

Saturday, April 25th was low water again on the scenic Octoraro Creek; so we had to do the middle section, about 7 miles in length. Club members Bud Baril, Diane Evanosky, Phil and Francine Taylor joined trip leaders Christine Brubaker and Terry Wright. Other clubs invited were the New Jersey Outdoor Club, Terry is a member, the Delaware Paddling Club and the York Co. Paddling Club. All met at the intersection of Rt 1 and 222 South. Added this year was a true joint clubs social after the paddle at the Union Station Hotel outdoor picnic table and bar/grill. This establishment is on 222 South and so was easy access for all parties to also go home. The menu is fresh food from the hotel finer dining restaurant, so all were pleased with their meal choices.

We think we could improve the trip shuttle speed and confusion in the future by designating a club member to take a car to the Rt 222 South New Bridge Road take-out before meeting others; but otherwise the trip planning and execution was AOK. The trip itself was uneventful in terms of true accidents, but we had a couple of dumps due to low water issues. Reminder: everyone should drill a drain plug on the deck of their boat's stern for faster drainage! Hand pumping in moving water is not recommended due to safety issues. Other safety equipment to be considered are spray skirts and helmets. A fun activity on the trip was watching and listening to the wood toads (?) attracting their mates at the final rest stop on our trip. We kept hearing them as we paddled, then we got to see them in a small still rainwater catch-basin.

Club members should be reminded that the Lancaster County Conservancy has been designated as the protector of the 150 acres on both sides of the Octoraro which involved resolving 22 parcels of land and 9 1/2 miles of stream corridor. Old railroad properties were involved in this success story. Also land was purchased from the Chester County Water Authority. The creek was designated as a Scenic River by the state of Pennsylvania in 1983 but land acquisitions were not finalized until recently. Thanks should also be given to the Octoraro Watershed Association, the Natural Lands Trust, Lancaster and Chester County, a private foundation and the PA Community Conservation Partnership Program administered by DCNR. for their fine work and financial contributions on this project too.

Please continue to enjoy the full length, 17 miles, of the Octoraro when the water is high enough. The scenery is worth the effort!

Submitted by: Christine Brubaker-Trip Co-Leader