

Photo above from Paul Davidson on board Skinner Guide Service

LEHIGH RIVER STOCKING ASSOCIATION

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Issue 56, March 2014

The Lehigh River Report

The Voice of the Lehigh River Stocking Association

LRSA Hooked Up with New Trout Supplier— Big Brown Fish Hatchery in Effort, PA

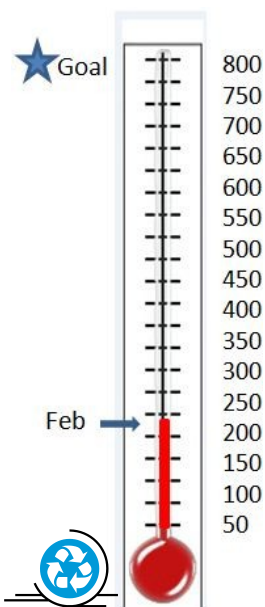
LRSA's Running Total:

Trout Stocked:
333,400

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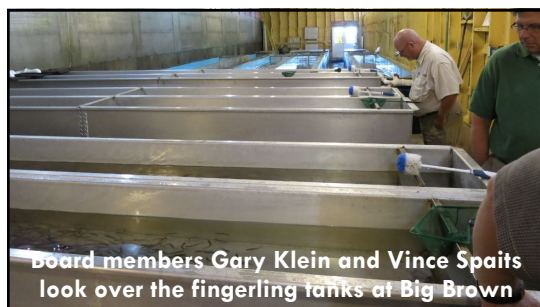
Sponsorship Count,
220 so far in 2014



As reported in the last Lehigh River Report, Birch Creek Fisheries has closed and the LRSA went out for bids to alternate trout hatcheries for the 2014 stocking season. This is a big change for our club because the LRSA has been receiving trout from Birch Creek since our inception in 1991 when Birch Creek Fisheries owner (Ted Miller, deceased in 2008) co-founded the LRSA. However, the LRSA Board is now pleased to announce that Big Brown



Two of the raceways at Big Brown



Board members Gary Klein and Vince Spaits look over the fingerling tanks at Big Brown

Fish Hatchery has been awarded the 2014 trout stocking contract. LRSA Board members traveled to the Big Brown facility in Effort and were impressed with the operation, trout quality and pricing. The owner, Charlie Conklin II, was very accommodating of the LRSA stocking requirements. Big

Brown has been operating since 1971 and the parallel business Paradise Brook Trout Company, also in Effort has been in operation since 1902. One factor in the decision was that Big Brown had provided a 7% discount if the trout were pre-purchased in December 2013. That discount amounted to about a \$2,000 value and for the first time, LRSA has pre-purchased the seasons' fish by taking out a line of credit with our bank (Susquehanna). We purchased the same number of fish that had been stocked the last two seasons. The low interest rate will only cost us about \$40/month over a few months and after fees we expect to save \$1,500. That means more fish for the Lehigh.

Now we are counting on all of you to send in your sponsorship dollars and ticket purchases. Thank you for making your contribution to sustaining the Lehigh River trout fishery—good luck angling this spring! - LRSA Board

Modified Stocking Strategy this Spring—Single Larger Truck rather than Two Smaller Trucks

The change in trout supplier requires a change in the way we have been trucking the fish during stocking events. The Big Brown stocking trucks have twice the capacity as the trucks we have been using traditionally. The LRSA typically split a stocking range and have meeting times and places for each of two trucks. For example, one truck would meet at Northampton and the other would meet at Walnutport to stock the Lehigh County stretch. So this year we will utilize the six tanks

in each of the Big Brown trucks to split the load by releasing fish from 3 of the tanks in the first section and 3 of the tanks in the second. Each truck can hold the full 1,800 lbs of trout we plan to release during the stocking events. Those who like to come out to help stock the river need to be aware of this change because the timing for meeting the truck will change. We will be clear on the start time and location and the stops along the way to help people plan.

Please support LRSA with sponsorship and ticket purchases

"Light at the End of the Tunnel". This photo was taken from a kayak inside the Lausanne Tunnel, built in 1906 to de-water coal mines in the Jim Thorpe area.-MM

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

Jim Thorpe—train station parking lot where the rafts put in (just below the 903 bridge). Or walk up river a bit. Also try **Glen Onoko**—follow 903 over river and stay left into park. Great trout pool a short walk from parking lot or walk or ride bike up into gorge to park bench, Bear Creek trib area is very good.

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

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

Parryville—Pull off 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.

Bowmantown—Fishing is good above or below the Rt 895 bridge. You can park under the bridge. Or drive down to the new boat ramp (south about 1/2 mile, past Lizard Creek, on west side of river), the large pool we call the Musky pool and where we hold Lunkerfest.

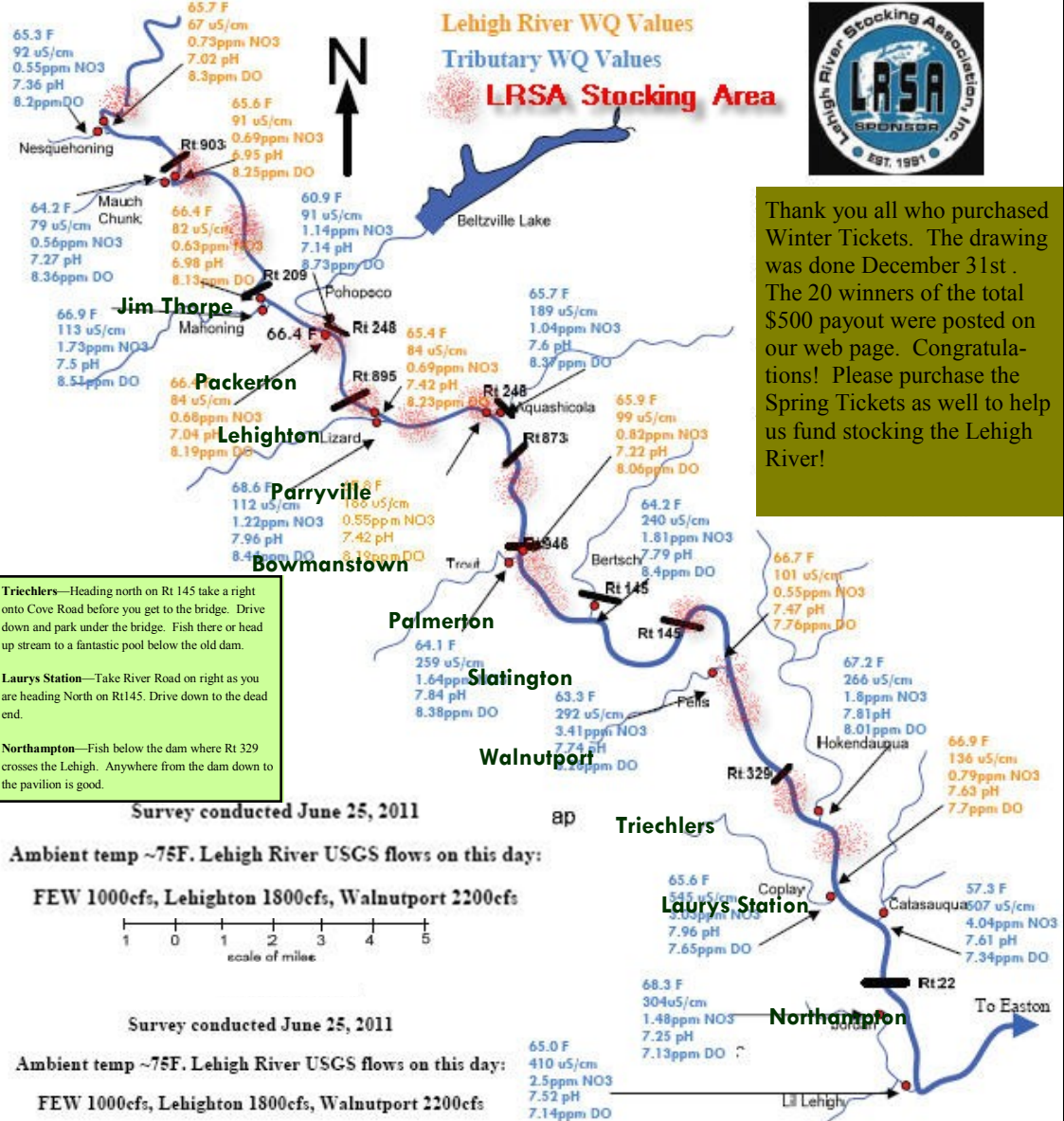
Palmerton—Heading south on 248, take Palmerton exit. Take 2nd dirt road right and head down to the "horseshoe". The river forms a big bend and pool just below a good set of rapids.

Slatington—Heading east on 248 take right over the 873 bridge and on your left you will see Slatington Fabricators. You can find a place to park along the road there and walk back to the river (you will pass the Szokes Bros. building). This spot is just below shale riffles and lots of good fishing pools.

Walnutport—Head into Walnutport and the Canal Park is on the east side of the river just below the Main St bridge. Head down to pavilion (about 1/4 mile down) and walk to river. Canal runs about 1 mile down to Bertsch Creek. Lots of good pools along the way.

Monthly Meeting Location—Now Closer to Allentown/Bethlehem Area Sponsors

Market Café, Wegmans, 3900 West Tilghman St. Allentown. Meeting time from 7:00 to about 9:00 pm the last Tuesday of each month. Everyone is welcome to come visit and get involved!



Thank you all who purchased Winter Tickets. The drawing was done December 31st. The 20 winners of the total \$500 payout were posted on our web page. Congratulations! Please purchase the Spring Tickets as well to help us fund stocking the Lehigh River!



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Spring Stocking Schedule—Lehigh County

Saturday, March 29th—

Truck contains 1,800 lbs of trout (~1,400 fish), 50% brown, 50% rainbow in the 12-15" class. Six tanks on the tank will be used to partition the fish in two halves. First

Half : The truck will start at 10am at the Pavilion on Canal St. in Northampton. Hit several spots in Laurys Station, then Triechlers Bridge



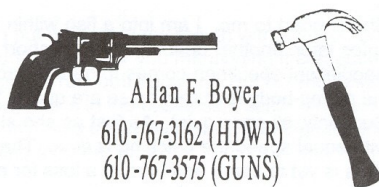
and head up the D&L to finish below fast water at the old dam. Second half: The truck will continue up the D&L on the west side of the river, stock near Trout Creek, across from pillars and across from Bertsch Crk.. Head north on 873 to Slatinton stocking behind Szokes Fabricators then finish at the 873 Bridge boat ramp. The exact stocking points and plan are subject to change as dictated by conditions and



as directed by the LRSA leaders. Also, if the river is exceptionally high such as up in the trees, the LRSA may opt to postpone the stocking event. Please check the website (www.LRSA.org or our facebook page for latest information). Please plan to come out to meet us to assist in spreading the fish out, we do love to see you out there. Pick-up trucks welcome so that folks can get in the back and follow stocking truck and reduce the number of cars. Thank you .—LRSA Board

Spring Stocking cont'd on page 6

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STATUS OF PFBC HELP STOCKING

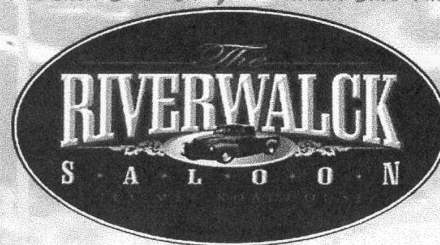
I have been informed by Dave Arnold at PFBC that the study has been completed and is being reviewed before release. We expect it in March. I am told not to get our hopes up. We told Dave LRSA would be happy with any contribution of adult trout period.

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EXPLORE THE LEHIGH

THE ISLANDS AND THE OXBOW

By Vince Spaits

Well, finally the 2014 fishing season is within sight. In spite of still being surrounded by 20 inches of snow and bitter cold nights, in a few short weeks it will be here. The winter has proven to be unfriendly to anyone wanting to hit the river. Very few days provided temps and proper water for a decent outing. Ice flows, snow covered banks and water temps in the 34-36 degree range will keep even the most hard core anglers at home. But, as we know this will soon change and after such a long hard winter cooped up inside spring fever will set in with the first 50 degree sunny day. I hope you are looking forward to a great season on the Lehigh and plan on fishing some new spots this year.

“The fast water on the east side is a well-known riff and where the water of the river meets at the foot of the island is a long deep pull. It fishes well in its entire length.”

The LRSA is also gearing up for a big season and have some really great plans and visions to share with all our sponsors. Stocking dates are getting set and our 3rd annual Lunkerfest promises to be bigger and better than ever. Please check out the website (LRSA.org) and read the newsletter for more information. Also, please help by joining as a sponsor for the coming year. As you know your sponsorship dollars are applied directly to benefit the fishery and the ecology of the Lehigh River. If you can, recruit a friend or family member to join as well. Our goal is 1,000 members and by reaching this goal will provide the LRSA sponsors a memorable season. Your generosity is appreciated. Now on to the fishing.

We have many seasoned Lehigh River anglers within our ranks, however a growing number are also new to fishing the Lehigh. It can be somewhat confusing on where to fish and how to get there, so hope-

ful this article will help you find some new water. The Lehigh is termed a navigable river and you have the right to fish in the water (wading or drifting) and on the bank to the high water mark throughout its length. There is very little private land so access is limited only by your desire to reach water you want to fish. The best way to get to the water is to use the rail trail as your roadway. There are also numerous parking places and access points along its route. As always, be respectful to private land owners, but with so much water there really is no reason to have any troubles at all. When facing downstream in the river, the west bank will be on your right (river right) and the east bank will be left (river left).

How to get to the Islands and Oxbow Section:

The section we will discuss in this article begins downstream from the East Penn Boat Ramp in Bowmanstown and runs downstream to the 873 bridge in Slatington. It covers approx. 2.25 miles of river and has a highly variable selection of water to fish.

To get there head north or south on Rt.248 take the Bowmanstown exit and cross the river. Turn left on to River Road and follow it south until the last parking area before the hard right bend in the road. You will pass by the boat ramp and the Muskie Pool (the site of the Lunkerfest). This will put you at the first big island and on the better side of the river. You can work downstream using the rail trail. This will get you into the upper section of this run.

The Oxbow can best be fished from exiting rt. 248 at Palmerton and using the rock road on the right to park and walk a short distance to the river. Once there you will notice the “bay” or oxbow in the river. It is fairly easy to get around in this location

The lower section is best accessed by crossing the Slatington Bridge and following 873 until you see the hard left turn for the Nature Center. The road leads back under the bridge. Here you will find a boat launch and plenty of parking or drive further up to the Nature Center to park. Use the rail trail to fish upstream from here. I must tell you, the bank leading to the river off the rail trail can be steep and somewhat difficult.

Carefully pick your water and then find the easiest route down and you will be ok.

THE WATER

The first island after the Muskie Pool has previously been discussed in the last newsletter. What needs to be mentioned here is the foot of the island is a real hot spot. The fast water on the east side is a well-known riff and where the water of the river meets at the foot of the island is a long deep pull. It fishes well in its entire length. Wading the east bank is most productive and drifting in a boat or raft can be spectacular. After about ¼ mile the river widens and shallows leading the next 2 islands.

Island 2 and 3 split the river in three branches for a brief time. The second island is small and the third the largest. It is known by several names but I have called it Bowman’s Island for many years. At Bowman’s Island it is river left or the east bank where you want to be. Popular with the folks that know this section it is well worth the effort to get there. There is a fast rapid that is deep and has a rocky bottom. There are several large eddies and reverses and a ton of fish feeding stations. I have caught trout each time I have visited this location several of notable length, however most memorable was a drift in late June when I caught smallmouth in the range of 13 to 17 inches. I must have had 15 before I finally moved on to the next hole. It is tempting to try to get to this location by parking on 248. Although I am guilty of this I do not recommend it as crossing the lanes can be downright dangerous. It is a run you can fish for several hours before exhausting all the locations to fish.

Next on the way downstream would be the Oxbow and the 2 small islands at the backside of the Ox. Many people fish the Oxbow for all types of fish. It is big, deep and full of snags.....it is also full of fish especially in the early season. There are few places to fish on the upper side but the lower pool offers more in the way of casting places, more unique water and feels less pressure. Carefully make your way around to the downstream side and you will find some very nice water. A nice eddy starts the

Continued on page 5

section and as the water leaves the Oxbow a ripping run of deep fast water is great trout habitat. If you hook into one of those big Lehigh Rainbows in here hang on....the fish will use the fast current against you and try spooling your reel. If we are having higher water this is not the place to go as the water gets in the trees fast and the current sees a big increase here. Save this for one of those perfect water days and you won't be sorry.

The islands just slightly downriver from the Oxbow offers what I feel is the best water in the entire section. Reach this section on the rail trail by parking near the Nature Center and walking upstream. Again the foot of the island is where to fish as it forms a long deep glide after a beautiful rapid stretch on the west side of the island. You will often see drift boats positioned on the back side of the island. I have caught both numbers and size here as many others have as well. I suspect that a few of those uncaught lunkers from last year's Lunkerfest are calling this section home and are now 2 or 3 inches bigger.....

Downstream another 1/8 mile is the confluence of the Aquashicola creek. Aquashicola means "where we fish with bushnet" in Lenapehoking native language. It is always worth a cast or 2 at any tributary confluence along the Lehigh. Many times they serve as thermal refuge or food supply for our resident trout. The last place to check out on the way down the river is the "wire run". Look overhead and notice the power lines traversing the river. Directly under them is a great place to fish. The river makes a quick turn to the left as it hit a rocky rise in the bottom. In low water it is easy to notice this as the water on the west bank is only inches deep while the water on the east side is deep and fast flowing. This is a great place for wading and fishing the entire run from mid river. The quality water of this run is at least 200 yards long. It is an awesome place to fish mid river, nymphing and an excellent place to practice as the run makes a nice drift with almost every cast.

This entire stretch of river provides nearly every type of water you could want and has places that are easy to get to and others that are rarely fished. There is plenty

of parking and access to the runs from either the down river or upriver sides. Give one or 2 of these places a try this season and I am sure you will like it as much as I do.



BOWMANS ISLAND RAPID IS TOP CENTER AND A GREAT PLACE TO FISH

TECHNIQUES AND TIME

This stretch fishes well the entire year however during the summer months is subject to some thermal stress of the trout population. At this time of year it is just a blast to fish for the smallmouth that inhabit this section leaving the trout for the fall months. All bait types as well as lures and spinners will produce trout. I prefer fishing this section with medium sized shiners either threaded or fished live. It is especially a nice section for fly fishing with plenty of places to wade and cast. It also appears to have a healthy array of macro invertebrates and quality hatches are fairly common. Fishing both wet and dry will be productive depending on the time of year and time of day.

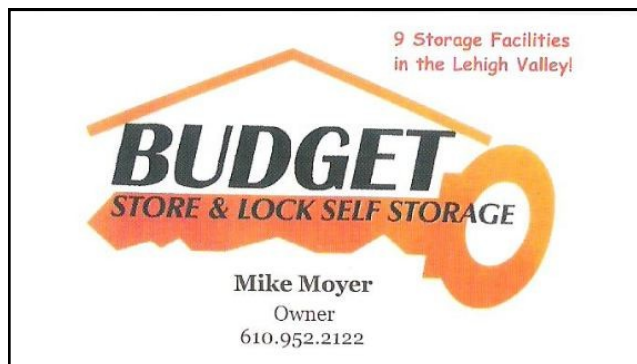
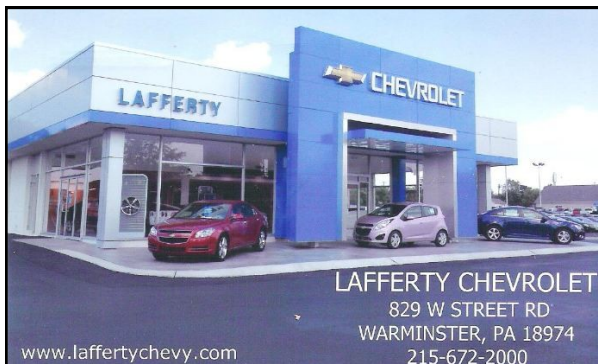
To get the best this section has to offer I recommend drifting it. It is a relatively gentle section so one doesn't

need a high end drift boat here. A raft, pontoon river runner or kayak will work great. Put in at the East Penn Boat ramp and take out under the Slatington Bridge. Plan on three hours, but allow extra time for the action can heat up and slow you down. It is also nice to pull up on one of the islands for lunch and to enjoy the scenery the gap in the mountain has to offer. I have even observed several eagles fishing here last year.

I hope this helps get you to some new water. As always we hope you continue to enjoy all the river has to offer and continue to support the LRSA through your sponsorship. Remember, we are also available on line and on Facebook. We enjoy hearing comments and stories from our members. Hope to see you on the River

I wish you all the best.... and tight lines!!!

Vince Spaits



Spring Stocking cont'd from page 3

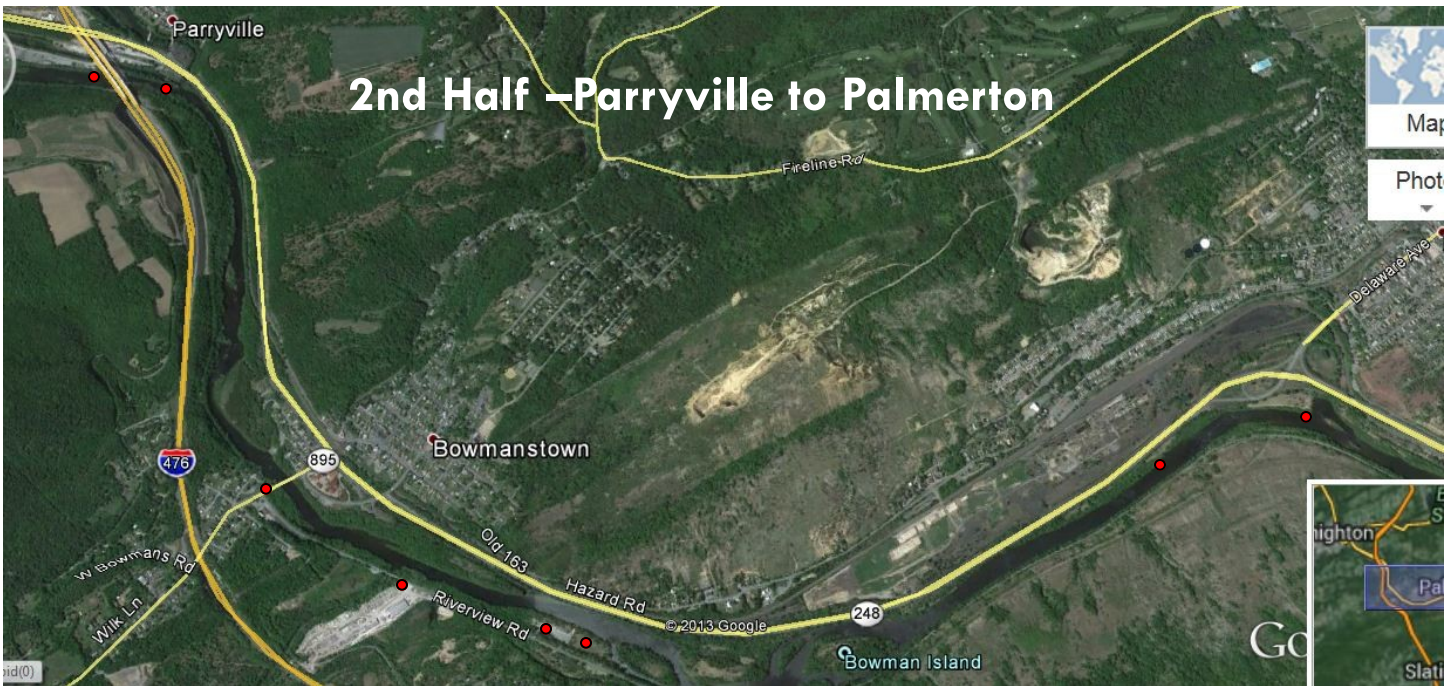
Spring Stocking Schedule—Carbon County

Saturday, April 12—

First half: Meet the truck at 10am at the Glen Onoko pool, stop at Nesquehoning Bridge then head down to 903 Bridge and train station parking lot beach. Then head down to Packerton Hollow Rd and do several spots then finish down behind Dunbar's Beverage.



Second Half: Truck heads down 248 to Parryville to stock at the Pohopoco confluence, then down to the 895 bridge in Bowmanstown, then Lizard Creek confluence, then the East Penn Boat ramp area (site of the Lunkerfest to be held May 17th) then back on 248 to hit one spot in the flats and then finish at the horse shoe (dirt road pull off near Delaware Ave cloverleaf).



71 S Wyoming Ave.
Edwardsville, PA
18704

Vince Spaits
Owner
215.272.3175

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Also stocking the full river Northampton to Jim Thorpe with 1800 lbs on May 10th. More details on that later. Stocking again for the Lunkerfest on May 17th.

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Lehigh River Fly Fishing Journal

A Winter Fishing Fix—By Tom Gyory

I had cabin fever and felt that I needed a winter fishing fix. At this time of year, I like to dream about fishing the Lehigh and sometimes I even venture down to my favorite spot to check it out and cast a line but this winter was unusually cold and snowy. The river was frozen solid, and



I knew it would be a while until fishing would be possible.

I wanted to cast a fly, but where could I go at this time of year?... I had to head south. I was checking the weather maps daily and saw that it was cold even in the Deep South. The only spot I saw in the US that maintained a constant warm temperature was an island in Florida, Key West.

Key West has a long rich history of fly fishing. Famous fishermen like Zane Grey, Ernest Hemingway, and US Presidents Harry S Truman

all frequented the backcountry flats around Key West to test their fishing skills on the resident permit, bone fish and above all Tarpon. This was the trip I needed to make.

I had no trouble convincing my wife to pack up and join me, so in a few short hours we went from 2 degrees in Slatington to 75 degrees in beautiful Key West. We had just been skating on our pond and now we were having margaritas on the beach.

I didn't really plan ahead for the fishing trip so I thought I would just find a guide when we arrived. I called LRSA member Shane Becker from my beach lounge chair for a reference and he got right back to me with a guide's name Mike Wilbur. Luckily Mike was available the next morning so we set up the trip.

Things are more laid back in Key West so we started out about 8:30am. A short 30 minute trip on the 18ft shallow water skiff and we were in the mangrove cays that surround the island. When



we pulled up to our spot, Mike said to keep an eye out for rising fish. It reminded me of back home watching the Lehigh for rising trout. There were fish rising everywhere. Mike quietly got us closer to a slick where baitfish

reside, with a long 15 foot pole pushing off the bottom. We drifted with the currents until

the rising fish were all around us.

The fish weren't very selective. Just about anything we threw at them provided action. We used bait fish imitations very similar to muddler minnows and shrimp imitations. The same double haul cast and streamer strip that I use back home worked well on these ocean fish. We caught a variety of small fish including jacks, sea trout, permit, parrot fish, perch and small tarpon. We spotted some larger fish, black tip sharks and tarpon, but did not hook up with any. This was not the best time of year for these larger fish because they are not feeding as much as in May and June.

Overall, the fishing was enjoyable and it was nice trip to thaw out for my wife and me. I recommend fishing in Key West for anyone who needs a winter fishing fix.

See you on the Lehigh.



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Lausanne Tunnel Update

A meeting was held in January with many stake holders. We are in agreement that further remediation work is needed. Funding sources are being sought.

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Details:

The LRSA will stock about 800 trout 14" to 30" in the pool for Lunkerfest. 100 trout will be tagged. Free giveaways, LRSA memberships, and raffle tickets available at sign up. Food and drinks will be available for purchase. Picnic tables and port potty bathroom on site. Sponsor's demonstration tables will be on display. No alcohol allowed.

In 2013 we had 150 contestants and gave out over 80 prizes.

What: Fishing Contest for Great Prizes. Food and Fun!

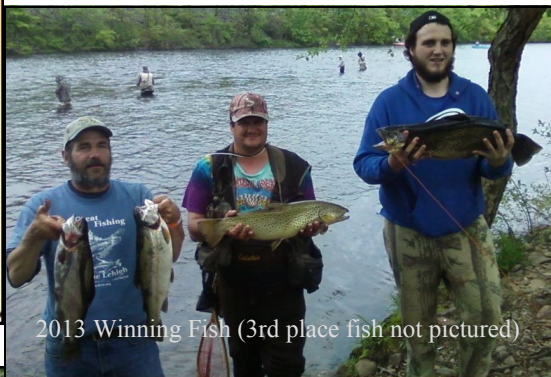
When: May 17th 2014, (high water date June 7st 2013)

Sign up starting at 7:00 am

Fishing from 9:00am-3:00pm

Where: Lehigh River, East Penn Boat Launch, Bowmanstown, PA

Fee: Adults and Youths \$20, (\$15 early mail in or online registration), Kids under 12 free



Lehigh Dental

Dr. Thomas R. Gyory, D.M.D.

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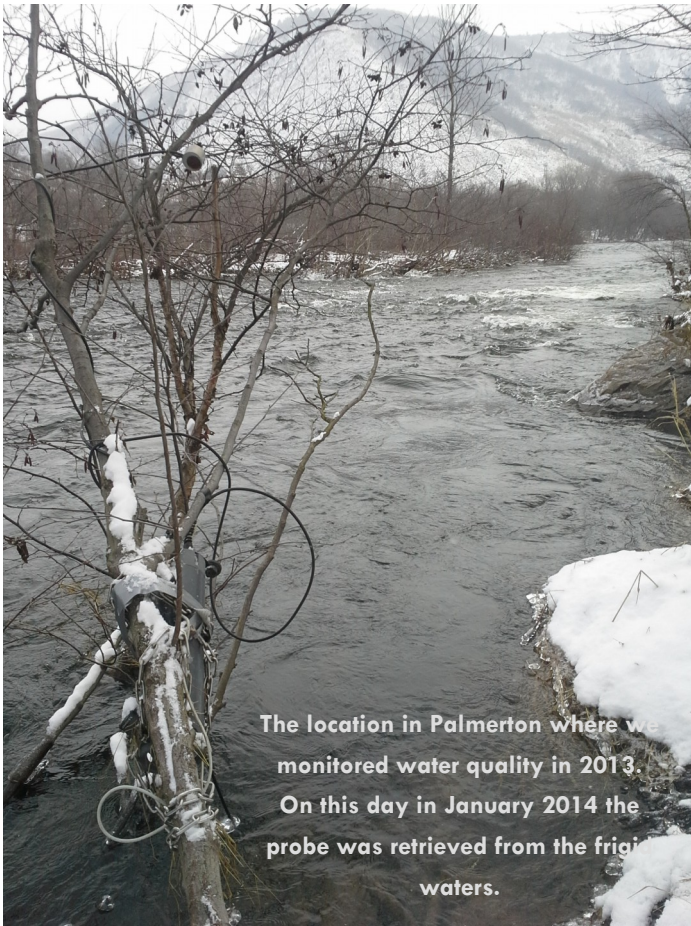
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A few stocking photos from the archives—Upper left Jim Thorpe, above Lehighton, Upper right Jim Thorpe, right Laurys Station

Water Quality Monitoring Plans —2014 By Matt MacConnell



The location in Palmerton where we monitored water quality in 2013. On this day in January 2014 the probe was retrieved from the frigid waters.

The LRSA is looking forward to the WQ monitoring in 2014. We will conduct scientific experiments that will help us better characterize the river with regard to trout habitat. The plan is to use the two monitors to compare conditions above and below specific sections of river in real time to assess impacts across that section. The monitors are connected to a cellular modem that transmits hourly readings to an Internet application for public viewing or data download. We expect to form collaborative studies with Wildlands Conservancy and hopefully one or more academic institutions. Ideas for sections to study include: 1) above and below sections with poor riparian cover or particularly wide, slow sections—such as above the location of the former Triecklers dam. 2) Above and below waste water treatment plant discharge locations. 3) Above and below tributaries, such as the Pohopoco Creek, to help assess the influence of the tribs. 4) Differentials through the Carbon County Section and the Lehigh County Section.

The LRSA will also conduct the annual tributary survey where water quality parameters in thirteen major tributaries across our stocking range are logged. The tribs include from south to north: Jordan/Little Lehigh, Catasauqua, Hockendauqua, Fells, Bertsch, Trout, Aquashicola, Lizard, Pohopoco, Mahoning, Mauch Chunk, and Nesquehoning Creeks. Parameters monitored include: temperature, pH, dissolved oxygen, nitrate and specific conductance.

We will also conduct a 3rd installment of our macroinvertebrate study under the leadership of board member Karl Imdorf. The focus will be on assessing insect abundance and diversity that mark high quality trout habitat. We will also be looking to assess the impact of the Lausanne Tunnel discharge in Jim Thorpe. This mine drainage discharges approximately 500 lbs/day Total Iron, 300 lbs/day Aluminum, 300 lbs/day Manganese, and 40,000 lbs/day Sulfate at a pH of about 6.4 and temperature ~52F. We will determine how this impacts bug life and how far down river the impairment extends.

LRSA Supports the Delaware Shad Fisherman's Association at their Annual banquet. Attending from left: Tom Gyory, Greg Gliwa, Matt MacConnell, Matt's wife Diane, Vince Spaits, Taffy Connolly, Chuck Morganstern and Sue Coulbourn.





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.

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come to join us at our meetings— 7pm the
last Tuesday of every month at the Market
Café at Wegmans (see map on page 2)

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Ads: Gary Klein, Vince Spaits
Newsletter Editor: Matt MacConnell
In Memoriam—LRSA
Founder, Ted Miller



In Memoriam—The LRSA would like to pay tribute to the memory of Zachary Paules who passed away on December 6th at the age of 23. Zachary was a LRSA member as is his dad. The LRSA received a very generous donation of \$550 from friends and family in Zachary's memory. The LRSA is planning to release a trophy trout in the Lehigh at his home town of Slatington this spring.

LRSA Welcomes visitors at our February and March meetings from the PFBC.

Stay Tuned for Lunkerfest 2014. This will be held May 17th at the East Penn Boat Launch area in Bowmans-town from 9 to 3 pm.



LRSA SPONSORSHIP FORM

Yes, I do want to support the Lehigh River Stocking Association in the effort to restore, revitalize and restock trout into the magnificent Lehigh River. Is this New or Renewal Sponsorship _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____ Do you want to be contacted to help stock the river _____

Basic Sponsorship --- \$20. All sponsorships include badge (or badge decal) ID card and subscription to Newsletters

Silver Sponsorship --- \$40. You will receive a LRSA T-Shirt State your size: Sm _____ Med _____ Lrg _____ XL _____ XXL _____ Dont send T

Gold Sponsorship---\$60. You will receive a LRSA Hat (or _____ don't send hat)

Platinum Sponsorship --- \$100. You will receive a LRSA Hat and T-Shirt or you will receive a Sweatshirt. Circle your preference and state your size Sm _____ Med _____ Lrg _____ XL _____ XXL _____ Dont send merchandise

Life Time Sponsorship --- \$250. You will not to renew each year.

Conservation Sponsorship --- (Catch and Release) \$70. You will receive a special LRSA Hat and \$20 will be allocated to the LRSA Conservation Program. (_____ don't send hat)

Diamond Sponsorship --- \$500. Receive a finely crafted Sterling Silver trout ring (4-6 wk del). State ring size _____

Amount of Sponsorship you would like to direct toward LRSA Conservation Programs _____

Please remit to : Lehigh River Stocking Association | PO Box 97| Trexlerstown | PA | 18087

Amount of Check Enclosed _____ Visit (or renew at) or web site : www.lrsa.org. Check out our facebook page or send us email at: Lehigh.River.Stocking.Association@gmail.com

Thank you for supporting the Lehigh River trout fishery