

C. Important Habitats

The most important features of the LeTort Spring Run is its upper waterway and its population of wild brown trout. These trout are found mainly in the upper reaches of the stream between the Route 34 bridge and the Railroad Bridge at LeTort Park.

The productive aquatic life found in the upper portion of the LeTort is the most diverse found in the entire stream. The aquatic plants serve as a food supply, habitat and as a natural conditioner of the water chemistry. As a food supply the thick populations of aquatic plants provide surplus amounts of energy to aquatic herbivores. Besides the energy available in its own green leaves for higher forms of life, the vegetation harbors dense populations of aquatic insects, insect larve and crustaceans. The invertebrates in turn are excellent suppliers of food for the brown trout.



Sculpin

Trout spawning areas have been artificially enhanced along selected portions of the upper section of the stream. Without these beds the natural reproduction of the brown trout would be severely limited. There is a constant effort being made to ensure that a spawning habitat of gravel is maintained for the brown trout in the midst of the sediment introduced to the stream by human activity within the watershed. The wetlands which border much of the stream not only serve an important function for the aquatic wildlife but also for

terrestrial wildlife. Since the majority of terrestrial species rely on this type of habitat during their life. In this capacity the wetlands serve as a food and water source, cover and nesting and reproduction areas.

VII. Cultural and Recreational Resources

It is the intent of the affected municipalities and various state agencies, largely working through the LeTort authority, to retain and even broaden the use of the stream and its watershed for public enjoyment. Although fishing has, historically, been its principle attraction, the establishment of nature trails and a park has opened up a variety of enjoyable opportunities.

A. Fishing

The LeTort Spring Run is a unique trout stream that has been immortalized in numerous writings. Articles about the LeTort have appeared in national magazines such as *Outdoor Life*, *Sports Afield*, *Esquire* and numerous fishing magazines. Local fisherman and world-renowned authors such as Vince Marinaro and Charlie K. Fox have written books about the stream. To many avid fishermen, the LeTort has become a Mecca for light tackle and minute dry fly fishing. Some of the articles written have compared the LeTort to the trout streams found in southern England.

The combination of constant volume of flow, the small and limited aquatic species and the importance of tiny land bred terrestrial insects' plays a major role in LeTort fishing restrictions. Because of the uniqueness of the LeTort, traditional flies were and still are ineffective in catching the trout. In order to remedy this situation, new trout flies were created. Two of the flies that were created just for the LeTort are the LeTort Hopper and the LeTort Beetle.



Brown Trout

However, the most important discovery was the jassid. In response to the aloof brown trout, the jassid was developed, which opened the previously unheard of practice of using replicas of land based insects as flies. A jassid is a fly that resembles winged ants and other terrestrial insects.

A unique achievement in fishing occurred along the LeTort, when in 1961, Charlie Fox, along with other local landowners and fisherman, joined together to establish certain fishing regulations. This was done by posting signs that allowed access for the purpose of fishing as long as the angler followed certain rules. The rules were designed to allow immediate enjoyment of the stream while leaving enough trout to reproduce and grow for future enjoyment. Then in 1974, the Pennsylvania Fish Commission aided them by adopting state regulations to enforce and control fishing along the LeTort. Currently special regulations apply to the upper reaches of the LeTort Spring Run concerning "No Harvest Fly-Fishing Only". This section of the LeTort is marked along the stream by small green and white plastic signs and larger cardboard signs. The restrictions are published annually in the Pennsylvania Fish Commission pamphlet: "Summary of Fishing Regulations and Laws".

B. Nature Trail

In 1978, the LeTort Regional Authority established the LeTort Spring Run Nature Trail after the Reading Railroad line was abandoned in the wake of Hurricane Agnes in 1972. The 1.4-mile nature trail runs from LeTort Park in the Borough of Carlisle to the Bonny Brook Road Bridge, within the abandoned railroad right-of-way. The trail runs parallel to the LeTort Spring Run through woods, meadows and marshes. Although the old right-of-way extends further into Carlisle and south into South Middleton Township towards Mount



LeTort Spring Run Nature Trail

Holly Gap, ownership has been questioned and has prevented the utilization of the entire abandoned railroad as a nature trail. The trail is open all year to walkers, anglers, bird watchers, and cross-country skiers. Biking, horseback riding, all terrain vehicles, motorcycles, and snowmobiles are not allowed on the trail. The LeTort Regional Authority and other volunteer organizations maintain the trail on a routine basis.



LeTort Park

Besides the nature trail, additional access to the LeTort is provided on public park property, such as, LeTort Park and Biddle Mission Park in the Borough of Carlisle and school grounds at LeTort Elementary School in Carlisle and on Dickinson College property in North Middleton Township. Willing private property owners also provide access on an informal basis. The Carlisle Area School District and Dickinson College use the trail and stream for science classes and as a science laboratory. Historically, the U.S. Army has permitted limited, controlled public access to the LeTort Spring Run at Carlisle Barracks.

C. Historical and Archaeological Importance

The LeTort Spring Run and its watershed are rich in history. American Indians are known to have lived along the LeTort and Conodoguinet banks due to their location and abundance of food and water. Later, in 1720, the first documented European settler, James LeTort, a French trader, trapper, Indian interpreter and government messenger, also built his home along the stream.

The LeTort's ideal location and resources for westward travel resulted in the construction of a fort (Fort Lowther) in 1753. At the same time Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton, chose the LeTort's vicinity as an ideal site for the Cumberland County seat. In 1753, five dwellings, including a temporary log courthouse, formed a new town. By 1782, this town was incorporated as the Borough of Carlisle.

Today, several historic areas reside within the LeTort watershed. In the Borough of Carlisle a historic district was established in 1976. In this district, which extends to the LeTort banks on Louthier and High Streets and nearly to it on Pomfret and South Streets, a Historical Architectural Review Board regulates changes. This district is contained entirely within the watershed but should have no direct effect on the LeTort or its watershed.

On the Middle/Lower reaches of the LeTort are the Carlisle Barracks, one of the oldest U.S. military installations. The first permanent settlement in the Barracks was established in 1757 by Col. John Stanwix. The Carlisle Barracks served as a military training and educational center throughout the years, including the Revolutionary War, at which time it was known as Washingtonburg. In 1879, the War Department passed control of the post to the Department of the Interior. During the next 39 years the Carlisle Barracks became home to the Carlisle Indian School. This school was well known for several Olympic football and track and field stars, the best known being the legendary Jim Thorpe. Today this area is well manicured with the majority of the LeTort contained within well maintained stone walls.

Neither of these historic areas have any known adverse affects on the LeTort watershed, but merely increase the amount of visitors to its banks each year.