



Lehigh River Watch

Winter 2019

LRSA Stocking Total
Since 1991: 367,600

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Co-Op News: In November, the LRSA obtained floats for a dock expansion of the Gyory Co-Op Nursery. The expansion is needed to support an additional fish cage that will be fabricated from the aluminum we purchased earlier this fall. The Co-Op expansion will enable the LRSA to stock an additional 1,000 trout annually: at a cost of approximately \$2 per fish. We plan to complete this project in the spring.

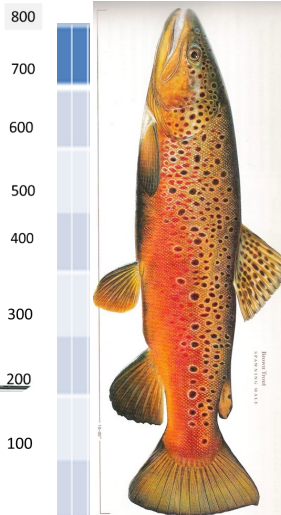
We are concerned about the future of our state sponsored Co-Op program. It is uncertain at this point whether the PAFBC will continue to provide trout fingerlings to Co-Ops. Scott Christman, the Waterways Conservation Officer for Carbon County told us that budget shortfalls may prevent the state from providing us with fingerlings: unless a measure is passed that provides the PAFBC with adequate funding to continue this program. The LRSA can potentially raise trout fry by incubating eggs purchased from certified hatcheries. We are not planning to do this at this time, but we have discussed the idea of raising our own trout as a contingency plan in the event the PAFBC discontinues support for Co-Op programs.

Stocking: WCO Christman told us that the PAFBC will stock the Lehigh from Glen Onoko to Jim Thorpe again this spring. He said that this section is now regulated as stocked trout water and open to fishing all year. Last summer, PAFBC was not certain they would stock this area in 2019.

Water Quality Probe: The LRSA water quality probe stopped broadcasting in October due to failed batteries. We typically retrieve the probe in the fall, but historically high water conditions have made it impossible for us to safely remove the probe from the Lehigh.

2019 Membership Total: 190

**2018 Member
Total: 576**



Matt MacConnell provided this photo of the LRSA water quality probe earlier this month. We are hoping to eventually recover this piece of equipment along with our modem and broadcast antenna!

Fly-Fish or Spin? - Steve Chuckra

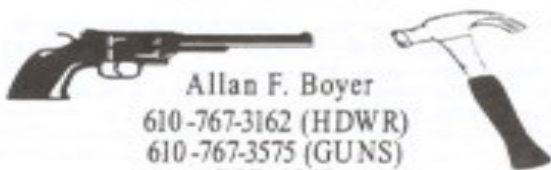
Happy 2019! Wow, I can't believe that it's already January. As a New Year's resolution, I recently cleaned and organized my basement. And, I happened to come across a box of old spinners. That box was one of my most prized possessions as a kid. It was packed full of CP Swings, Rooster Tails, Panther Martins, and a Killer or two. I hadn't opened the box in years, so I inspected it to ensure the contents were still in good order and relived some nice fishing memories.

Most of the hooks in my spinner box were rust-free, but a few of the lures were tarnished and needed a good steel wool polishing. As a teen, I enjoyed fishing with Rooster Tails and small spoons before I eventually adopted fly-fishing as a preferred way to spend time on rivers and streams; however, I really enjoyed fishing with those lures and a six-foot ABU Garcia spinning rod during my high school years. I remembered the feel of that rod and how the blades on my spinners made the rod blank resonate as they dimly flickered their way through our local tannin stained streams. Entice a current enhanced strike, accompanied by a big yellow flash and you created a perfect moment! I would really miss those moments after I left PA for the Air Force 33 years ago.

However, a few years later I would find myself living in Alaska and later California. I developed a preference for fly-fishing while I lived in Alaska and enjoyed fishing for small rainbows and grayling in Munson's Slough, right across the highway from Eielson AFB. There was also a lake about an hour's drive from base that teemed with "big" spawning rainbows each spring, just after the ice melted away from the shoreline. They were really fun to catch with a flyrod! In the winter, I would tie boxes of big Hendrickson nymphs just for that occasion. Fishing opportunities would eventually become a lot scarcer after I was reassigned to an Air Force satellite control facility in the middle of Silicon Valley. Lucky for me, there was good fishing to be had a mere 4 to 7-hour drive from my apartment in Sunnyvale!

(Continued next page).

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LRSA Members: Did you know that you can help the LRSA stock the river by shopping? If you shop on Amazon, please use [smile.amazon.com](https://www.smile.amazon.com) and designate the LRSA as your charity of choice. Amazon will then donate a portion of their profits to our non-profit organization at no additional cost to you. LRSA uses the extra funding to purchase fish for our annual stocking program.



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After living in California for nearly three-and-a-half years, I eventually discovered the West Walker River on the eastern side of the Sierras. I made quite a few trips over the Sonora Pass to fish that river: enduring heavy California traffic most of the time and swearing never to return after getting caught in numerous traffic jams. California traffic jams can easily turn a 4 hour drive in to an eight-hour test of your character.

One fall weekend I convinced a colleague named Bob to try out fly-fishing. I told him we'd be going to the West Walker and I brought my old ABU Garcia along in the event he got tired of fishing with flies. The West Walker is a lot like the Little Lehigh before it meets the Tobyhanna above the Walter Dam: same size, bottom, color, etc. The only notable difference is that the West Walker is surrounded by high sierra scrub and very few trees. California Highway 395 doesn't add much to the charm of the place, but it is easy to get away from and the river is pretty spiffy otherwise, and loaded with stocked trout.

My friend Bob eventually decided to try the spinning rod and diligently plied the waters of the West Walker with good success. During a lunch break, I picked up my estranged ABU Garcia and plunked a small Panther Martin down into an irresistible pool with a big log at the bottom. The rod bent slightly from the current when I poked my index finger in front of the unwinding line at the reel face. I stopped the descent of the spinner just in front of the log and quickly closed my bail; the spinner immediately started flashing and chugged its way back to me as I slowly reeled it in. Flash! I gave the trout a whack and hauled him towards me as he jumped and spun his way to my feet. It was a California rainbow, provided courtesy of a local state hatchery; and much appreciated after many Air Force imposed fishing hiatuses.



Some of the spinners from my box. Most of them are instantly recognizable. The Killer is located third from the left in the bottom of this picture.

I enjoyed everything about the encounter up until I started retrieving the fish. I found that I didn't care for the feel of the shorter rod or cranking in a trout with a spinning reel anymore. However, I decided to repeat the process. I quickly found myself about 40 yards upstream from the 395 bridge. (Not a bad place to be if you are ever in that area: downstream from the bridge is even better!) I indexed the line with my finger, opened the bail, and with a slight wave of my arm and roll of the wrist, I loaded the rod to full tolerance; and let the Panther Martin fly at the bridge. The spinner hit the side of the bridge with a ping and fell into the waiting current. I let it sink a few feet before stopping the line again with my trigger finger. As it was, there was a trout under the bridge: no doubt a close relation to the one I'd just caught. He wasn't fooling around and took my lure just after I felt some resistance from the spinner blades turning in the water. I squeezed the line a little tighter with my finger and gave it the hook, then quickly closed the bail so I could retrieve the fish.

Catching the second rainbow was pretty much like the first one. I liked the feeling of the take and setting the hook, but I felt a lot was missing. I missed all of the aesthetics and sensory nuances that I enjoy with a flyrod. Even though it was kind of fun fishing with my old ABU Garcia, I handed the spinning rod back to Bob and took up my fly-wand again. That was in 1996 and it was the last time I spin-fished for trout except for a guided steelhead trip to New York a few years ago.

I'm still tuning up those old spinners and I look forward to remembering more adventures as I do it. Will I fish with them again this spring? Probably not. My fishing tastes lean too heavily towards fly-fishing these days, but I'm sure glad I still have that box of spinners and all of the nice memories I created with it.

- Steve Chuckra



Lehigh River Fly Fishing Journal

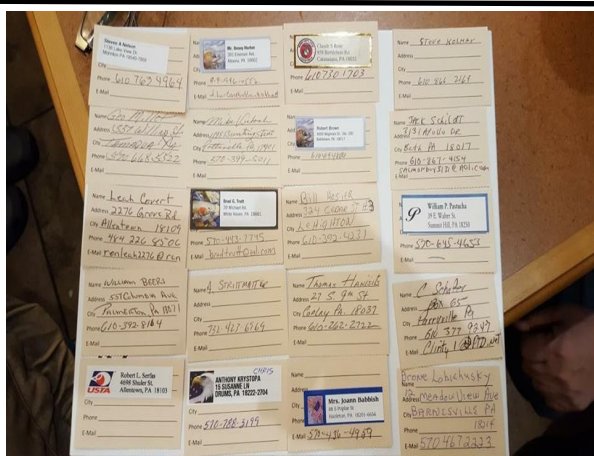
January 2019

By Tom Gyory

Another Rain storm has flooded the Lehigh River here in late December. The water levels currently are very high 2,800cf/s in Lehigh, PA. Normal wading fishing levels are under 1,000cf/s. Some adventurous LRSA members venture out even in high water as evidenced by the pictures of some nice trout being posted on our Facebook page. The one positive thing about the rain is that the temperatures are staying above freezing, making fishing tolerable. There is a good website to check out fishing maps, access points, boat ramps, dam release schedules, water level gauges, safe wading charts, fly hatch charts all gathered together in one convenient place called DYI (Do it Yourself) Fly Fishing by Ken Sperry. The Lehigh River is one of the rivers on the site.

Winter is a good time to head south for some extra fishing opportunities, if you are able. My wife Maureen and LRSA Board member Vince Spait planned a surprise trip for me to New Orleans, LA for Red Fish in March. I have fished for these elusive inland marsh dwellers in Florida before without success. Fly fishing for red fish requires accurate casting and ability to reach distances longer than for trout fishing but the technique is similar. Cast beyond the feeding fish and strip quickly past the predator for an aggressive strike. The red fish cruise the shallow marshes looking for crustaceans and minnows, sometimes putting their tails up above the water while nosing in the mud. Sight fishing for these bulls is the way to go and it is why it is called "hunting" for red fish. Flat bottom boats with raised platforms are the preferred set up for these fish. This enables good viewing and unrestricted casting while quietly poling in close to the reds. Polarized glasses are a must to spot the red fish. Shown are several of the common crustacean and minnow imitation flies that are used to catch red fish.

(Continued next page)



LRSA Raffle Winners

November raffle winners are displayed in the photo to the left. All winners have received their prizes. Drawing order runs from top left to bottom right. Thank you very much for your support!

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(Continued from previous page.)



Flat bottoming for Red Fish in the Mississippi Delta.

After this trip in March it will be time to turn our attention to trout fishing in the Lehigh. I'm looking forward to stocking the river with the nice coop nursery fish we are raising. Another benefit to the high water we have received this year is that the fish grow very well. We are stocking 3,000 coop nursery trout to supplement the 8,000 purchased trout. It should be a very good year for trout fishing on the Lehigh.....if the rain ever ends.

See you on the Lehigh! And don't forget to sign a friend or family member up to the LRSA.



- Tom Gyory

*Casting for Bass in Maine**By Brett Peruzzi*

*The water is bottle green,
clear as the Caribbean.
We can see the boulder-strewn bottom
fifteen feet down.
I paddle the canoe
into position offshore
in front of a red maple
that hangs into the water
a cool shadow
for the bass to lurk in.
An old fallen tree
is splayed across the lake bottom
right at the dropoff
where the water plunges
from two to ten feet.
A bassy looking spot.
I cast my plastic salamander
beneath the branches of the maple
where a few leaves
are already turning red.
A fish nails it
on the first throw
and I reel in
a feisty smallmouth
his sage-colored scales
flashing in the sunlight
as he tries to dive under the canoe.
I land him and toss him back,
continue to cast.*

*A few throws later
in the same spot
I bring in a slightly bigger largemouth.
I joke with my sister
about trying for a hat trick
from that honey hole
and then hook a third bass
from the same spot,
but halfway to the canoe
he leaps clear of the water
and spits the hook.
My sister, who's been
throwing a plastic worm,
swaps it for a plastic salamander
and soon lands her first fish of the day.
I take a photo of her
holding the bass and smiling,
at the same time thinking
what it will not capture:
the far off cry of that loon,
the canoe's gentle rocking
in the warm breeze,
the sharp smell of fish
on my hands
as I press the shutter.*



Brett Peruzzi lives in Framingham, Massachusetts. This poem was originally published in *Two Hawks Quarterly*. His poems have also appeared in *Boston Poetry Magazine*, *Muse Apprentice Guild*, *Gloom Cupboard*, *The 5-2: Crime Poetry Weekly*, *Modern Haiku*, *Sahara*, *Pine Island Journal of New England Poetry*, and many other publications. He spends countless hours from spring to fall pursuing bass and trout in the lakes, rivers, and ponds of New England.



Environmental Update

Plastic World Recycling is currently under investigation by the Pennsylvania State Attorney General, Environmental Crimes Division. According to Scott Christman (Waterways Conservation Officer for Carbon County) this investigation will most likely take several months because it involves several different agencies.

WCO Christman also pointed out that the owners of the property on the east side of the Lehigh River in Palmerton will most likely gate the land near the Palmerton Cove to discourage illegal dumping in that area. WCO Christman also told us that there has been an noticeable increase in illegal dumping up and down the Lehigh River.

If you witness someone dumping, please contact the WCO responsible for that area. You can also notify an LRSA board officer and we will notify the WCO responsible for the affected location. Board officer contact information is located on the last page of this newsletter.

Want to know: by John Bondura

With the arrival of autumn in Pennsylvania our brook and brown trout will begin to spawn as stream temperatures drop, the male fish will become brightly colored and some will develop a hooked jaw called a KYPE. The female trout constructs a shallow nest in the stream bottom by sweeping the pebbles aside so she can deposit her eggs. After doing this, the male trout fertilizes the eggs, and the female trout returns to cover the eggs with the rocks and pebbles she brushed away to provide the eggs protection against predators; and the current.

Do you know the name of her nest?

A- Cribb

B- Redd

C- Water Nest

D- Aquatic



(Answer on page 8 following LRSA Overview.)

LRSA Overview: Steve Chuckra

The LRSA started our 27th membership season in October. To date we have 186 members who are current for the 2019 stocking season.

January is a great time to renew your LRSA membership. Early membership renewals help us to pay down the loan that we take out each year to purchase our trout order.

The LRSA has expanded the range of merchandise that we offer on our website. By the time this letter is published, we will be offering breathable performance shirts and gators on-line. The new shirts feature a handsome brown trout on the back and a map of the Lehigh on the sleeve. Additionally, we will offer flies specifically designed for Lehigh River anglers.

We are excited about the new merchandise and hope that you will like and enjoy these additions. We may need to initially backorder some of the flies and lures based on inventory levels and supplier constraints. If those issues occur, they will be short-lived as we move down that learning-curve and improve our customer delivery processes to minimize future delays.

Our new flies are being tied by George Maciag and the Lehigh River Selection includes 3 of the following fly patterns: BH Pheasant Tail Nymphs, BH Prince Nymphs, CDC Caddis Pupa, Peacock Stoneflies, Mud-dler Minnows, Black & Green Wooly Buggers, George's Killers, Parachute Adams, Sulphur Com-paraduns, Tan Elk Hair Caddises, and Hendricksons.

All flies are size appropriate for the Lehigh, and based on your purchasing preferences; we may offer boxes that only contain specific types of flies; i.e., dry fly boxes, nymph only boxes, etc.

As always, we appreciate your support and interest in the Lehigh River. You continue to make this river a better place to fish and your contributions are vitally important to the quality of the Lehigh Fishery in Carbon and Lehigh Counties.

On behalf of myself and the LRSA Board, we wish you a very happy new year! We are excited about 2019 and eagerly look forward to seeing you this year. We need your help more-than-ever to support and maintain this great resource which also happens to be a beautiful river!

Sincerely,

Steve Chuckra



(Answer from page 7 is B— Redd)



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Answer: B— Redd

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LRSA

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Email: Lehigh.River.Stocking.Association@gmail.com

The LRSA is a Non-Profit Organization Dedicated to the Restoration and Stocking of the Lehigh River.

Members and the general public are welcome to join us at our meetings—
7pm on the last Tuesday of every month
(except December) at Wegman's Café,
3900 W Tilghman St, Allentown.

www.lrsa.org

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In fond memory of LRSA
Founder, Ted Miller

LRSA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

I want to support the Lehigh River Stocking Association and their efforts to restore and stock the Lehigh River.

Is this a renewal membership? ☐

Name Address

City State Zip Phone

Email Age Email my newsletters ☐ Yes ☐ No

☐ **Basic Membership — \$30** All memberships include badge decals, ID card, and an annual newsletter subscription.

☐ **Silver Membership — \$60** You will receive a LRSA T-Shirt. Size: ☐ Sm ☐ Med ☐ Lrg ☐ XL ☐ XXL ☐ Don't send

☐ **Gold Membership — \$75** You will receive a LRSA Hat ☐ don't send

☐ **Husband and Wife Membership — \$55 or ☐ Family Membership — \$65:** Includes Husband, Wife, and Children < 16.

☐ **Platinum Membership — \$100** You will receive a LRSA Hat and T-Shirt or you will receive an LRSA Sweatshirt.

Circle your preference above and mark your size ☐ SM ☐ Med ☐ Lrg ☐ XL ☐ XXL ☐ Don't send

☐ **Life Membership — \$300** You will not need to ever renew your LRSA Membership and you will receive a Life- Member Pin.

☐ **Conservation Membership — \$75** You will receive a LRSA Hat and \$20 will go to the LRSA Conservation Program ☐ Don't Send

☐ **Diamond Membership — \$500** Amount of membership you would like to direct towards LRSA Conservation Program

Please remit to: Lehigh River Stocking Association, P.O. Box 97 Lehighton, PA 18235

Amount of check or money order enclosed You can also join or renew on our website: www.lrsa.org

Check out our Facebook page! You can also email us at: lehigh.river.stocking.association@gmail.com

Please note: All LRSA Memberships include a newsletter subscription.