

November 2007

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Raffles, Auctions, and More

At the November 14 chapter meeting, which will be the second rather than the third Wednesday of the month, we will be having our annual fundraiser. The November chapter meeting will offer a wide range of gifts for family and friends and yourself! In addition to a raffle with a fishing destination prize, there will also be a second prize of a quality rod and reel, and third prize is a digital camera. Tickets will be available for purchase at the November meeting.

There will also be many other items at our Silent Auction including: travel fishing guides by Ken Penrod and Ann McIntosh; fly tying books by Dick Stewart, Gary Borger and Randall Kaufman; casting by Lefty Kreh; and Patterns of the Masters for expert tiers.

Also, back by popular demand will be PPTU's Flea Market where members and guests can sell items that are gathering more dust than use and/or buy items that you had forgotten that you need. The November meeting will be fun, exciting, and best of all the proceeds will further PPTU's conservation program and cold water habitat improvement work.

In addition, the meeting will feature PPTU's own panel of experts, including Jay Sheppard, Jim Greco, >

Annual Fundraiser Wednesday, November 14

7:00 PM
(see bottom of page for directions)

****Guest Speakers****

**Jim Greco, Dave Pratt,
and Jay Sheppard**

Dave Pratt, and probably other invited guests. The panel will discuss flyfishing techniques, tackle, waters, and a lot more. A question and answer session will follow so be sure to bring your toughest questions and our experts will give you their best insights. This will be a fun meeting and a chance for you to win some terrific prizes so be sure to attend, as this will be our last chapter meeting of 2007 since there is no chapter meeting in the month of December.

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Monthly Chapter Meetings

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

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

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

The Conservationist

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Contributions in the form of clip art, articles, conservation activities, trip reports, letters, fishing and conservation news, tying tips, book reviews, and essays about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or in a Microsoft Word attachment. Authors should also include their phone number and a brief descriptions of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Bob Dietz

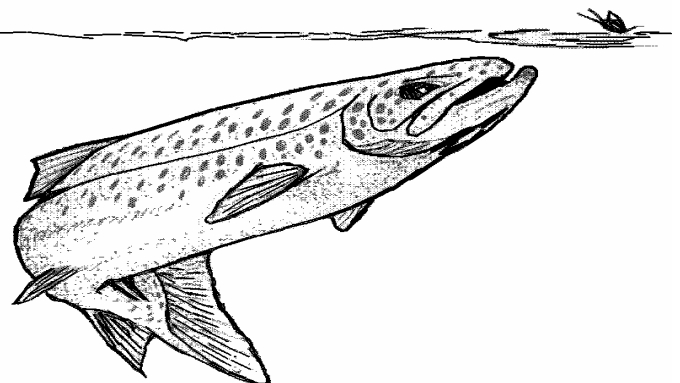
The last few weekends I've spent teaching fishing skills to a couple of Boy Scout troops, one from my local area, and one from Virginia. As a chapter, we help sponsor a fishing/conservation camp in Virginia, and this year sponsored teaching the fly fishing merit badge at Baltimore area Boy Scout camp. We also run a kid's fishing day the first weekend in May every year.

I mention these activities because it's important that we involve youth in our sport. Studies done in Maryland, as well as other states, have shown that adults who didn't fish as children are very unlikely to take up the sport.

Why do we want more people involved in the fishing? Fewer fishermen mean more fish for us, right? Wrong! Fewer fishermen mean fewer resources that will be devoted to maintaining our fisheries. Perhaps you've heard the saying "A stream that has no friends has no future." The same holds true on the grand scale. If streams in general have no friends, they have no future.

The activities I mentioned above are organized ones. You don't need to wait for an organized activity to present itself to help keep fishing a viable means of recreation in the future. **Take a kid fishing.**

Getting off the soapbox, don't forget that the November meeting is your chance to win valuable prizes (really, they are) and to "stump the chumps" as they say on Car Talk. It's our annual fundraising meeting, with a much larger raffle (in terms of quality, not quantity) than our usual monthly one, and features the ever popular "ask the experts" panel discussion. I hope you can make it. ■



You Should Be Tying Flies

By Jim Greco

This article is a reprint from 2001, but since we are now registering students for our PPTU tying class, I thought those of you who weren't around then would benefit from it, and those who were would enjoy it again. By the way, it still ends the same.

In the spring of 2000, Pam and I traveled to one of our favorite streams in Bedford County, PA to fish the first few days of the annual sulphur hatch. It turned out to be a day or two early. We hiked to a remote pool about a mile from our car and eagerly waited for the sulphurs, but as dusk approached there wasn't a sulphur to be seen. The calm water beneath the hardwoods whispered past our legs and taunted us with memories from prior seasons when the sulphurs hatched on time and rising fish shattered the calm water with many slurping rises.

Seventy-five yards downstream, at the tail of the pool, two other fly fishers entered the placid water and gracefully presented their offerings. I gave them a pleasant nod and waited, just about ready to tie on a weighted nymph and cast to the faster moving water in the center of the pool. As I reached for my fly box, a ring formed in the calm water twenty-five feet in front of us, then another, thirty-five feet upstream from Pam. In a matter of minutes, rising fish dotted the pool with rings almost everywhere I looked, but there weren't any sulphurs to be seen. I bent over and scanned the surface of the water for a clue. Surprisingly, I saw a large black caddis lying spent in the surface film. Once I knew what to look for, I noticed caddis now drifting everywhere in the pool. Quickly, I scooped one up and scrutinized it more closely. It was a size twelve, the largest I'd ever seen anywhere. I fumbled for my caddis box and grabbed a size twelve caddis pattern that I had tied the year before for a trip to Montana. It had a black body, a dark dun deer hair wing, and five turns of black hackle tied up to the eye of the hook. I couldn't believe how lucky we were to have a pattern that so closely matched the natural. I tied one on and quietly waded over to Pam with a couple for her. Over the next 45 minutes Pam and I caught and released more than 25 fish, each crashing the black caddis pattern with mucho gusto. Before last light, we headed for the car, passing by the two fellows who had been fishing the tail of the pool. >

One of them called to us wanting to know what we had been using. When I told him, he said he'd been fishing the pool the night before when the same hatch had occurred, but not having anything that large, he'd only landed two fish. He went on to say he'd been to a couple of fly shops in the area and had only found some #14 black, Elk Hair Caddis, the largest in stock at any of the shops. He also said he'd had nothing but refusals all evening, not one strike. I gave him a couple of the big caddis Pam and I had been using and waited while he tied on and cast to the closest riser. On his first cast, a solid 15 inch rainbow slammed the caddis.

This story has a moral, but you probably have to tie flies to understand it. You should be tying flies because; you will catch more fish, learn new things, be more creative, get to spend more time tying for others who fly fish, get to carry seven or eight fly boxes in your vest instead of one or two, get to study Latin names of bugs you never heard of before, get to take allergy pills, and get to catch fish on flies tied with your own hands. I never want to quit.

Pautexent Report

BY JAY SHEPPARD

Although I have had reports of a few trout surviving the very low flows these past 2 months, I really would not suggest fishing the upper Patuxent Special Regulation Area until we stock next February. The other real problem with fishing this stream at this time of the year is that much of the upper Patuxent Special Trout Area is a public hunting zone. Call the Park office at (301) 924-2127 or stop by their Clopper Road office in Gaithersburg (Seneca Creek State Park is responsible for Patuxent River State Park) to obtain maps of hunting zones within Patuxent. Some of the local sport shops may also have this information. The firearm season for deer is about to start, but other firearm hunting (e.g., squirrels, woodcock), as well as archery and black powder seasons for deer will be running from now through early February. I would suggest weekdays or Sundays OR a bright-colored hat on Saturdays, in particular. (Sunday hunting is not allowed on public lands.) The most hunted area is mostly between Hipsley Mill and Howard Chapel Roads, as well as around Long Corner Road. No stocking of trout has been done in either the sections of the main Patuxent above or below Triadelphia Reservoir and Brighton Dam this fall.

FINAL NOTICE!

MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT NOW PAYABLE

The annual assessment (see back) is now payable. We have not had everyone renew in recent years, so we may have to further reduce the size of THE CONSERVATIONIST if we do not have enough folks renewing. Please help PPTU and send in your money today!! Check your label—if we have stamped it in **RED** with "FINAL NOTICE . . .," you must send us \$15 now or pay at the November meeting in order not to miss the January and next year's subsequent issues. Some members have already paid this year, so they show "PP-0908" or a later year. Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER — TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. Please indicate if you wish to have it sent via email; otherwise, we will send a hard copy, if that is not otherwise noted. Full time high school or college students are waived the assessment, but you must send us your graduation date. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations at our raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, etc. **This is the final mailing** for those having "PP-0907" or no "PP-" date on their label. **There will be NO separate mailings to remind current members of this obligation. Please take note and action today! Thank you.**

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM: BEGINNERS AND BEYOND

One on one stream side fly fishing instruction is available to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hipsters, a rod and reel outfit, and leader.

Discussions will include equipment, knot tying, 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 \$15.

Contact Ken Bowyer at 301-627-7154 or e-mail kenbowyer@comcast.net.

October Outing Report

By Dennis Covert

While the weather was a tad warm this year, it was still more enjoyable than the 20 degree temps of last year. The October outing was a three day camping trip to fish the waters of western Maryland, including the Savage River, and the North Branch of the Potomac River.

There were some very nice fish caught, mostly browns, but also some rainbows, several brookies in the 9-11 inch range, and at least two 20 inch biggies out of the North Branch. Jay also reported a 23 inch rainbow out of Beaver Creek on his way home.

A variety of patterns were used, including blue winged olives, parachute adams, terrestrials, egg patterns, and a pink san juan worm at the PHD pool on the Savage that produced an 11 inch brookie, a true trophy fish.

The October outing remains a real crowd pleaser so we have already reserved the pavilion for next year over the Columbus Day weekend, October 10-12, 2008.



Fall PPTU Outings Schedule

November 11-12-13—Elk Creek Pennsylvania (steelhead stamp required). This will be a mid-week steelhead outing. The plan is to arrive sometime Sunday, fish all day Monday & Tuesday, check out Wednesday and fish some more before heading back. This will probably be a brisk outing with cold temps. So pack winter clothes and ice free for your rod guides. We are staying at the Red Roof Erie #54 located at I90 at Perry hwy/sr 97, exit #27. (814) 868-5246 FAX: (814) 868-5450. Rooms are \$60 per night plus tax for a double room, and single room rates are also available.

For more info or to sign up for an outing, contact Dennis Covert, coordinator, by email at dennis-covert@hotmail.com or phone at 410-740-8337.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

BY JAY SHEPPARD

I have done very little spin fishing for trout and bass in the past decade or two. Many years ago, that was about the only way I fished. As I got more and more interested in fly fishing, that became my dominant manner of fishing. I still retain my ultralight spinning rod and reel. I have a few 'old timer' suggestions for those who like this form of fishing that should still work today.

Ultralight outfits allow me to toss a very light lure with good accuracy into tight pockets or close to cover where the trout or bass might be lying in wait for a 'protein packet' to pass. Line of about 4-lb test is ideal, as it is usually strong enough to hold a good sized fish and still allow casting of lures in the ¼ ounce or smaller range with some distance and accuracy. One very quickly learns with this light line that the fisher cannot rear back to set the hook as with much heavier test lines without losing the lure on the fish or snag.

Although I would use them, my tackle boxes held fewer and fewer of the spinners and other sinking lures readily available. Such lures required constant cranking on the reel to keep them from catching the bottom. My preferences in later years went to those lures that could float or suspend themselves when they were not being retrieved and then dive when retrieved. The various minnows, crayfish, frog and similar lure imitations could be cast up stream of some obstruction such as an over hanging branch and then allowed to drift under it before starting the retrieve. If one has ever seen an injured or sick fish, they do not have the energy to continually move. They move a few inches and drift, move a few inches and drift...etc.

About 25–30 years ago a state record brown trout (not in Maryland) was caught on a dead drifted, floating minnow lure. The fish was downstream of a power plant that in the summer sucked thousands of thread-fin shad into the turbines where they would then float along the surface for a mile or so downstream—like mayfly spinners. The trout was simply sucking in the floating and stunned shad as they drifted across its feeding station. The fisher simply had to cast his floating minnow out in front of the trout and hope that it would float to the trout at the proper moment. >

In actual fact, it took several mornings to get the fish and the lure timed correctly before it was hooked. I have seen floating/twitching lures work in the Savage, North Branch and Gunpowder Rivers with good effect, especially when the flows are relatively high. (None of these rivers have the floating shad, but they do have some big browns looking for an easy meal.)

Another lure that I see rarely used in recent years but yields good results is the old Lazy Ike or flat-fish. These will dive and vibrate when under a tight line, which can be varied depending upon the current and other factors. 'Hanging' one of these funny lures just upstream of a large log jam or other deep cover can often entice a big brown to come out and give chase. This is especially useful in really cold water where the lure is essentially held in the same spot for many minutes, only being vibrated or twitched every few seconds. This lure comes in very small sizes for fly rods, too. As with any fishing, cold water means SLOW retrieves to allow the fish the time to recognize the lure and then to give chase.

Ultralight spin fishing is a lot of fun. One does not need a zillion choices of patterns like fly fishers carry, especially for bass. Always have Polaroid glasses to see the fish chasing the lure. Keep varying the speed and other action to find the combination that yields solid strikes. Go ultralight!



New Key to Identification of Mayflies

A new one page key to identifying our local mayflies found on trout streams has been prepared by Jay Sheppard. It will be on sale for a nominal cost at each meeting in a laminated form for packing in your vest and taking onto a stream. The key has also been posted on the chapter web site in a downloadable file. This is a useful tool to have with you while you are fly-fishing many of our streams in the mid-Atlantic. The laminated sheets are about six inches by nine inches and have the date of September 2007.

REMINDER TO PPTU MEMBERS

The next mailing of the *Conservationist* will be in early January. There is no December issue or any monthly meeting. Have a safe and Happy Holiday!

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If you have moved or see any error in your mailing labels (*Trout* or *Conservationist*), please notify **both** the National TU office and this chapter with **separate** notices. Our mailing list is maintained apart from the National list; we do eventually get the notice of address change from National TU, but it is often a few months before it affects your *Conservationist* and other mailings.

Renewals for TU Members

Existing members should be renewing their membership to TU by any of the following methods:

- Membership Renewal Statement,
- Call Customer Service at 1-800-834-2419, or
- Online at www.tu.org.

For online renewals, click on the **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left. You will need to know your login name and password.

Since the November meeting is our annual fundraiser, there will be no tying bench or angler's corner at the November meeting. In fact, you could say that the whole meeting in November will be a big angler's corner.

However, if you want to find out more about the steelhead trip to Pennsylvania, look for Dennis Covert at the meeting and chat with him about the trip. The steelhead trip to Pennsylvania is scheduled for November 11-13, 2007. He can also give you many more of the details about the October outing camping trip to Western Maryland, and what to expect if you are interested in going on that outing next year. He already has the pavilion reserved for that outing, which will again be over the Columbus Day weekend on October 10-12, 2008.

Dennis is also interested in suggestions about new waters for our outings. So don't hesitate to talk with him about any ideas you may have for future outings. He will also welcome your reports of some days you have had on the stream.



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