

Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance

Newsletter

Summer 2020

Welcome to the Summer 2020 LCFA newsletter!

We hope this newsletter finds you and your family and friends healthy and doing well in these ever-changing times. It's been quite a busy past year for LCFA with new leadership changes, and finally the start of the F.E.W Feasibility Study and some other new potential projects. LCFA will continue to advocate for the fishery, and we are looking at several ways to accomplish that. First and foremost is working with the Army Corps of Engineers and other groups with the current feasibility study. Other potential ways can be through opening up connectivity to cold water tributaries to provide thermal refuge in the summer and spawning grounds in the fall. Groups such as the Wildlands conservancy and Trout Unlimited have been working on cleanup of Black Creek from the effects from AMD. This is one of the larger tributaries within the Lehigh Gorge, and is one of the more picturesque remote streams you will find anywhere.

The Lehigh River only continues to amaze us. The quality of the wild fish we find, hatches, and great fishing experiences all around are all reminders that the potential of this river seems limitless. It's impossible to say exactly how far along the journey this river is to becoming a world-class fishery, but the needle is unmistakably pointing up. Each year we find new things which amaze even the long diehards of the river. Few rivers in the eastern US have such a combination of characteristics from Class III remote white-water to long slow gradients

offering superb drift boat water. That one can find trout in this river spans the entire length from its headwaters all the way to the confluence with the Delaware. (over 60 miles) is due in part the many cold water tributaries, and the fact that

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A few fish from this past season



the lower river runs through the limestone belt of PA. The river can be fickle and can certainly humble even to the best fisherman. It certainly can take time to unlock its secrets, but the journey of adventure and discovery can be very rewarding and rare experience. We hope that everyone gets to take a break from this hectic world and spends some time on the river.

- Mike Stanislaw

FEASIBILITY STUDY UPDATE:

LCFA representatives attended a virtual meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) and fellow Lehigh River stakeholders to get an update on the status of the Feasibility Study. It was a very informative and productive meeting.

The ACOE did a nice presentation and summary of where they are in the Study process and outlining the study objectives, which are as follows:

- 1) Reduce life loss and economic damages during flood events along the Lehigh River downstream of the F.E. Walter Dam resulting from increases in population and development that have occurred since the project was constructed, as well as the possible increasing intensity and frequency of storms in the Northeast U.S., over the 50-year period of analysis
- 2) Improve the quality of aquatic habitat and enhance recreational fishing opportunities in the Lehigh River up to 30 miles downstream of the dam by reducing elevated water temperatures released from the F.E. Walter Reservoir in mid-July through September, over the 50-year period of analysis.
- 3) Enhance the ability of the F.E. Walter Reservoir to further contribute to mandated flow objectives in the Delaware River measured at Trenton, New Jersey and repel the salt front on the river, by increasing the flexibility to provide low flow augmentation via the Lehigh River during drought conditions, over the 50-year period of analysis.

The slide presentation information can be found on this link.

ACOE listed a number of constraints with the study. The constraints listed basically means that these things will not be deviated from during the study. For example, the study outcomes cannot compromise the reservoir for flood risk

mitigation. There was some concern over the whitewater releases and current flow plans being compromised, but ACOE explained that this information will be used as a baseline to build from during the study.

What was of special interest during the presentation was the "Alternatives" that the ACOE will be investigating. There are nine alternatives listed, with 3 of the 9 looking at structural modifications to the water discharge tower and the ability to increase water storage in the reservoir. Which by now, we all know are two critical components to enhancing the downstream trout fishery. Without more water storage and a tower that is capable of releasing water from various levels in the lake, the productivity of trout fishery will still be limited. What was also explained is that the ACOE may find that some of the alternatives need to be combined to obtain the study objectives.

The ACOE also discussed and outlined the project timetable. This is a very complex study that is investigating a multitude of issues that will be needed to justify any operational changes or structural changes at FEW. Once ACOE evaluates the alternatives, they move to analysis of the potential preferred plan for FEW. A draft report will be prepared which will go to state and agency review. I'm assuming the PFBC will be involved and allowed to review this draft report. Then once there is an Agency decision to select the agreed upon "Plan" for changes at FEW, a draft report will then be released to the public for comment. The draft report will then go to the ACOE district "Chief". The "Chief" will review and need to approve and sign off on it for the report to go to Congress for passage into the Water Resources Bill for funding and eventual construction.

Somewhere along the way in the process described in the above paragraph there will be another public or stakeholder meeting. The one thing that was of some concern was there was no real discussion on the investigation into optimal releases for the fishery. We're not sure where all that fits in and this is something the LCFA will be advocating for during future stakeholder meetings.

All being said, this may be our best opportunity to see some real changes at FEW that have a sustained long-term benefit to the downstream trout fishery on the Lehigh River.

We will continue to advocate for the fishery throughout the process and continue to info our supporters of news and updates.

- Dean Druckenmiller

NEW LCFA WEBSITE

After many years with our previous web design it was finally time for a change. In 2019 LCFA launched an entirely new website for the organization. Our goal with the new site was not only to provide a refresh, but become a plain language learning and reference tool regarding the Frances E. Walter Dam (F.E.W.) dam operations, and the river. The site has an entirely new section devoted to the F.E.W. Feasibility study. It contains straight forward info to help understand, what is a quite complex situation in regards to what it means for the fishery. During the fall/winter of 2019, the new site played a valuable role providing accurate information to the public and news organizations. This allow folks to be well prepared and knowledgeable for the official start of the Feasibility study. As the study process evolves, we will continue to post

updated information, links and details to provide a deeper understanding that goes beyond your typical news reporting.

You can still find our river access points map, water level wading chart, along with links to USGS flow gauges, and other important sites about the Lehigh river. In the near future we will be adding an online membership sign up process. This should make joining and donating to the LCFA a much easier process.

For any suggestions or feedback about our new site you can send you comments to info@thelehighriver.org. Also don't forget our Facebook page as well www.facebook.com/LehighColdwaterFisheryAlliance. The Facebook page can be a quick and easy way for us to get smaller but more frequent updates out.

- Mike Stanislav



THE FISHERY

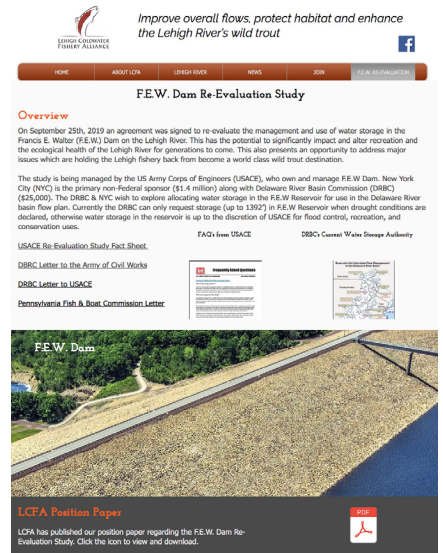
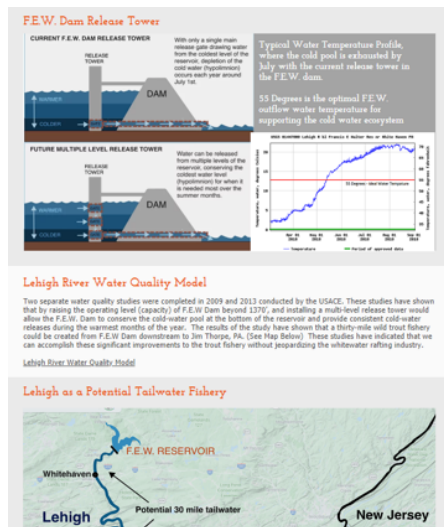
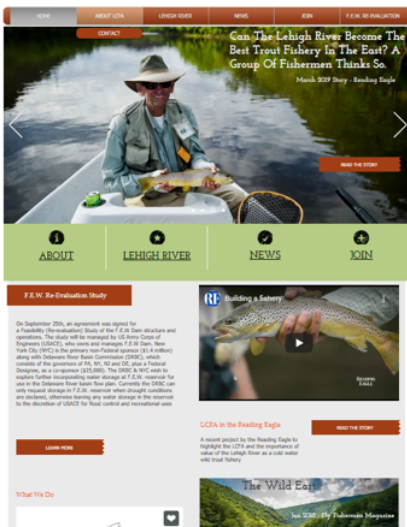
The Lehigh river currently has a sustaining population of wild trout (Mostly Brown Trout) thanks to factors such as conservation water releases from F.E.W., Acid Mine Drainage (AMD) cleanup, and the numerous high quality cold water tributaries which feed into the Lehigh river system at various points. The fishery is also supplemented through stocking program through the following public and private groups:

- Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission
- Lehigh River Stocking Association
- Five Mile High Stocking Club
- Tri-Boro Sportsmen Club

Visit the [Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission](#) for the latest on the fishing regulation

While the wild trout population is increasing within the river system, its is still a fragile population. We always encourage Catch & Release to help ensure sustainability.

These trout feed on the abundant numbers of large stone flies and hatches of mayflies. They also tend to move many miles through the river system in search of food and cool water in summer.



www.thelehighriver.org





LEHIGH COLDWATER FISHERY ALLIANCE

www.thelehighriver.org

MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Our mission is to obtain a consistent release of coldwater (55 degree F) from the Francis E. Walter Reservoir through better utilization of Walter's storage capacity and discharge options, in an effort to improve overall flows, protect habitat and enhance the Lehigh River's wild trout fishery.



LCFA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Memberships

- ☐ Membership Renewal - \$30
- ☐ Individual Membership - \$30

Sponsorships

- ☐ Silver - \$50
- ☐ Gold - \$100
- ☐ Corporate - \$250
- ☐ Platinum - \$500

Name _____ Email _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to:

Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance

Attn: Membership

PO Box 5157

Doylestown, PA 18901

- ☒ Make checks payable to the Lehigh Coldwater Fishery Alliance
- ☒ Thank You For Your Support!