-prepared to take the large brown trout that I saw persistently porpoising in the tree shaded water along the west bank. This time was going to be different!

Getting back to the same location was a challenge. I stumbled along the steep river bank for almost thirty minutes; climbing over boulders, crawling through vines, trying to avoid the poison ivy, and untangling my rod from the brush. One step off the bank would put me into waist high water that I figured would be even more difficult than trudging along on dry land. Progress was slow but when I finally arrived sweat soaked at my destination, I fully expected to see my quarry. I was not disappointed. The big Brownie was right where I left him, finning consistently in a small, calm, backwater eddy. I climbed up higher on the bank to get a bird's eye view of his size and his travels and began to formulate a plan.

Anticipating our reunion led me to do some research on porpoising trout. During our previous engagement my adult caddis presentation ended in failure, even though there were lots of them flying around and on the water surface. What I didn't know then was that porpoising trout rarely look up as they gracefully break surface while sucking in rising emergers. So to prepare myself this time, I tied a few caddis pupa patterns. There must have been an abundance of emergers because the trout was very predictable in the direction of his feeding pattern. He would swim/porpoise downstream hugging the bank for about fifteen feet, turn and swim/porpoise upstream, outlining a well-defined oval.

I thought about a few options for presenting the pupa pattern. One approach could be downstream and across with an attempt to bring the fly directly in front of the trout in his feeding zone as he swam up river. Another approach could be an upstream cast hugging the bank and timing a "lift" just in front of him as he swam down river. I learned from my previous failure with the adult caddis that presenting the fly at the fish's feeding level was going to be critical for success. I could also try an indicator or dry dropper combo with the pupa pattern dangling at what I thought was the fish's feeding level. This approach seemed the least stealthy because of the splash from the indicator or dry dropper combo, so I ruled it out. I also thought about greasing my leader up to a defined length from the fly that would allow the ungreased portion of the tippet to sink and present the fly at the correct depth. The floating portion of the leader would also act as a very sensitive strike indicator. Whatever approach I'd use had to avoid the very real possibility of hooking an overhanging tree and spooking the fish. I very slowly and carefully got into the water and tried both the downstream and upstream approaches, successfully avoiding spooking the fish but failing to hook him (considering my position and the terrain, I thought the greased leader approach was a bit too difficult to prepare). I'm not sure why the pupa pattern struck out? Maybe it was altogether the wrong pattern or maybe it was just poor presentation on my part? Whatever the reason, the situation called for something different.

I decided that my 9 foot 5X tippet was OK but I changed my fly to a caddis Klinkhammer pattern. I'd successfully used the Klinkhammer in a variety of sizes and colors to imitate a number of different bugs on the Lehigh. The pattern is a poly wing post/parachute dry fly designed to allow the thorax to hang down through the surface film imitating an emerger. It's been around since the 1980s, but "recently" Partridge of Redditch developed a Klinkhammer X-treme (15BNX) version of the hook that allows the thorax to get even deeper through the surface film and provide better fish visibility. At a downstream position from the fish, I made an upstream, bank hugging presentation and waited for the trout to swim the downriver leg of his route. If I timed it correctly, I could present the 'hammer' just in front of him as he porpoised toward me. My first two casts were off the mark, poorly timed, and ignored. But I was allowed a third cast and the 18 ½ inch Brownie was hooked. I felt the thrill of victory when I brought him to the net but also a strange feeling of compassion for disrupting his solitude. It was a great day to be on the river!



A fly fisherman lands a great trout at Lunkerfest2016

# Memories, and Advocacy: What does the Lehigh River mean to you?

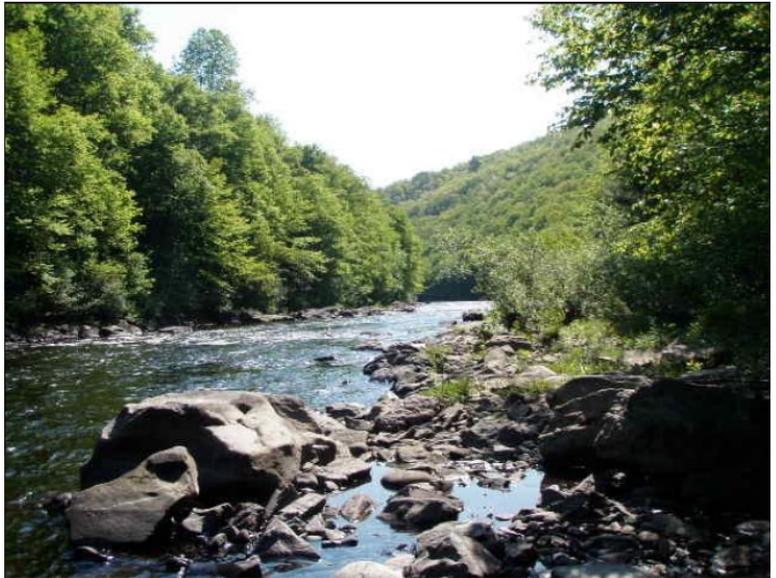
The L.R.S.A. plans to reach out to all of our members in 2017 and ask for your help. In particular, we are asking that you to advocate for the Lehigh and our organization this year. With that in mind, I am trying to find the common ground that we all share so I can make a personal appeal to each of you. The river means a great deal to us because it's a beautiful place and it is exciting to fish. But the Lehigh has more significance than that, and I even find it difficult to answer my own question. Any attempt to describe my feelings about the river and what it means to me, conjures up many thoughts and personal memories that are hard to quickly describe.

I grew up fishing the Lehigh and started fly fishing this water when I was eleven. By the time I graduated from high school, I found myself transitioning from spin fishing to fly fishing. At that point, I had learned to fish with flies well enough to really enjoy myself and I found it pretty exciting to wait for a good evening hatch. I spent many a humid summer evening in my leaky boots waiting for trout to rise. I would frequently pass the time sitting on a rock listening to cicadas and swallows, and all of the loud fishy noises that the river makes. Occasionally, this opus would be interrupted by a train rumbling along the nearby railroad tracks. Looking back, I don't know why I bothered to wear the dry-rotted boots. I think that as a 17 year-old, wearing them made me feel more like a grown-up trout fisherman. The sucking and pumping noises my feet made in the boots made me sound like a washing machine trying to find its way home in the dark.

My preferred sloshing route was along the railroad bed below Hayes creek. After fishing, my father and I would meet near a spring that trickled down a rock wall near the railroad tracks. We would then compare fishing notes as we walked back to the car together. He frequently remarked that he could hear me coming a mile away in my noisy hip boots.

I learned to fish the Lehigh with a hand-me-down 7 ½ foot Browning Silaflex rod and Pflueger reel that my uncle gave me. The reel was fitted-out with a floating 6 weight line that doubled as a sinking line. And, also as an intermediate line. I think that my uncle may have even used it as a clothesline for a while before entrusting it to me. By nature, it tried to be an intermediate, as it was well used and always wanted desperately to sink. It typically preferred to hang out just a few inches under the surface. (Maybe it was a sinking line, and my uncle was playing a joke on me: secretly thinking that it was funny to watch me try to make that thing float!) I would eagerly grease it with Cortland fly-line dressing whenever the trout started to jump and tip the spear with a size 14 grey caddis; which was my answer to everything.

Early in the season, I would weight "old trusty" with twist-on sinkers, so I could get my muddlers and hares' ears down deep enough for serious consideration. In retrospect, this was actually a pretty versatile system. It also produced many a leader-shattering strike from emerger-seeking trout as my line, unknown to me, would frequently sink while I fished after dark. It would take my caddis down with it and often tail-out over trout that were feeding just under the surface.



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The summer after high school graduation was the last that I would spend in Pennsylvania for almost 30 years. I enlisted in the Air Force earlier that year and arranged things so that I would start basic training about the same time my friends left for college in the fall. A lot went through my mind that summer as I shared my time with the Lehigh River trout. I frequently pondered deep subjects including, what it would be like to live away, the girl that lived up the street, friends I might lose touch with, and also whether or not I might ever put my spinning rod and rooster-tails away for good.

After I left Pennsylvania, I made it a point to visit my family during the prime fly hatches; so I could try to get my fill of the Lehigh before heading back to wherever I happened to be stationed. That vacation strategy came to an end when the Air Force assigned me to Eielson AFB, Alaska! Even with all of the once in a life-time fishing adventures that one experiences in Alaska, the Lehigh was always in my mind. I would compare the Alaskan streams that I fished to it and eventually judge all water as either as pretty or almost as pretty as the Lehigh. I even found some waters that were prettier, but you never forget your first love. My time in Alaska quickly came to an end and I was destined to live in places that would continually place me further and further from the fishing that I longed for. But, there was always the Lehigh, and I resumed my seasonal visits to fish here whenever I could manage it. In the years that I lived away, I always dreamt of living close to the river and catching up for lost time. And possibly, giving something back to my home waters. Now fate or circumstance has given me the opportunity to do that.

The appeal! According to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, in 2016 there were 4,676 licensed anglers in Carbon County and 12,239 licensed anglers in Lehigh County. In contrast, L.R.S.A. membership peaked at 782 in 2016. We are seeing an exponential increase in angling activity on the Lehigh and I am making a personal appeal to each of you to help us increase support for this tremendous river. I firmly believe that without more membership support and the funding that it provides, we can expect that the quality of our fishery will decline. Angling interest in the Lehigh and fish prices are both on the rise. Our concern is that L.R.S.A. membership participation and funding for the stocking program are not keeping pace with angling activity.

Taking care of the Lehigh and realizing the potential of this river is no small task. It takes a community of dedicated anglers working as a



team to create and maintain a great fishery. I mention this because the river faces formidable challenges. Not the least of which is increased angling pressure. We need to think of new ways to entice everyone who uses the Lehigh to support it. I suppose that is the common ground we all share. We are asking you to talk to non-members who are enjoying the Lehigh to help them understand the value that their contribution will bring to both them and the river. We also welcome your ideas on this matter and encourage you to share your thoughts with us on our website, Facebook, and at our monthly meetings.

Steve Chuckra

Forest scene on the Lehigh (Pennsylvania) (circa 1832): aquatint by [Karl Bodmer](#) from "*Maximilian Prince of Wied's Travels in the Interior of North America, during the years 1832-1834*"



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# Lehigh River Fly Fishing Journal - by Tom Gyory

The holidays are over and I hope everyone received some gifts for fishing. My family gave me a few things for my upcoming fishing trip to Patagonia, Chile in February - a new Temple Fork Outfitter travel bag, some flies, and leaders. This should be a trip of a lifetime. It all Kuebler retired from art teaching and wanted to pursue some of the best trout fishing in the world. I asked who was going with him. He said he was going alone. So, I said I would board member Vince Spaits and he joined

Chile is a South American country that stretches over 2400 miles on the western border of the continent. Patagonia is the most section of Chile and is located close to the southern-Antarctic circle and is defined by a rugged mountainous coastline of fjords, islands and temperate rain forests much like the inside of Southeast Alaska. As you travel east, the climate becomes drier with conditions much like the state of Montana. One of the advantages of traveling to South America in February is that it will be summer time with comfortable temperatures reaching the low 80's

Trout and Salmon were not native to South America and were introduced into the pristine rivers by European and American settlers in the early 1900's. Brown and rainbow trout are the most abundant species with some brook trout and salmon also found in a few remote locations. The flies that we will use to seduce these big trout are terrestrials, mostly grasshopper patterns size 10 with colorful names like Double Dutch Bug, Rainy's Hopper Grande, Pool Toy and Foamulator. Other useful fly patterns are dragon flies, streamers and mouse patterns. As you can see from the size of the flies, these aggressive trout will be attacking large top water patterns that imitate their most common food sources. In fact the name of the lodge we will be staying at is El Saltamontes meaning The Grasshopper in Spanish. Excellent travel arrangements have been made by The Fly Shop in Redding California. I recommend them.



came about last year when LRSA member Mark ed to fulfill a lifelong dream of going to Patagonia the world. I asked who was going with him. He love to go along. We mentioned the trip to LRSA the expedition.

stretches over 2400 miles on the western border of most section of Chile and is located close to the mountainous coastline of fjords, islands and temperate rain forests much like the inside of Southeast Alaska. As you travel east, the climate becomes drier with conditions much like the state of Montana. One of the advantages of traveling to South America in February is that it will be summer time with comfortable temperatures reaching the low 80's

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I'm excited to go fishing in such an exotic place with good friends who appreciate

fly fishing as much as I do. It will be a nice respite from the cold northern winter weather and it will help keep up my fly fishing skills for the Lehigh River in the spring.

See you on the Lehigh.

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# Sponsorship Renewal Message

Please remember, Your 2016 LRSA membership HAS EXPIRED! In order to receive 2017 stocking info, you MUST be renewed by March 1st so as to be on mailing list for March newsletter with stocking info. Thank you in advance. — The LRSA team



## Lunkerfest 2017 Lehigh River Stocking Association

**What:** 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Trout Fishing Contest for Great Prizes.  
**More Fish, Kids Fishing Pond, Extended Stocking Area**

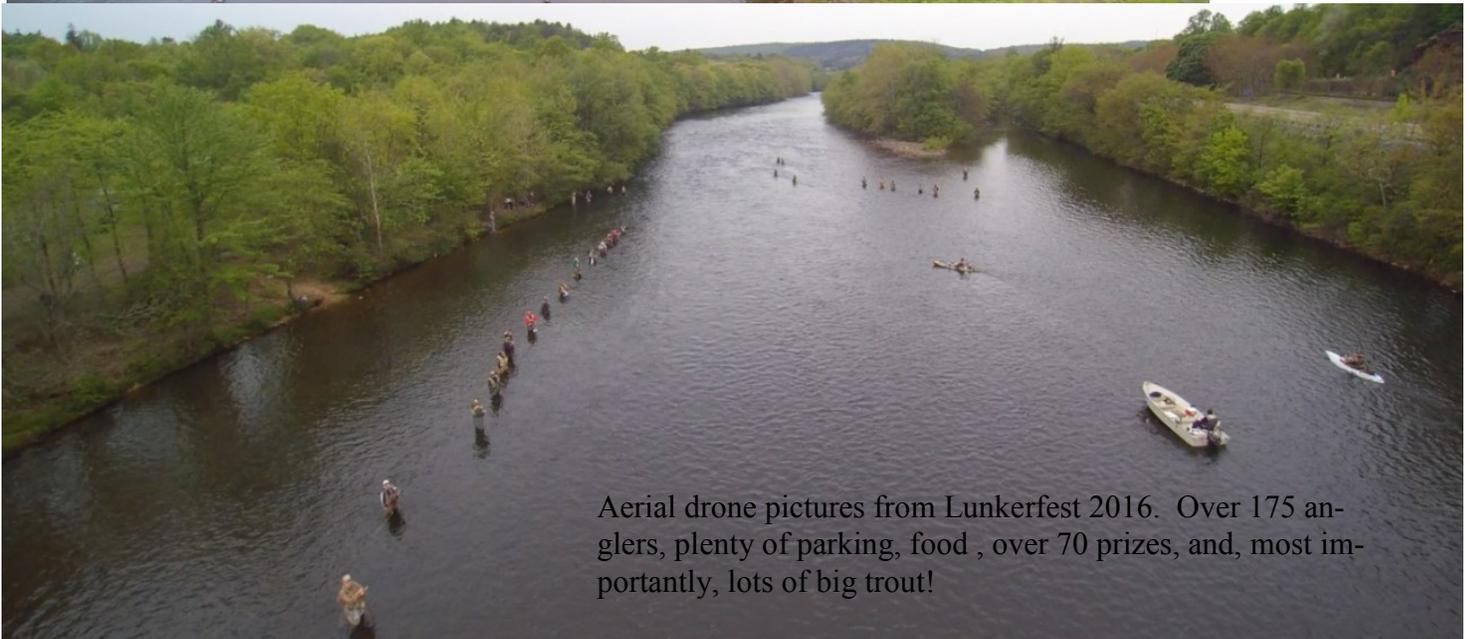
**When:** Saturday May 13, 2017, (high water date May20, 2016) |  
Sign up starting at 7:00 am  
Fishing from 8:30am-3:00pm

**Where:** Lehigh River, East Penn Boat Launch, Bowmanstown, PA  
**Fee:** Nonmember Adults and Youths \$25, (\$20 Members), Kids under 12 free

**Details:** The LRSA will stock about 500 14" to 28" trout with 12 or more 20"+ (more than ever before). Ten 26" trout will be stocked for this event! Lunkerfest contest runs 0.9 miles from the confluence of the Lehigh River and Lizard Creek to the first island below the East Penn Boat Ramp. This extended stocking area enables anglers to spread out with a range of river conditions to fish. A kid's pond stocked with trout for kids 12 and under will



The 2016 Lunkerfest winner Craig Mangold with his 28.3" rainbow.



Aerial drone pictures from Lunkerfest 2016. Over 175 anglers, plenty of parking, food, over 70 prizes, and, most importantly, lots of big trout!

# December Trophy Trout



Thanks to Willie from Willie Marx's Bait and Tackle in Cementon for snapping this photo in his shop last month. Jeff Clock from Cementon hooked into this beautiful 23" brown trout below the falls in December 2016. He was wading out from shore and fishing in the wash below the dam with a 4" sinking Rapala lure. Jeff plans to have this trophy mounted. I would say that fish is most defiantly one of the fine browns LRSA has contributed to the mighty Lehigh trout fishery! My only comment would be lose the gloves.

Also thanks to Willy in his help promoting the Lehigh trout fishery by helping sell sponsorships from his shop. We appreciate support from all the area bait and tackle shops and Willy's is setting a great example! Thanks!

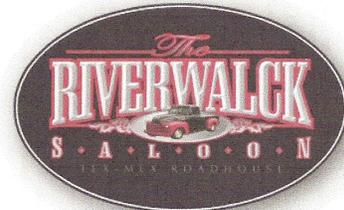


LRSA stocking below the Cementon Dam in April 2016, and a brownie above slips into the mighty Lehigh



Lunkerfest angler lands a trout in the muskie pool

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**Fishing Poetry****Watching Her Fly Fish** by Tom Mallouk

Imagine the tightening loop of the fly line.

She's so intent

she cannot possibly know you  
are watching.

You admire the way the line glides in the surface foam  
and the quick flash  
of spray on the arch and recline of roll cast –  
back and forth,

the tension as the rod loads and rolls forward,  
the line stiffens  
and the fly leaps on a puff of breeze,  
alights, floats,

looks down into the gleam to see the trout's mouth agape.  
The fly anticipates  
a kind of death. Hook set, line hums, violent thrashing as  
the fish comes

to net. She palms it in the surface foam, head into the current  
and caresses its filmy  
flanks, its silken length, calms the pulsing gills  
and lets go.

Tom Mallouk's poetry has appeared in *The GW Review*,  
*Pisgah Review*, *U.S. 1 Worksheets*, and *The Schuylkill Valley Journal*. His chapbook, *Nantucket Revisited*, was published  
in May 2013. This poem first appeared in *Freshet*. A psycho-  
therapist by vocation, Tom says his favorite dry fly is the elk  
wing caddis and he loves fishing.

**Jim Deebel, at right, provides instruction to captivated high school students at the LRSA / Lehigh University Summer Science Institute program. Jim was describing the macroinvertebrates found while collecting in the Nesquehoning Creek. The work was to show the impairment to the health of the insect life caused by the abandoned mine drainage from the adjacent Lausanne Tunnel and the environmental engineering work underway to reduce the damage. Note that the bugs are great in Nesquehoning creek (including crawfish!) but are trashed below the Lausanne tunnel discharge due to the iron (yellowboy) that coats the rocks.**

## A (True) FISHING STORY

### - By Jim Deebel

Many years ago my dad took me fishing down to the small brook trout stream below our barn. I still recall digging for the manure worms by the pigpen. The tackle was very rudimentary—a sapling cut in the woods was my fishing rod, a piece of cord string was my fishing line, and the catgut snelled hook (no eye) was my leader. My bait was the lively “garden hackle” that we had picked earlier. The worm was carefully threaded onto the hook. I crept over to the edge of the stream and dunked my baited hook into what seemed like a mighty river. I immediately got a strike and hauled out a huge beautiful fish. The color seemed to represent all the colors of the rainbow. My dad measured it and said “it’s too small, we have to let it go”. I was crestfallen that my huge fish had to be released.

It’s funny how the perception of a little boy is so different from an adult—in those days the size limit for my native American brook trout was 6 inches. That “river” where I caught that trophy trout I can now step over without getting my shoe soles wet, but that initial fishing excursion caused a lifelong passion (some would say obsession) that has translated into fishing all over the United States, and many other countries. Now I find some of the best fishing for me is tiny dry fly fishing on the Lehigh river. I find this challenge surpasses many of my excursions to more famous destinations.

Now for a corollary to the preceding anecdote let’s fast forward about 20 years to the dark waters of Bradys Lake in the Poconos. Now we see that same little boy as a father with his very young son on a rowboat with oars but no motor. As I rowed the boat along while trolling a rapala plug for my son I said “This a good spot because there is an underwater pier that fish like to hang around”. I no sooner said that when I struck the pier with the boat. At the same instant he said “I got one on”. He was using a Zebco spincast reel with virtually no drag, but after many exciting moments we netted the muskellunge that he had caught. I measured his fish and declared something to the effect of “It’s too small we have to let it go”. The musky measured 29 ½ inches but at that time the minimum size was 30 inches. How is it possible for history to repeat itself like that? Magic moments like that keep fishing exciting for me!



**LEHIGH RIVER STOCKING ASSOCIATION**

**LRSA**

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A Non-Profit Organization  
Dedicated to the Restoration and  
Revitalization of the Lehigh River  
Trout Fishery.

Sponsors and interested people are wel-  
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last Tuesday of every month at Sliders  
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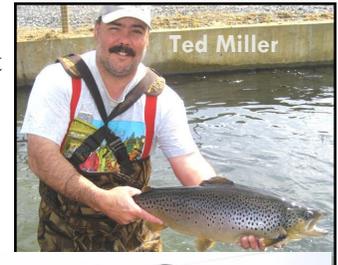
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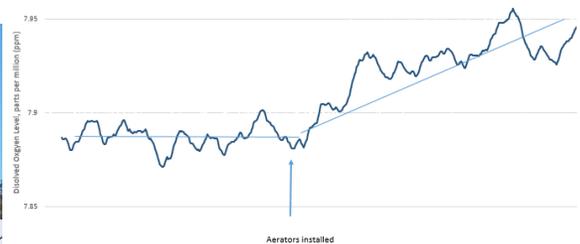
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Tough job but someone needs to do it—thanks LRSA sponsors who help us stock!



This year the LRSA provided the manpower and Lehigh Valley Sierra Club provided the \$9,000 funding for the installation of a solar powered aerator system at the Lausanne Tunnel passive wetland treatment system in Jim Thorpe. This system relies on oxidation of ferrous iron, which stays in solution, to ferric iron, which precipitates out into the wetland thereby trapping it before it can flow into the Lehigh River. The new system provides free 200 watts of power for two aerators that will operate each day during daylight hours.



The graph above is the dissolved oxygen in the wetland. You can see the oxygen levels sharply increased when the aerator was activated! This means more iron kept out of the river!

From left : Tom Gyory, Steve Chuckra, Jim Deebel, Matt MacConnell, Chuck Morgenstern, Brian Tartar and Greg Gliwa