

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

April 2026 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

## “TU’s Policy Initiatives & Conservation Objectives”

Guest Speaker – Lindsay Slater

Apr 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026

For our April speaker, we are pleased to welcome Trout Unlimited’s Vice President for Government Affairs Lindsay Slater to provide us with insight into his work to advance TU’s national policy initiatives and broader conservation objectives.

Lindsay began working on Capitol Hill in 1997 and joined TU in April 2023 after 23 years as U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson’s (R-ID) chief of staff. During the last five years of his tenure with Rep. Simpson, Lindsay worked tirelessly on the Columbia Basin Initiative to remove the four lower Snake River dams and permit sustainable populations of wild salmon and steelhead to access high-elevation spawning grounds in Idaho and northeast Oregon. This project simultaneously protected the interests and livelihoods of local communities dependent on agriculture, reliable energy, transportation, and a recreation economy.



When Lindsay joined TU, Representative Simpson extolled Lindsay’s previous work, saying “Lindsay’s fingerprints are all over the major legislative victories I have had during my time in Congress. He played a crucial role in crafting the original LAND Act, which eventually became the Great American Outdoors Act, a widely supported and bipartisan recreation and public lands bill. He was instrumental in crafting and passing legislation to fix the wildfire suppression budget, ending the practice of fire borrowing and restoring the funding intended for those important land management projects that make our forests healthier and more resistant to fire. Not to mention ending long-time controversy in the Boulder-White Clouds by creating a comprehensive solution to the challenges that ranchers, recreationists, conservationists, and local leaders faced for many years. He will be an asset to the great organization Trout Unlimited and their CEO Chris Wood.”

Lindsay grew up on a fifth-generation ranch near the town of Wallowa, Oregon (pop. 800) with three trout streams flowing through the property. He graduated from Oregon State University and the Southwestern University School of Law in Los Angeles, California. Lindsay lives on Capitol Hill with his wife and two children. I have the pleasure of knowing him because our children attended elementary school together on the Hill. – *Scott Cernich*

*Credit Trout Unlimited’s April 3, 2023 press release for the bio and Trout Unlimited for the photo.*

### April 15<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting

Laurel Volunteer Fire Department  
7588 Van Dusen Road, Laurel, MD 20707

Time and Day: 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday of the month except June, July, August and December

[Chapter Meeting Zoom Link](#)

Visit our website: [PPTU.org](https://www.pptu.org)

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2025 – 2026

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### Mid Atlantic Council Delegates:

Ron Briggs  
Bob Bokulic  
Tom Bronson  
Bob Dietz  
Randy Dwyer: Council Chair  
Bob O'Donnell  
Craig Vanderkolk  
Nick Weber

### Contact Us:

[mail@pptu.org](mailto:mail@pptu.org)

## Presidents' Column - Craig VanderKolk



Last week was the Towson Fly Fishing Show and for the first time we had table. It was a well-attended show, and we had many anglers stop by to talk about TU. I think it was successful because we had 13 people give us their contact information in order to get more information. It was exciting to share with these people some of the great things we do as a chapter. One guy stopped by with a Murray's Fly Shop hat and he shared some of the streams that he fished with Jeff Murray who presented a great talk this past week. One young man stopped by and told us he has been tying flies for two years but hasn't gotten out to fish very much. He was very interested in the mentor program. In addition to the mentor program, we discussed with interested anglers the past and upcoming outings, fly tying night (April 7), the swap meet, postings on the listserv and TIC. People were impressed with all we had to offer and it made us proud to be there to represent the chapter.

To many of the attendees, we suggested visiting the website. This has been a great part of our chapter. We owe Ken Bowyer a heartfelt thanks for all he's done over the years to make this the best TU website in Maryland. It's an amazing source of past and present information and I encourage everyone to dig a little deeper into the site.

Since I'm always looking for inspiration for this column, I went back 25 years and reviewed the "Gazette" for March 2001. Jim Keil was President and his column highlighted the chapter's active membership. He highlighted the wealth of knowledge that people share on the listserv and in particular hatch articles by Jay Shepard, who continues with those excellent contributions. We all benefit from such information, whether a new angler or an experienced one. Jim talked about sharing information to newcomers to the sport and chapter. Similar to the Towson Fly Fishing Show, the chapter in 2001 supported the University of Maryland Fly Fishing Show.

Something that I was not very familiar with was the ICC and its threat to local streams. It was reported that Governor Glendening in 2001 said the "The ICC is Dead" and should never be built for concern about the mid-section that goes through the Northwest Branch and Paint Branch watersheds. Despite that statement and all the work that was done by the

chapter for those local streams, the ICC was built. I'm sure it and other conservation violations noted in that Gazette, contributed to their current status.

I'm happy to be able to report in this current form of the newsletter, "The Conservationist" that 25 years later, we continue to make a difference in the health of the local waters and providing important information. I hope each of you will continue this tradition of supporting chapter activities by attending the Swap Meet (April 17 at Waredaca) or posting information on the listserv. We can use your help on projects on the Patuxent or helping out with Trout in the Classroom. Finally, consider sharing your knowledge of streams, bugs, flies or fishing techniques by writing a piece for the Conservationist. Twenty-five years from now someone will appreciate your contribution.

Craig VanderKolk  
President, PPTU



## PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

PPTU provides one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hip boots, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, etc. all on nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact us by e-mail: [mentor@pptu.org](mailto:mentor@pptu.org)

## Upcoming Events and Outings - PPTU

**April 7<sup>th</sup> – Fly Tying Social Night**  
Greene Turtle in Burtonsville, MD

**April 17<sup>th</sup> – Fly Fishing Gear Swap Meet!**  
Waredaca Brewery in Laytonsville, MD

**April 25<sup>th</sup>-26<sup>th</sup> – Casselman River**  
Grantsville, PA

**May 14<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> – [Fly Fishing 101 Class](#)**  
Howard Count Parks & Rec, Centennial Lake, MD

## April Chapter Outing - Ron Kerrick



Our next chapter outing is planned for Saturday, **April 25 to Sunday April 26** to fish the **Casselman River** in **Grantsville, MD**. We will be getting together for dinner at the Casselman Inn on Saturday night. So, please let me know if you plan to attend dinner. I posted a write up and map details via email. If you did not see it let me know.

To register for this Outing, go to the PPTU website or just use this [Link](#) and select Casselman River.

If the weather is right and the hatch is on, there should be an intense emergence of #14/16 mottled brown/grey wing dark body American Grannon (genus *Brachycentrus*) Caddis flies from early to late afternoon. During the hatch, the caddis flies swarm up and down the river in fast flight, sometimes in a blizzard of flies with eventual egg laying taking place late afternoon and evening. Even during this swarming period there can be a mid-day lull in surface activity and a good time to switch to subsurface flies. This is one of the best spring hatches in Maryland and the classic dry fly experience. The river is mostly open, easy for casting.

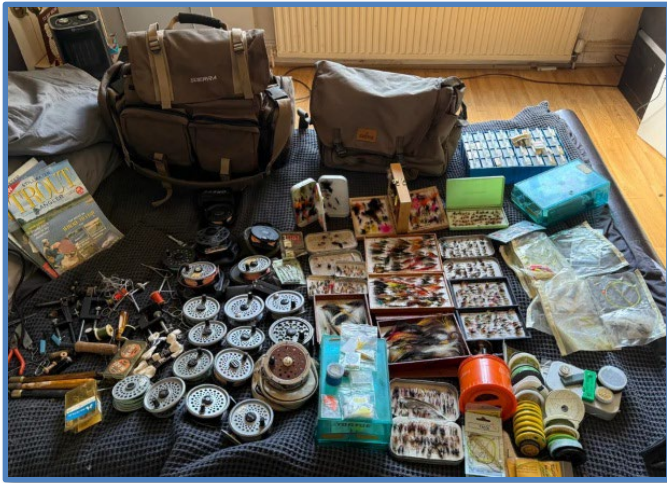
**Meeting Area:** We will meet in the parking lot at the Casselman River Bridge State Park on Saturday morning at 9:00 AM. The address is 10240 National Pike, Grantsville, MD 21536. It is located off Rt 40 as it crosses the Casselman River at the historic stone bridge.

If you have any questions, please contact me for more information. (240) 423-8375

[dron224@outlook.com](mailto:dron224@outlook.com)

## Fly Fishing Gear Swap Meet! - Ethan Miller

The date is set for our next swap meet on **April 17 from 4:00 - 7:00 pm at Waredaca Brewery** in Laytonsville, MD. Please mark your calendars to enjoy some beer, talk about spring and summer fishing plans, and peruse the inventory of lightly used gear, including rods, flies, tying material, and other helpful gadgets. This is a great event to bring friends to, especially folks who are just getting into the sport and are looking for new gear without spending a ton of money.



If you are interested in selling your lightly used items at the event, please be in touch with me at [ethan99@gmail.com](mailto:ethan99@gmail.com).

Please feel free to spread the word outside of the chapter.

See you then!  
Ethan

## TU National Raising Membership Dues - Randy Dwyer

TU National is raising membership dues to \$45/year starting April 1<sup>st</sup>.

PPTU members need to be a member of National Trout Unlimited. If you are in our group or wish to join our group and are currently NOT a TU member, give us a shout and we can get you your first year membership for free.



## PPTU Outings Schedule for 2026 - Ron Kerrick

Details for the PPTU Outings will be posted online before each date. This is what we're looking at for 2026.

**Apr 25-26:** Casselman, MD

**May 15-17:** Spring Creek, PA

**Jun 13:** Gunpowder One Fly, MD

**Jul:** No Outing Scheduled Yet

**Aug TBD:** Yellow Breeches White Fly, PA

**Sep 12:** Monocacy Smallmouth, MD

**Oct 9-12:** Savage River Camp Out, MD

**Nov TBD:** Steelhead, PA

**Dec:** No Outing Scheduled Yet

**Note:** If any PPTU members have any comments or suggestions for outings, please let the Outings Coordinator(s) know, at [outings@pptu.org](mailto:outings@pptu.org)

If you spot poaching please call or text:

**Maryland Wildlife Crime Stoppers**  
**At 443-433-4112**



*Add this number to your cell phone contact list!*



## Volunteer for City Catch - Sat, April 11 - MDTU

More hands make for light work so please consider joining, and invite a friend or two. No special expertise required, just basic spin fishing skills.

Each child receives a free spinning rod and reel, bobbers, hooks, and bait. Lunch is served for all, and the event is over by 1:00 pm. Please join us for this fun event and help bring joy to a group of youngsters.

Volunteer orientation begins at 8:00 am on April 11th and the students arrive at 9:00 am. Lunch is between noon and 1:00 pm. Please bring a fillet knife. Volunteers will clear fish that are caught so the kids can take them home.

PPTU - Consider helping out MDTU. The more volunteers they get the better the experience for all the kids!

[Volunteer to Help Kids](#)

[Volunteer to Stock Trout](#)



### Fish Art - Sean Beck

There was a neat vendor from PA at the MD Fly Fishing Show this year. Here's a link to her website: <https://www.rodandneedle.com/>

She makes felted nature art from natural wool. Some of her brook trout in particular are very realistic. I bought her Pumpkinseed which is at the bottom of this page: Aquatic Creatures | Rod and Needle.

Something cool to look into if you want some interesting fish art.



*Note: I had an issue with her page loading in Chrome. I switched to Firefox and it popped right up.  
Bob O'Donnell*

*"It is impossible to grow weary of a sport that is never the same on any two days of the year."*

~ Theodore Gordon

## 2026 Bamboo Derby on the Battenkill! - American Museum of Fly Fishing

As part of the Arlington Common's Battenkill Fly Fishing Festival, this special addition to the lineup is designed as a fun day on the water for bamboo veterans and first timers alike. Think of it as a day spent fishing with friends—old and new—while celebrating the traditions, craftsmanship, and heritage preserved by the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Whether you're a seasoned cane devotee or simply curious to cast bamboo for the first time, we'd love to have you join us. [See Derby Details Here](#)

Limited to 20 anglers! Advance registration required. Derby is open to all: guides, amateurs, and everyone in between.

- 8:00 AM check-in and group photo (location TBD)
- Score card and instructions will be provided
- Participants will honor AMFF's heritage by fishing bamboo rods exclusively
- \$125 entry fee
- Grand Prize: a custom engraved Abel reel
- All participants will receive a commemorative gift

## **Mending Fly Line - Marshall Cutchin**

For nymphing in early spring — when water temperatures sit in the high 30s to mid 40s and trout won't move far for food — this mend is critical. Cast slightly upstream and across, then immediately throw a firm upstream mend all the way to the indicator. This slows the rig and lets nymphs sink to the four or five feet of depth where cold-water trout hold. Compare your indicator's speed to nearby bubbles or foam: if the indicator is outpacing them, mend again.

The mistake is mending upstream when the current geometry doesn't call for it. If the slow water is between you and the fly — if your line is lagging behind the fly rather than pulling ahead of it — an upstream mend actually introduces drag by pulling the indicator backward.

### **When to Mend Downstream**

A downstream mend removes drag caused by slow water holding your line back, and it deliberately adds movement to swung flies. Competitive angler Devin Olsen describes watching a fishing partner cast nymphs into faster mid-river current from a slower bank position and reflexively mend upstream — causing the indicator to water-ski backward. Switching to a downstream mend fixed it immediately.

Downstream mends also drive soft-hackle presentations during early-spring hatches. When Blue-Winged Olives emerge in March (typically between 1 and 3 p.m. on overcast days), trout intercept emergers just below the surface. Casting quartering downstream with a size 18 soft hackle, making a small upstream mend to let the fly sink, then throwing a downstream mend forces the fly to swing broadside — mimicking an emerger rising through the water column. Trout often strike precisely when the fly shows its full profile and moves laterally.

### **Reducing the Need to Mend**

The best mend is often the one you don't have to make on the water. A reach cast — sweeping the rod tip upstream during the forward cast so the line lands with built-in slack — buys two to three extra seconds of drag-free drift before any on-water correction is needed. Following a reach cast with stack mends (shaking a foot or two of additional slack into the

drift at intervals) can extend a drag-free float to eight or ten seconds across complex currents.

Pennsylvania guide Domenick Swentosky advocates casting shorter and wading closer rather than making heroic mends through 30 feet of mixed currents. Every on-water mend introduces slack that weakens your connection to the fly and delays hook sets — and fish have an uncanny habit of eating during a mend, when you're least able to respond.

Strip all the line you'll need off the reel before casting, and feed slack incrementally rather than dumping it all at once. Use 6X fluorocarbon tippet on a 12-foot leader for small spring dries and emergers — fine tippet cuts through conflicting currents with less drag than heavier material. When conditions allow, position yourself to minimize the number of current seams your line must cross, reducing the need for mending altogether.

### **How do I know if my fly is dragging?**

Watch nearby bubbles or foam on the surface. If your indicator or fly is moving faster or slower than the natural debris around it, drag is occurring. Even subtle speed differences — your indicator pulling slightly ahead of the bubble line, or lagging behind — signal that a mend is needed.

### **What is a reach cast in fly fishing?**

A reach cast is an aerial mend performed during the forward cast by sweeping the rod tip upstream (or downstream) as the line unrolls. The line lands with a built-in offset that delays drag without disturbing the water. It's especially effective when casting across multiple current speeds to a rising trout.

### **Should I mend upstream or downstream when swinging wet flies?**

Start with a small upstream mend to help the fly sink, then use a downstream mend to initiate the swing.

### **Does rod length affect mending?**

A longer rod — 10 feet rather than the standard 9 feet — gives significantly more leverage for repositioning line on the water and keeps more line off the surface during a drift. If you plan to do a lot of indicator nymphing or long-leader dry-fly fishing in complex currents, the extra foot of rod length noticeably improves line control.

[Watch Orvis' Tom Rosenbauer display mending.](#)

**Members Catch  
- Bob O'Donnell**

It's time to round up some friends and go fish!  
Hope some of you can make it to the next outing.  
Keep posting your adventures, fish or no fish.



## Contributions & Questions Welcome!

Send your contributions, article suggestions or fly fishing questions to the Editor in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is typically the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

**Editor: Bob O'Donnell**

Phone: 410-733-0638

Email: [TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com](mailto:TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com)



### Arnot's New Age Caddis

This is a fully synthetic caddis imitation that Jack designed to be effective as a single dry fly, or used to suspend a nymph in a dry dropper setup. One of the key elements to this fly is that it's fully synthetic construction allows light to pass through it, which is what happens with real life caddis.

[Watch Video Here](#)



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