



FACT SHEET

Recreational Fishing Improvement Projects for the Palmerton Zinc Pile NRDA

Palmerton Zinc Pile Superfund Site Natural Resource Damage Assessment

Background

In October 2009, state and federal Trustees reached settlement for the Palmerton Zinc Pile Superfund Site. For 90 years the Palmerton area and nearby watershed were contaminated by metals that were emitted from the Site. Since 1981, lower Aquashicola Creek was not stocked with trout due to the high levels of metals found in sediments and water. If lower Aquashicola Creek had not been affected by Site related contaminants, it would have been managed as a regionally significant “high yield” recreational cold water fishery. The contamination and subsequent lack of stocking in this section of stream resulted in a loss of recreational fishing opportunities for the public. After settlement, a publicly-reviewed Restoration Plan and Environmental Assessment was finalized on April 5, 2011. The plan describes a number of access improvement projects determined through a needs assessment that will compensate the public for reduced recreational fishing opportunities. Improvements to existing access points and creation of new recreational fishing access areas on the Lehigh River were included in the plan’s preferred alternative.

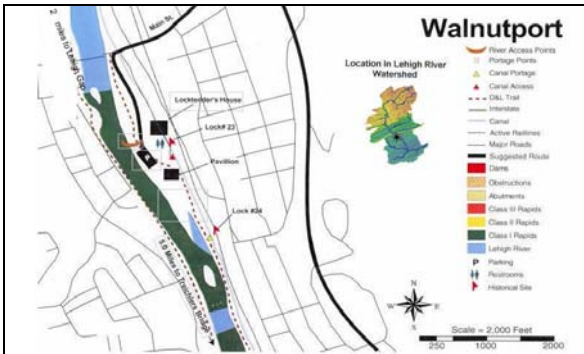
Projects Awarded

Settlement funds were recently awarded to the Wildlands Conservancy for water trail and access area development along the Lehigh River in Carbon, Northampton and Lehigh counties. The settlement funds will be used to rebuild the boat launch and expand the parking area at the Walnutport access in Walnutport, Northampton County; to construct a parking area and a concrete boat launch at the Treichler’s Bridge access in North Whitehall Township, Lehigh County; and to install new signs along the Lehigh River Water Trail and upgrade the Lehigh River Water Trail website <http://wildlandspa.org/lrwt/> with current maps, river conditions/hazards, and details about access points.

Walnutport Borough, the Conservancy and the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources also are providing funding to the project.



Treichler’s Bridge access point (pictured above) is currently a popular informal Lehigh River access area. The site will be improved with a new parking lot, cement boat ramp with vehicle access, and site design to tie-in with the newly developed Delaware and Lehigh National Heritage Corridor Trail and Trailhead. When complete, the site will be similar to the recently completed Lehigh Gap access area (pictured below).



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