
Subject: : Conservation

Topic: : Lehigh River Dam Study

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Report on Update on Lehigh River Restoration Progress

January 28, 2011

On Friday, January 28, DRSFA President, Ron Marks, John Berry, Jim Monroe, and Dave Bittner attended a meeting with Mr. Chris Kocher at the Wildlands Conservancy headquarters in Allentown, PA for the purpose of updating developments in the efforts to restore American shad to the Lehigh River, including feasibility studies to remove dams. Also attending was Shane Becker of the Lehigh River Stocking Association.

Allentown Agreement: The Allentown mayor had previously, rejected the invitation to participate in a feasibility study for removal of the dam, wanting an official letter stating that it would be a non-binding study. A letter was received and Allentown will be included in the PFBC study. The study will include the first three dams on the Lehigh River. The Easton dam, the Glendon (Chain) dam, and Allentown dam will be the subjects of a study funded with money from the Palmerton Zinc Superfund and a matching grant.

Some concerns Allentown has about the dam removal are Adams Island, the Lehigh Canal, the emergency backup water supply intake, and recreation.

The study will be in two parts. The lower two dams, Easton and Glendon, will be studied first, then Allentown and LaFarge (Northampton). An equal amount of funding is necessary for each part of the study. The PFBC and American Rivers will sponsor the project.

Concerns for the Easton dam are water for the Delaware Canal, and recreational boating.

Mayor, Sal Panto, would like to make Easton the "Shad Capitol" of the world. Hugh Moore Park in Easton owns 6 miles of Lehigh River waterway.

LaFarge Dam: The LaFarge Dam at Northampton is used for water for the cement company. Discussions have evolved that the company is willing to pump water from a nearby quarry, but they were denied a permit from the EPA. Negotiations are continuing.

Lehigh River Cold Water Release: Cold water release policies have progressed to more civil and compromising positions among recreational and environmental groups. Both realize that the river is cleaner now than it ever was in the last 175 years. The key to a solution is modeling efforts at water quality and efforts to maintain a sustainable fishery with recreation. The amount of water is now equal for recreational and environmental purposes.

The Wildlands Conservancy, along with the PFBC have already obtained access points for the Lehigh River.

The Wildlands Conservancy has two useful maps with access points, and historical, recreational, and environmental points of interest called The Lehigh River Water Trail. Information may be found at www.wildlandspa.org. The PFBC prints the pamphlets.

Land Protection Accomplishments: Through Wildlands' efforts, over 2600 acres have been acquired and

transferred to the Bureau of State Forests. 70,000 acres of protected open space has been acquired along the Lehigh River. Over the last ten years the Conservancy has purchased about 20 miles of Lehigh River property to provide access to the public.

Shane Becker of the Lehigh River Stocking Association (LRSA) announced that they will put in thousands of 14 inch trout in the Lehigh for a contest to be held May 21, 2011. They are also looking for sponsors to hopefully stock 20 – 25 inchers for prizes. The LRSA has been a pioneer which proved the Lehigh River can support a trout fishery.

The Lehigh River has become a new center point of community recreation, activity, and tourism. According to John Berry, both the Lehigh and Delaware Rivers have the potential to become world class fisheries.

Chris Kocher, Wildlands head, asks that we help by:

- Supporting the feasibility study
- Supporting dam removal projects
- Educating the public on the positive environmental aspects of dam removal

Thanks to Mr. Kocher and his staff and partners for their continuing improvement of our environment and enhancement of our lives!

David Bittner, Secretary

Delaware River Shad Fishermen's Association (DRSFA)