

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

## “Slow Moving Foam Bugs for Summer Predators”

Guest Speaker – Rob Snowwhite

May 20th<sup>th</sup>, 2026

We are pleased to welcome local guide and educator [Rob Snowwhite](#) as our May speaker to discuss Slow Moving Foam Bugs for Summer Predators. Rob provides guided fishing trips by the hour for both novice and experienced anglers in Northern Virginia and Washington, D.C., and hosts the longest running [fly fishing podcast](#).

Rob incorporated Fly Fishing Consultant (FFC) in 2010 to cater to the busy lives of Washingtonians and DC-area visitors by offering locally guided trips in the urban surroundings of the Potomac River. His encyclopedic knowledge of fishing, nature, and history will blow your mind. He is one of the most unique characters in the fly fishing industry. You may have encountered Rob over the years at Orvis Tysons, Hudson Trail Outfitters, the Mountain Lake Lodge, or on the water.



Rob is a self-taught fly-tyer. He started by taking parts from classmates' dioramas in high school Spanish class. These pieces of foam, yarn, and pipe cleaner were wrapped by hand using sewing thread to hooks with feathers from Rob's parakeet. They were immediately successful on his favorite stretch of the Potomac at Seneca.

Rob bought his first vise from Grizzly at the Angler's Lie in 1994. He began tying flies to imitate the insects living between his backyard creek and the lake across the street from his childhood home. He brought his vise to college and would tie between classes testing his flies on the nearby Rappahannock River. Rob seeks out and uses materials not intended for flies. His imagination and background in biology allow him to create incredible patterns that speak for themselves. Rob's most well-known fly is the Snowwhite Damsel.

As a guide, Rob caters to anglers of all abilities. His hands-on approach ensures that you receive personalized guidance throughout your trip, making it a rewarding experience for everyone.

If you are looking to fish in unique urban and suburban settings while targeting warm water species indigenous and introduced to the Potomac River watershed, Rob's guided trips are the perfect opportunity to immerse yourself in this exciting angling adventure. – *Scott Cernich*

### May 20<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](#)

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Bob Dietz  
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Bob O'Donnell  
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[mail@pptu.org](mailto:mail@pptu.org)

## Presidents' Column - Craig VanderKolk



Welcome to the new world of fly fishing. The Yellow Breeches is a stream that many anglers in PPTU have fished. It is a famous limestone stream that begins just below and to the west of Tabacco Patch Mountain (1542 ft) and winds its way through farmlands and small towns. As it moves down its spring fed and supports a wild brown trout population. Below Boiling Springs, the river receives cooling spring water to modulate temperatures in winter and summer. It has a broad spectrum of hatches throughout the year. And, as of the past month, you now need a permit to fish the most famous stretch, the Catch and Release section around the Allenberry Resort. While the permit is free, it takes some planning to reserve, and you need some extra time to pick up the permit at the resort. There are two time slots, 6am to 1:00pm and 2:00 pm to 9:00pm. I don't know what they do between 1:00 and 2:00, perhaps patrol the property for wayward anglers. Allenberry didn't respond when I asked more about the new requirement or how many anglers or permits are available.

What many of us probably didn't know is that the Allenberry Property extends from parking lot on Mountain Rd across from the Furnace, 1.46 miles downstream. Being someone who trusts but verifies things, I went down the rabbit hole to confirm that they could do this. I looked at Google Earth and saw the railroad tracks, perhaps the railroad has a right of way that's public? No, Allenberry owns the stretch of land between the river and the tracks right of way. Can they keep me from walking downstream from the Mountain Rd bridge? No, its "non-navigable" water, so they own the stream bed. Do they own both sides of the river? I downloaded the Regrid App (its free and pretty good at highlighting private land boundaries) and determined they own most of it. Finally, I looked at the online Allenberry Q & A section and interestingly it says, "The permit system applies only to anglers accessing the creek from Allenberry property". There is a fairly large property on the north side that they don't own, but it could be posted and I can't get there to see but maybe I'll test it out.

What does it really mean? Well, it's not the end of fishing the Yellow Breeches. I've had my best day there downstream in Williams Grove. There's some

good fishing upstream toward the headwaters, so I'll plan to use my Regrid App to make plans to fish it. I was always appreciative that Allenberry let anglers park on their property for some time, I tried to make sure I treated that with respect. I will continue to do that wherever I fish. I guess I was lucky to have that time on this stretch of water, along with the memories of fishing the white fly hatch a few years ago on a PPTU outing.

Mostly, I'm thankful that many of the streams here in Maryland are on public land. I also thank everyone who has given me tips on fishing them but also worked hard to preserve them, including PPTU. As the new official Trout Unlimited tagline puts it, "Every River Needs a Champion." Let's all continue to champion the Potomac and the Patuxent along with every other stream we fish.

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

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

May 15<sup>th</sup> - 17<sup>th</sup> – Spring Creek  
State College, PA for the Sulphur Hatch

[Select for the PPTU Outings Page](#)

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

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

## Steel Wheels on Tractors - Tim ???

If you've driven around the farmlands of the US, you might have noticed Amish or Mennonite farmers running tractors and other farm machines fitted with large steel wheels. Religious rules are behind the strange wheels, which serve in place of typical pneumatic tires.



Many Mennonite and Amish communities do some modern technology, with strict regulations around its use. There are differences between congregations, but most reject the broad concept of the automobile. It's believed that eschewing cars keeps a community closer together, due to the isolation when the only travel options are by horse, buggy, or on foot. Intrusion from the outside world is also cited as a factor, and is also why many such communities strictly limit the use of telephones and other communications technologies.

So, the steel wheels on tractors help the Amish and Mennonites avoid temptation. We took notice on the recent outing to the Casselman River.

[Read the full article here.](#)



## 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.

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

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

**Jul:** No Outing Scheduled Yet

**Aug TDB:** 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)

## Secret of the Mayfly's Dance - The Guardian

Thanks to Bob Dietz for slipping this one in for us.

In mayfly behavior, the bizarre vertical flight pattern has long puzzled experts but new research reveals why it may play a crucial role in the insect's survival. [Read the full article here.](#)



*"If we carry purism to its logical conclusion, to do it right {fishing} you'd have to live naked in a cave, hit your trout on the head with rocks, and eat them raw. But, so as not to violate another essential element of the fly-fishing tradition, the rocks would have to be quarried in England and cost \$300 each."*

~ John Gierach

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!*



## Salmon on Cocaine! - Bob O'Donnell

Ok, I've heard just about everything now. Salmon exposed to cocaine swim almost twice as far as those without. Not exactly surprising results there, but it's an interesting study. Frankly, I could use a little get up and go myself these days.

The links below will give further details on this interesting experiment. This is the first study of how drugs affect the behavior of fish in the wild. It adds to various concerns about chemical exposure from our water sources.

[Salmon Link 1](#)

[Salmon Link 2](#)

## Magnetic Fly Threader & Knot Tying Tool - Courtesy of Jouky Chang & Sean Beck

There was a lot of discussion on the server revolving around this tool. Jouky sent us a link to the site that developed it – [Talweg Company](#). Sean additionally included a video of it in use.

[Fly Roost Magnetic Threader](#)

Talweg is a family run brand started by two brothers who grew up hunting and fishing in beautiful Cache Valley, Utah. Despite all the awesome products out there, there are still a couple things we wish we had so we decided to make them ourselves. At Talweg, we create fishing tools that we want to use on the water. Each one goes through



dozens of prototypes and hours of testing right here in Utah. We don't sell it if we don't love it first.

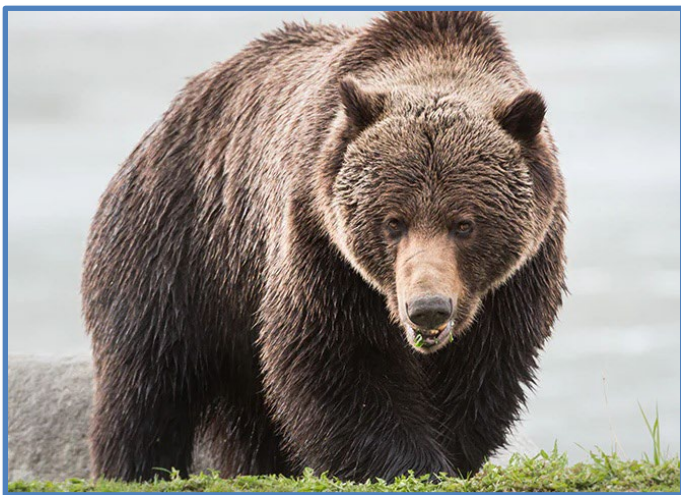
[Check the tool out here.](#)

They also have some other interesting tools on their website. Check them out. Thank you guys for the information!

## Alaska Fishing Insights - Jay Sheppard

Jay recommends watching this video for insights into fishing Alaska and emphasizes observing the subject's attitude. Very cool!

[Watch Video Here](#)



My wife has this on a t-shirt –

“What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger!  
Except Bears, Bears Will Kill You”

One time in Yellowstone she wouldn't even get out of our car. I just had to show her this video!

## Middle Patuxent Stocking - Jim Senker

We stocked 700 trout from Old Columbia Pike downstream for about 2 1/2 miles. Many of the Browns were 15" -20". I've fished several times since we stocked and the fish are spreading out and acting like fish. They have immediately found cover in undercut banks, timber and deeper holes/runs.

The stream has changed a lot in the 3 years since I was last there. With water levels are so low some of the deeper areas are now shallow and some of the shallow areas are now deeper. The stream is narrower and that's good given how the water levels.

Lastly, the stream is supporting a very active indigenous fish population that includes Fallfish, Bluegills/Sunfish, Suckers and minnows of some type. I fished for 8 hours Saturday and easily caught 75 Fallfish, 25+ Bluegills/Sunfish, 6+ Suckers and about 10 of that invasive species we stocked! All were very healthy and in good shape!

Go explore!

## Spring Creek Outing 2026 - Ron Kerrick/Lou Reichel

Spring Creek, as the name suggests, is a well-known spring creek in central PA between State College (Penn State campus is there) and Bellefonte, PA. This creek is considered the best limestone creek in PA. and is also a fly-fishing destination for many fly fishermen from all over the country. Spring Creek has been fished by well-known fly fishermen like George Harvey, Joe Humphreys and George Daniel. One section of the creek is called Fisherman's Paradise, a special regulated area that is a Catch and Release and Fly Fishing Only section where we will start. We will fish the prolific Sulphur Mayfly, and Blue Wing Olive hatch, mainly fishing for brown trout.

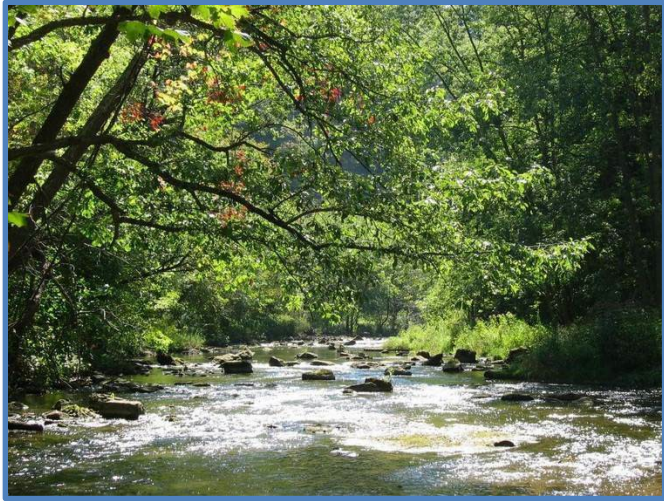
**Outing:** Sulphur hatch on Spring Creek

**When:** Friday May 15, 5:00 PM to Sunday May 17, 4:00 PM (3 days, 2 nights)

**Where:** Spring Creek, near Bellefonte and State College, PA.

It's about a 3 1/2 hour trip from Silver Spring to State College/Bellefonte, PA, so it's difficult to make this a one-day trip. We also want to fish the spinner

fall from dusk to evening (7:30-8:30 PM), so meet at Fisherman's Paradise by 5:00 PM on Friday. Of course, you can arrive earlier to fish but meet at the parking lot. After fishing we will meet back at the parking lot by 8:30 PM. Then we will find a late-night restaurant (most places close around 9:00 PM) for dinner in the State College/Bellefonte area.



## Brook Trout Win Big in \$44.2 Million Chesapeake Bay Restoration Package - MidCurrent Staff

The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on February 11 announced \$44.2 million in grants for water quality and habitat restoration across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The 72 grants, awarded through the Chesapeake Bay Stewardship Fund's Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction (INSR) and Small Watershed Grants (SWG) programs, will leverage nearly \$31 million in matching contributions for a total conservation impact of \$75 million.

For fly anglers in the Mid-Atlantic, the headline number matters less than a single line item: an \$812,132 grant to Trout Unlimited (TU) to reconnect and restore aquatic habitat in eastern brook trout strongholds along the North Branch of the Potomac River in West Virginia and Maryland.

### What TU's Grant Will Do

The North Branch project targets sediment and nutrient pollution—the two forces that do the most damage to coldwater fisheries in the region. TU will install more than two miles of agricultural exclusion fencing and riparian plantings to keep cattle out of

tributaries that feed the main stem. The grant also funds the restoration of 32 acres of riparian forest habitat and agricultural conservation practices on 250 acres of farmland.

These are practical, proven measures. Exclusion fencing drops sediment loading in short order; riparian buffers shade water, filter runoff, and rebuild the insect communities that trout depend on. The 250 acres of agricultural best management practices address nutrient loads further upslope.

### A River That Came Back from the Dead

The North Branch is one of the more striking comeback stories in eastern fly fishing. Through the mid-1990s, acid mine drainage from abandoned coal operations in Garrett County, Maryland, and neighboring West Virginia had rendered long stretches of the river biologically dead. Water pH dropped below levels that could sustain aquatic insects, let alone trout.

Beginning in 1993, the Maryland Department of the Environment installed a series of limestone dosers—mechanical devices that crush and dispense calcium into tributaries to neutralize acidity. By 1994 the water could again support fish. Maryland's Department of Natural Resources launched stocking programs, and within a few years wild brook trout and brown trout were reproducing naturally in the tailwater below Jennings Randolph Lake. The North Branch became the only river east of the Mississippi holding all four salmonid species: brook, brown, rainbow, and westslope cutthroat trout.



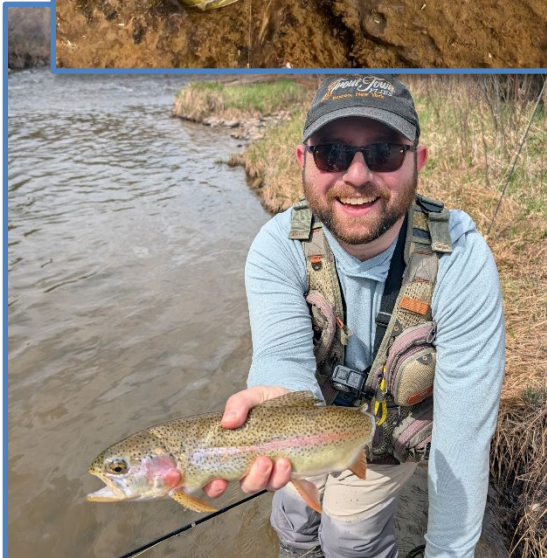
That recovery, though, depended on active chemical treatment of the mine drainage. The new TU grant shifts focus to the surrounding landscape—the agricultural pressures that now pose the next tier of threat to water quality in the watershed's headwater brook trout streams.

**Members Catch  
- Bob O'Donnell**

Couple of nice fish here this time. Hope some of you can make it to the Spring Creek outing. It's a gorgeous place to fish and worth the license and trip.



**Mopp Fly!  
That's cheating.  
Almost as bad as  
a squirmy worm.**



## FINAL NOTICE

If you have been receiving this printed newsletter for more than 6 months, this is your final hard copy. These mailings cost over \$2 each for printing and postage. You may only continue to receive a hard copy by immediately making the \$20 Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) each year. You can mail your check to PPTU, PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915, OR you can go online to <https://www.pptu.org/j-d/donate> and use your credit card. Going online and donating will automatically give us your email for future mailings. PPTU does not share your information with any third party. Your help in this matter will be appreciated. The chapter much prefers to spend our limited resources on conservation and education, not printing and postage. Thank you for acting on this matter.



### Snowshoe Hare Sulphur Dry Fly

You'll want to have some of these in your box this month. I've already seen some sulphurs popping out. This pattern is from our friend Matt O'Neal at Savage Flies and is a fairly easy tie. Plus the fish seem to like it. Tie some up! If you don't have any snowshoe rabbit, use a similar synthetic that will float.

[Watch Video Here](#)



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