



Lehigh River Watch

New For 2018:

**LRSA Stocking Total
Since 1991: 360,000**

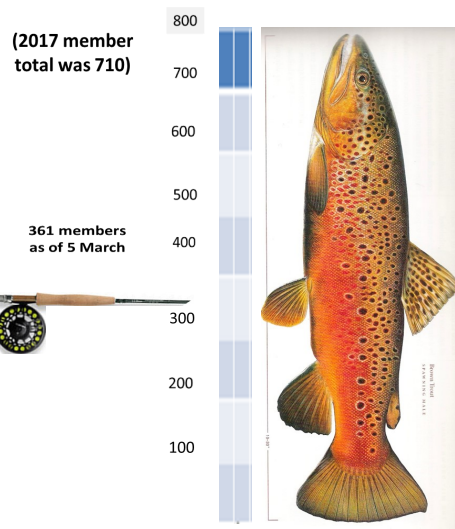
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Fall Picture from Lehigh Gorge

LRSA 2018 Membership Total



2018 marks a year of new beginnings for the Lehigh River Stocking Association. The LRSA plans to expand the size of our Gyory Co-Op nursery this spring with funding from the PAFBC and grant money from the Carbon County Community Foundation. This initiative will add approximately 1,000 trout to our stocking program in 2019.

It is significantly less expensive for the LRSA to raise trout in our Co-Op nurseries than it is to purchase fish from private suppliers. Even though the LRSA cannot yet raise enough trout to completely meet the needs of our annual stocking program, our Co-Op nurseries help us to significantly reduce the average cost of each fish that we stock annually: allowing us to stock more trout.

The LRSA also made an agreement with our BC Bait Co-Op nursery to double the amount of trout that they currently raise for us; from 1,000, to 2,000 fish per year. Some of you may remember seeing brook trout from the BC Bait Co-Op at last year's Lunkerfest. We stocked them along with trophy trout from Big Brown Trout Hatchery to spice things up for our annual fishing tournament. (And, to try out our new stocking trailer: courtesy of Tom Gyory). The new agreement with BC Bait will allow the LRSA to stock an additional 1,000 trout each year at an approximate cost of \$2.25 to \$2.50 per fish.

Our friends at BC Bait are currently raising another brood of brook trout for the LRSA 2018 spring stocking. You will see approximately 800 of these fish in the river this May. Next year we plan to exclusively raise rainbow trout at the BC Bait Co-Op because they are more resistant to warm water conditions than brook trout and they grow significantly faster.

This spring the LRSA also plans to stock 100 of our BC Bait trout in the Lehigh Gorge to help the Five Mile High Club put more fish in this beautiful section of the river. We hope to better develop our relationship with our Five Mile High friends so that together we can leverage our resources to stock more trout in the Lehigh.

Fish Study: LRSA plans to modify our stocking program this year in order to study the impact that stocking has on naturalized trout populations. We intend to skip one of our traditional stops this spring and use the trout that we regularly stock at that location to increase stocking allocations in other sections of the river. In short, we will not stock any trout at the confluence of the Pohopoco Creek and the Lehigh River. We have noticed significant numbers of naturalized brown trout immediately above and below the Pohopoco Creek confluence that are clearly reproducing in this area.

We intend to study the impact that this effort has on the naturalized fish population as well as the quality of fishing in that area of the Lehigh. Nick Raftas with Sky Blue Outfitters has offered to provide us with fishing reports of trout caught immediately above and below Pohopoco Creek to help us evaluate this effort. We will continue stocking as usual at the 476 turnpike bridge and at



Continued from Page 1.

-the bridge in Bowmanstown. We realize that some of the trout we stock will still enter the Pohopoco study area. However, our new stocking plan will help minimize their influence to a practical extent that also considers the angling expectations and financial support of our members.

Lastly, the PAFBC has pledged to continue stocking trout between Glen Onoko State Park and Jim Thorpe. This effort is part of a 3 year study to determine if there is sufficient fishing interest in this section of the Lehigh to justify permanently including it in the state's annual stocking program. By fishing in this area you can actually help us to convince the PAFBC to continue stocking at Glen Onoko and Jim Thorpe beyond the 3 year trial period. (The PAFBC's decision to stock this part of the Lehigh River was a direct result of Matt MacConnell's advocacy efforts to persuade PAFBC to include it in the state's annual stocking program.)

We believe that 2018 will be a great year for trout fishing. Please go out and enjoy it!

Steve Chuckra

LRSA Neighborhood Watch!

We have a special request from the East Penn Township Ranger: Last fall, some of the LRSA Board had the opportunity to meet with Mr. Walt Hoster who is the acting township ranger. He mentioned that illegal activity was on the rise in the area and asked us to contact East Penn Township in the event we witness illegal activities in and around the Bowmanstown Area. After talking for a while, we told him that we would be happy to ask our members to do the same.

East Penn's contact number is 570-386-5735. If you see people doing something illegal in that area, please contact them. Mr. Hoster mentioned that gang activity and drug trafficking are becoming more prevalent than usual and is asking for our assistance. Please help us make the river a better and safer place to fish.

Sincerely, the LRSA Board

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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 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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Matt MacConnell—by Steve Chuckra

The Lehigh River Stocking Association is sad to announce that Matt MacConnell has decided to retire as our president. Matt's career with the LRSA spans over 15 years to date and he has served as LRSA president for the past 9 years. His contributions to the Lehigh watershed are numerous to say the least, and Matt's name has become synonymous with Lehigh River conservation efforts and the LRSA trout stocking program. As the public face of the LRSA, Matt coordinated funding efforts for countless environmental projects with the Sierra Club, Wildlands Conservancy, and Trout Unlimited. He also frequently collaborated with peer environmental organizations, the PAFBC, and other river minded interests to promote and improve the Lehigh fishery.

Matt knows that there is more to good fishing than just putting trout in the river. He started **all** of the LRSA's water quality initiatives 10 years ago and initiated a tributary study program in 2012. Since that time, the LRSA has monitored and recorded key water quality measurements in 24 of the Lehigh River's tributaries in an attempt to comprehensively understand the environmental condition of the Lehigh Watershed. Matt also wrote grants to procure over \$25,000 in funding for water analysis probes that he uses to monitor and record key river health statistics. These are the same probes that the LRSA deploys in March each year to report river conditions and water quality. (The LRSA places a water quality probe in the river bed from March until October, so the probe can relay water conditions in real-time to our website, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.)

The water monitoring programs that Matt established enable the LRSA to compile key water quality data and promote public awareness of environmental trends that are affecting the Lehigh fishery and its tributaries. These programs form a foundation for sound water quality management practices: practices that many state agencies and other water management activities have yet to adopt. Our hope is that PA water management agencies will someday benchmark to Matt's efforts so they can better understand other river systems and improve water management practices on the Lehigh. It is worth mentioning that LRSA's water monitoring program is world-class and the only one of its kind in Pennsylvania thanks to Matt's visionary efforts.

Additionally, Matt MacConnell engineered and supervised over \$30,000 worth of renovations at an abandoned mine drainage (AMD) treatment site near the confluence of Nesquehonning Creek and the Lehigh River. These improvements have reduced the amount of heavy metal contamination and significantly increased oxygen levels in the Lehigh immediately below the Nesquehonning Creek confluence. Matt's efforts were instrumental in persuading the Pennsylvania Wildlands Conservancy to authorize LRSA to study, improve, and maintain the AMD impoundment in 2010.

It is worth mentioning that the Lehigh River Stocking Association is a non-profit organization and all of its board officers are unpaid. Matt MacConnell has sacrificed thousands of hours of his own personal time to improve Lehigh River water quality and promote environmental initiatives that have significantly improved the health of a fishery that is an enormous part of our lives. Matt also works full-time as an environmental engineer for Air Products in Allentown and he frequently travels all over the world in that capacity. Despite his busy schedule, Matt continuously puts his personal life aside to promote the LRSA and water quality. Matt's contributions and untiring dedication to the Lehigh River are truly inspiring and they reflect great credit upon him and an organization that he has worked selflessly to improve. His contributions as LRSA president will be sorely missed!



Matt MacConnell taking water quality measurements near Nesquehonning Creek circa 2015.



Lehigh River Fly Fishing Journal

By Tom Gyory

Winter is over, it was cold at the start and warm and rainy at the end. Reports of ice fishing were good in January and then stopped by February because the ice was gone.

Now the Lehigh River fishing season is here. Facebook reports are showing early signs of good activity by the holdover trout in the river. If things continue, this should be a banner year.

For Valentine's Day, my wife gave me a beautiful selection of flies for the upcoming season. They were wrapped in a heart shaped box that I originally thought were chocolates pleasantly surprised with Adams, Copper Johns, Stimulators, and Stoneflies. I thought it was a great gift and I can't wait to try them out. The first flies to hatch in large enough numbers to bring the trout up to feed in the spring are the dark flies. Small stone flies, blue winged olives and Hendricksons. The hare's ear and pheasant tail nymphs are good underwater imitations to start with and the Adams and blue winged olives are good choices for top water.



wife gave me a beautiful selection of flies for the upcoming season. They were wrapped in a heart shaped box that I originally thought were chocolates pleasantly surprised with Adams, Copper Johns, Stimulators, and Stoneflies. I thought it was a great gift and I can't wait to try them out. The first flies to hatch

The Cooperative Nursery is doing well at our two locations (Gyory's Pond in Slatington and BC Bait in Lehighton) after a rough start when we had a 20% fish kill in the fall due to warm weather and a common bacterial disease. The fish commission inspected the fish in February and reported that the trout were doing well and were 10.5 inches on average with several 12 inch fish present in the sample. They will continue to grow 1 inch per month until we stock them in May. The LRSA is planning to double the output of the coop to 4 thousand trout next year if the funding is available. An interesting fact



that I found out from being a member of the US Trout Farmers Association is that Pennsylvania hatcheries are ranked third in the nation with over \$6 million of the \$113 million dollars' worth of trout grown annually, only behind Idaho and California.

The biannual streamside hatch box program will take place again in March with another 5,000 rainbow trout eggs to be hatched at the Gyory's Pond site. Feel free to stop by and see the operation. I'll be posting updates on the LRSA Facebook page.

Encourage a friend to join the LRSA and see you on the river!



Women on the Water—Jennifer Johnson

I had the pleasure of attending the Fly Fishing Show in NJ this January, and while this was my 2nd time going it was my first as a fly fishing enthusiast who happens to be a woman. At this year's show they had a special women's showcase with classes and a spot on the showroom floor designated for women. While initially I balked at this because I have never been a fan of specializing something based on gender, I was curious to say the least. I had to laugh when I saw the area on the showroom floor, it was in the back corner, and I heard Patrick Swayze in my head saying 'They put baby in the corner.' It was nice though, and Orvis even had a booth where a female angler was there to help you try on



Wild Brown caught while nymphing near Slatington.

their merchandise to find your size, which was great for me as I have been looking to purchase a pair of women's waders this year. She also had a few tips and recommendations on what she uses when she is out on the water, and I have to admit I had a bit of a girl crush listening to her. She is the angler I hope to grow up to be. While in attendance I also took a class for 'women only' it was casting basics designed for just about any level angler to help improve our skills. The class had 7 women, ranging in ages from 20's-60s, and it was an eye opening, opinion altering class for me. I learned some great tips, spent 2 ½ hours casting till I thought my shoulder might fall off, but most importantly I learned something special that day and it's that I actually enjoyed being with just women anglers.

While this is not a profound epiphany for most women, this was huge for me as I have always been a tomboy and have more male friends than women. I enjoy the action movie over the chick flick, and I thought spending time exclusively with women casting and working on our fishing techniques would be a chore for me. Turns out there is a comradery in listening to other women talk about wind knots, getting caught in trees, and missing the fish that was rising right in front of you.

(continued on page 8)



LRSA Raffle Winners

The winter ticket drawing winners are displayed (and hard to read) in the photo to the left. The drawing order runs from top left to bottom right. Thank you very much for your support!

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Out of Winter!

The winter is waning and in its final weeks. It has been a season of some extremes. 12 days of ultra-low temperatures mid-winter froze most waterways including the Lehigh in many sections. Anchor ice even was forming in some places. I watched video and witnessed in person the Susquehanna River ice sheet, in high water, tearing down full size trees that have been along the bank for 25 years or more ramming them into the water street bridge. During the high water after the freeze the Lehigh River pushed up ice sheets 12 inches or more thick 10 foot up the banks. The leading edge of all the islands were pounded with ice flows and downed trees can be seen in many places. Then we had some warmer days, and some heavy rains with high water and even a few snow storms mixed in. More than several times during the winter I received USGS water alerts that flows exceed 3,000 CFS in Lehighton and a few times over 6,000 CFS. This winter has been a little tougher than the last few. This has likely resulted in more winter die off and less hold over than hoped for. Now what would be great is a nice extended spring with reasonable temperatures well into June.

When you consider these extremes it is no wonder the river you see this spring will be slightly (if not dramatically) different than the one you left late in the fall. Yes, things do change in the river bed over winter. Structure and bank depth and cut will change. Strainers and debris will be in different locations. Some holes will fill in and others will deepen. One thing for sure, it is never exactly the same river from year to year.

Now most of the old standby locations, those that have produced over generations will likely be intact and as they were. Those go to spots will still be great places to start the year. However some new water may be in order this year. I don't need to remind any of our members of how many miles of river are available to fish. 40 plus miles upstream of Northampton for sure are available. I have fished many of these areas and can assure you each mile has great potential for trout.

The LRSA is most involved in the area from Northampton upstream to Jim Thorpe. This is our home water and the areas we stock, support with water measurements, conduct tributary surveys on and monitor throughout the year. This area typically is also the heaviest fished, easiest to access, wades and floats nicely and consistently produces quality trout both stocked and wild. This long stretch has every type of water imaginable and there is so much room you rarely have to fish with other anglers if so desired. However, there is much more to the river than this section alone. Being willing to explore other more remote waters upstream or the bigger water downstream will have its rewards. The river as a whole is what we love so I encourage you to venture out and visit other sections of the river.

Continued on the next page:



Car sized boulders provide structure and deep channels that attract trout. A common sight throughout the Gorge.



Out of Winter! continued:

The Lehigh is comprised of 9 fisheries management areas

Section #9: Lafarge Dam Northampton to Confluence with Delaware (RM 24-0)

Section #8: Relic Dam Palmerton to Lafarge Dam Northampton (RM 37-24)

Section #7: Sandy Run to Relic Dam Palmerton (RM 67-37)

Section #6: Francis Walter to Sandy Run (RM 76-67) at this point the Lehigh is officially defined as a “large river”

Section #5: Francis Walter Dam, Tobyhanna Creek confluence (River mile 82-76) in this section the river is officially defined as a “small river”

Sections #1 - #4: Headwaters to Tobyhanna confluence (River mile 106-82). At this point the Lehigh is considered a “stream” as its mean width is less than 66 feet.

If you have never fished in the Lehigh Gorge you should (Sections 6 and 7). Our upper stocking limit Jim Thorpe. This is the lower section of the gorge. Unofficially the start of the gorge is downstream of the Lehigh Tannery Bridge. Each mile the river flows the deeper the gorge. The river rumbles through the gorge with a high gradient. The water is beautiful as are the surrounding mountains. Trout are plentiful and feisty. Wildlife is abundant and humans few. Access can be found by walking or biking the trail, finding water you like and making your way to it. As always extreme care must be used when wading the Lehigh and the use of a wading staff is highly recommended. In high water choose another place to fish due to the force of the water.

Some key access points that are easily found and great fishing areas are;

Lehigh Tannery Bridge (parking available) fish downstream to Maple Island or Hayes Creek.

Hickory Run Confluence (park at Hickory Run state Park) walk Hickory run trail to the Lehigh River. The trail follows the beautiful Hickory Run to the Lehigh.

Drakes Creek access, follow Drakes Creek road. Follow the one lane road to the small parking area, walk to the Lehigh for some great gorge fishing

Rockport access (nice parking area and even better water)

Lehigh Gorge State Park (plenty of parking weekdays, gets crowded weekends so get there early). Walk or bike upstream for great water.

From the top of the gorge to the bottom you will find awesome trout water. As always we encourage catch and release fishing and always leave no trace you have been there.....

We again are challenged as a nonprofit organization for contributions, active and involved members and to meet our financial commitments. We thank you for your past and present generosity for without you there would be no LRSA, no stockings and certainly the Lehigh trout fishery would suffer. I once again ask for your continued support and ask that you spread the word about the LRSA and its efforts to restore and restock the Lehigh River in Carbon and Lehigh Counties.

I would also like to recognize our counterparts in Jim Thorpe for and taking care of this fishery. Thank you **Five Mile Club!** They do a great job, and I ask that you also give them your support, so they can continue their efforts to improve the quality of the trout fishery in this beautiful section of the Lehigh.

Best Regards—Vince Spaits



Women on the Water

(continued from page 7)

I reveled in listening to everyone's stories about why they wanted to be better: The woman who was tired of watching her husband fish on vacation, the girl who wanted to go to Chile but had to get her distance and accuracy down first, the woman who enjoyed being outdoors and wanted to add to her hobbies, and over and over everyone's stories could have been interchangeable and they were delightful. We all felt like we had a bond that I personally have not felt in my numerous times on the water with the men. Don't get me wrong I thoroughly enjoy fishing with the men and have always had a great time, but I always feel a bit of pressure to be good, to not screw up, catch the fish, and most importantly don't cast like a girl. I learned a lot from the class because I was comfortable in my surroundings and by the time I left I was consistently hitting my target which was almost 40ft away. As I left the class I reevaluated how I saw the women's corner at the show and thought it's not so bad for their first time, but hopefully next year it's more than just a corner, maybe next year it can just be incorporated into the show. Instead of making this an event let's make it commonplace, instead of being surprised when we see a woman out fishing let's encourage the women in our lives to give it a try. I left the show wanting more, and as I have been a member of the LRSA now for almost 2 years and have met some great people and had some even better fishing experiences, there doesn't seem to be many women fishing on the Lehigh, and I hope to help change that. Fishing has given me some great firsts like the first trout I caught on a dry fly, but my next goal is to get on the water with other women anglers, and hopefully it's on the Lehigh and it's a new member so if you have any women that might be interested in fishing encourage them to get out there and try and maybe we'll be lucky enough to fish together.

Jennifer Johnson

Environmental Note:

LRSA plans to meet with the Parryville Municipal engineer to help resolve issues involving grey water discharges from homes along the Pohopoco Creek. The Pohopoco is one of the healthiest tributaries between Glen Onoko State Park and Northampton and we would like to help the Parryville municipal authority to move forward on resolving this legacy issue.

We have also just been made aware of an situation involving the Cunfer Farm located near the confluence of Lizard Creek and the Lehigh. The farm plans to spray their fields with solid waste. Local authorities are concerned because this waste is a less expensive alternative to conventional fertilizers and may "potentially" contain heavy metal byproducts and other hazardous materials that pose a contamination risk to Lizard Creek and the Lehigh. The farm is located approximately 1,000 feet from Lizard Creek and a quarter mile from the Lehigh. For more information about this issue you can contact the East Penn Township Secretary at 570-386-5735.

Closing Thoughts: Steve Chuckra

I wanted to take a moment to thank all of our members for their financial support and volunteer efforts. We truly appreciate your help!

This month the LRSA mailed our March Newsletter to all current members and a few hundred people who have not yet renewed their LRSA memberships for 2018.

Current members should have received a newsletter and a slip with the 2018 LRSA stocking dates. People who's membership status is not current will only receive a newsletter.

In the past, LRSA only sent the spring newsletter to current members because we wanted them to have stocking information and we didn't want to share it with anyone who was not currently a member. We believe that is a fair proposition and our intent is to encourage people to renew, so they can have our stocking dates and so that we can take in additional money to pay off the fish loan that LRSA takes out each year. (The loan balance is currently \$15,000)

Our old approach had some limitations in that it reduced the number of membership renewals each spring. That's because only current members received newsletters with stocking dates and "membership applications". More to the point; people who weren't current didn't receive membership applications in the spring.

If you happen to renew after this newsletter was mailed, or for some reason did not receive the stocking dates, even though you are current; you can call me and I will be happy to provide them to you.

Please note that we are also working out issues with newsletter e-deliveries. We have a few dozen email addresses to correct and should be fairly squared away by the summer edition. Our ultimate e-delivery goal is to save money on

Lunkerfest 2018: The LRSA is happy to announce that we will hold our 8th annual Lunkerfest fishing tournament on June 2nd at the Bowmanstown Boat Launch. (Rain date is June 16th.)

mailing expenses and printing costs, and also to accommodate those of you who prefer to receive e-copies of the newsletter: Don't worry, we will still send you raffle tickets in the mail, unless you ask us not to.

In closing, I'm asking that if you have not renewed your membership for 2018, that you consider doing it this spring. Your membership dues will help the LRSA to pay off our fish loan and allow us to save money on interest payments.

We would also like you to renew because we need your help to support and maintain a great resource that also happens to be a beautiful river.

Thanks again for your support!

Sincerely,

Steve Chuckra

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The LRSA is a Non-Profit
Organization Dedicated to the
Restoration and Restocking 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,
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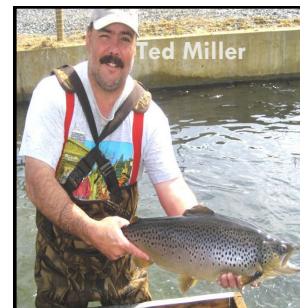
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LRSA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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.

