



The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

March 2012

Published monthly except
June, July, August and December



Gunpowder River - from Fly Fishing to Riverkeeping - March 21

Almost all of us are aware of the wonderful fishing and outdoor resource known as the Gunpowder River that lies just North of Baltimore. This month's program will give us an opportunity to have a tune up of our expectations for the coming season for the river from a fishing perspective as well as insight on the conservation needs and perspectives of the newly appointed Gunpowder Riverkeeper.

Our speaker, Theaux Le Gardeur, is known to many of us as the owner and operator of Backwater Angler, a full service fly shop and guide service steps from the Gunpowder River in Monkton, MD. He updates a twice weekly fishing report at www.backwaterangler.com. For the fishing portion of his program Theaux will update attendees on the hatches to be expected on the river along with an overview of the river and the techniques and tactics he has found effective for enjoying the sport of the Gunpowder browns. He also plans to supply maps of the river to help you pinpoint must try locations to evaluate his advice and approaches to enjoying the stream at its best. Bring a pen to make notes on your map!

Theaux will also share with us his view on how the river is doing from his perspective as Riverkeeper. He was just accredited as the 18th WATERKEEPER[®] in the Chesapeake Bay Region by the WATERKEEPER ALLIANCE[®] and is RIVERKEEPER[®] and executive director of Gunpowder RIVERKEEPER[®], (GRK) a grassroots, advocacy based, non-profit, tax-exempt organization charged with protecting, conserving and restoring the Gunpowder river watershed. As Gunpowder Riverkeeper and Executive Director, he is the voice of the Gunpowder River and works to uphold the Clean Water Act regulations. Theaux will share his insights on his responsibilities on behalf of the Gunpowder and what he sees as its strengths and its vulnerabilities in the future. For more information visit: www.gunpowderriverkeeper.org. Come and update yourself on one of our finest fisheries from both a fishing as well as a conservation perspective.

– Nick Weber

Monthly Chapter Meetings

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

Place: Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

DIRECTIONS TO THE SENIOR CENTER

From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First Right on Forest Glen Road, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

Visit our website: www.pptu.org

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President's Column - Dennis Covert

March has its attributes, steelhead fishing is still in full swing, and the larger brown stoneflies hatching on warm sunny days can bring on some fantastic fishing. But even so, March makes me antsy, the magic of winter has faded even if the winter storms haven't, and spring is definitely dominating my thoughts. I can't help but think of March as the middle month, half way between the shortest days of winter, but still weeks off from the best hatches of spring.

March can have some very pleasant weather, and bright sunny days during the work week; tiny flowers pushing their way up out of cold soil and a tinge of new green to the landscape will have me considering small withdrawals from my cache of never enough vacation time. The right side of my brain will say don't do it dude, go to work, save that time, better days are coming, while the left side whispers cajolingly, c'mon man, it's beautiful out, let's go fishing! And the tug of war begins.....

By the time this comes out, our chapter will have stocked our home waters of the Patuxent. Jay Sheppard will oversee the sprinkling of a couple thousand browns and rainbows in the catch and release areas of the upper and mid-sections Patuxent, from Route 94 almost down to Route 97, and below Brighton Dam down to Haviland Mill bridge. We also have more volunteers stocking the Middle Patuxent in south Columbia between Old Columbia Pike and Murray Hill. Just the thought of this many trout within easy driving distance should have chapter members fussing with their tackle in anticipation. Take advantage and enjoy!

We have several Chapter activities this month, on the 3rd we will be at Bass Pro signing up new members inside and selling hotdogs outside. Our outing this month is to Erie Pennsylvania for steelhead and maybe even a large brown or two that have been stocked at the creek mouths. On the 31st our chapter is participating in a stream clean up from below Brighton Dam all the way down to Mink Hollow Road. Show your support and come on out and give us a hand.

Our big drawing was at the January Chapter meeting and I want to recognize and congratulate the winners; PPTU member John Finerty won 1st prize the West Branch Angler trip. Second prize, the Allenberry weekend package, was won by Rich Thomas NJ Council Chair and former NJLC; the third prize water proof camera went to PPTU member Mark Noble. Have fun guys and thank you to everyone who participated. 🌸



PPTU Mentor Program Beginner's & Beyond

Ken Bowyer 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. at nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an Annual Supporting Contribution will be asked to contribute \$20. Contact Ken 301-627-7154 or

E-mail: kenbowyer@verizon.net 🌸

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

By the time this issue is mailed out, we will have done nearly all the float stockings on our local waters. In case there is still another stocking and you wish to help, drop me an email, and we will get you on our mailing list, if not for this year then for next. I certainly want to thank everyone who has helped us float stock trout this spring. Approximately forty volunteers have helped move over 4000 trout over the past several weeks.

Please mark your calendar for Saturday, March 31. That will be the annual cleanup of the Patuxent River watershed day. We have helped the Isaac Walton League (IWLA) in Damascus for the past several decades cleanup Patuxent River State Park. Meet at the Wildlife Achievement Chapter's work shed at 8:30 AM. They are located on Mullinix Mill road just north of the intersection with Long Corner Road. This is a great family outing. Bring waders and a heavy rake. PPTU and its friends go to all the bridge and work the actual stream banks and bottoms downstream for a few hundred yards removing debris that has washed into the river in recent floods. Families without waders can certainly help in the cleanup of the numerous parking lots and roadsides in the park. When finished, a free lunch will be provided back at the IWLA main building. 🌸



2011 Volunteer of the Year Awards Presented By Temple Fork Outfitters

The National Capital region held a recognition dinner on January 4th in honor of the 2011 volunteer and participants of the year and other notable volunteers and participants from the region. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing CEO Warren Phillips hosted the event at his home near Woodbine, MD.

The National Capital volunteer of the year was **Carl Smolka** member of the Potomac



Patuxent Chapter of TU that runs the Ft. Meade PHWFF program. Carl was nominated for this award by Larry

Vawter the program leader of the Ft. Meade PHWFF group. “Carl was one of the first, if not the first, person to raise his hand to volunteer when the program was founded two years ago” said Larry “Out of the original 5 volunteers he is the only one left with the exception of myself.” “Every week he takes great pride in teaching this art of fly fishing and fly tying to our Ft Meade warriors” continued Larry. “The warriors truly respect and enjoy working with him. He brings his expertise in the art of fly tying and challenges our students to create life like flies, which they truly enjoy.” 🌸



Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

Some have already been fishing this year, what with the warmer than normal winter temperatures and good rainfall we have had. Others are just now thinking of getting their license and heading for a nearby stream. Winter and early spring stone flies have been out most of the winter. The latter are about a size 14 tannish brown insect. A few #18 *Baetis* blue-winged olives have been spotted, but more will be coming off later this month and into the spring.

Many of us enjoy a day on a put-and-take stream (opening day is March 31) or the equally popular 2/day streams, such as the Little Patuxent in Savage or the Patapsco below Daniels Dam. As the season moves into April and May, more of us will focus our attentions on the no-kill waters. On streams such as the Gunpowder, Big Hunting Creek, and the Savage, those wild trout can get really picky on not just presentation but on fly choices. In fact, on those streams with wild trout, the smallest trout learn fairly quickly what is edible versus what jerks them into a landing net.

My guess is that probably 90–95% of fly fishers use #16 or larger fly for nearly all their fishing. Thus, the wild trout are very accustomed to those patterns. Many over 9 or 10 inches can likely identify not just the fly pattern by name but also the hook manufacturer! As always presentation is most of the game, most especially with dries. So even when we obtain a drag-free float over a feeding trout with the right fly, we still may get nothing but refusals.

My good buddy, Charlie Gelso, is a real aficionado of small flies. He even has dreams of using an 8X leader and a #22 or #24 midge to hook one trout after the other. On really slick flats one can often get by without a small fly being on point as a dropper behind a larger, more obvious fly. However, if the water is slightly ruffled up from wind or water action,

the typical small fly fisher will resort to the tandem rig. The smaller fly behind the larger is tied on with only 15–20 inches of 7X or even 8X tippet. Regardless of how much tippet is used between the two flies, the smaller fly rarely lands more than about 10 inches from the larger, often only 7 or 8 inches away.

Small midge patterns are the most popular tiny flies used, but even tiny caddis and mayflies can sometimes be employed when those insects are on the water. One of my favorite small fly patterns is what is called a ‘one-hackle,’ while others use a ‘3-hackle’ fly. A #20 or 22 dry fly hook (straight eye, vs. DTE or UTE) is used. Tie a few hackle fiber tips straight out the rear of the shank then palmer one or mix three quality hackles up to the eye. I love a dark dun one-hackle, but use cream and white about as much. The 3-hackle version can use grizzly, ginger and brown. There is no dubbing used. As usual, the hook point is offset, and I sometimes clip a V out from under the body to better expose the hook point.

When using the midge larvae or pupae patterns, the fly should be fished just below the surface. I have been amazed at how well trout can spot a #22 midge passing them in the fast pocket water of the Savage. They have less than a second to see and decide on pursuing the tiniest offering. One rarely has to go smaller than a #22. Try a tiny fly pattern when you are getting one refusal after another on our popular wild trout streams. Have a great spring and leave a few uneducated trout for me! 🌸

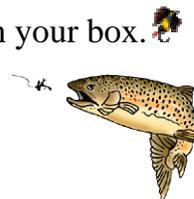
Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text in an email or as a Microsoft Word attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

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Early Meeting Segments Begin at 7 PM - Nick Weber

Tying Bench

This month Ken Bowyer, a long time member, leader of our Mentor Program, and mentor to many of us will tie a pattern that is simple enough that we all can tie it but one that you may not have tried for some time. Ken’s pattern is the Griffith's Gnat and he will show how it's tied. He explains that the pattern was invented by George Griffith, one of the founding fathers of Trout Unlimited, and imitates tiny midges, midge emergers, and small mayflies. Ken reminds us that if you enjoy dry fly fishing, this is a must fly for your fly box. Have several sizes of this important fly in your box. 🌸



Angler's Corner

Be sure and stop by the Angler's Corner and hear about the recent trip to Big Hunting Creek on February 25. There will undoubtedly be a lot of talk about the upcoming trip on March 22 – 25 for Erie Steelhead. The fishers are always excited about this venue and the prospects of putting a large bend in their 7 weights. Check with Dennis about travel, lodging, techniques, tackle, and patterns needed for a great experience. Also be sure and tell Dennis about a favorite fishing location that you might suggest that has not been tried by the outing group.

If you can't make it to the meeting, don't hesitate to suggest a potential outing destination to Dennis at denniscovert@hotmail.com.

See <http://www.pptu.org/outings/outings.shtml> for outing listings. 🌸



Spring Outing Schedule 2012

- March 22, 23, 24, 25 Steelhead Outing to Lake Erie Tribs
- April 25, 26, 27 28 Gypsy Fishing Pa Trout Waters, wherever the hatch is on, wherever the fishing is best!
- May TBA

For more information on these outings, please contact Dennis Covert at:
denniscovert@hotmail.com or 410-740-8337.

Help To Stop Poachers

Reminder - If you spot poaching please place a call to

Catch a Poacher Hotline at 1-800-635-6124



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