

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

September 2013 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December



## PPTU Summer Vacation A Look Back – September 18<sup>th</sup>

Welcome back everyone, I hope your summer included lots of fun and lots of time on the water. Our chapter never lacks for great pictures from great trips being shared by one another. That is the basis for September's meeting. For September's meeting, we want to make you, our fellow members the featured speaker for the evening.

We'll have three great presentations by Bob Deitz, Alan Burrows and Bob O'Donnell. Bob Deitz will be giving a photo presentation from his trip to the Catskills. Alan Burrows will be discussing his experiences fishing the Eagle River in Colorado, the Yellowstone in Wyoming and the Bitterroot in Montana. Bob O'Donnell will showcase his guided trip along the Delaware River with West Branch Angler. If you remember, this guided trip was one of our raffle items for this past year's fundraiser, which Bob won.

So please join us for a great night to reconnect and see some great fishing memories from your fellow members.

– Marc Hutzell

### **Fly Tying Feature**

Bob O'Donnell will be tying a  
White Fly Soft Hackle



### **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](http://www.pptu.org)

## **OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2012 – 2013**

President: Jim Robinson 301-490-5358  
Past-President: Dennis Covert 410-740-8337  
Vice-President: Bob O'Donnell 410-733-0638  
Treasurer: Ken Bowyer 301-627-7154  
Secretary: Lou Reichel 410-730-5150  
Directors: Rodger Johnson 301-275-2593  
Alan Burrows 443-610-7850  
Pati Nicholson 240-508-7864  
Joe Robinson 301-565-3267  
Jim Greene 301-652-3848  
Marc Hutzell 240-499-4945

### **Committee Chairs:**

Fundraising: Bruce Eberle 301-854-3142  
Listserve Moderator: Robert Simpson 410-461-8180  
Librarian: Lou Reichel 410-730-5150  
Mentor Program: Ken Bowyer 301-627-7154  
Membership Secretary: Carl Smolka 301-929-1365  
*Conservationist* Editor: Bob O'Donnell 410-733-0638  
Outings: Dennis Covert 410-740-8337  
Speakers Program: Marc Hutzell 240-499-4945  
Conservation Advocacy: Jim Keil 301-588-8375  
Project Healing Waters: Larry Vawter 410-750-8264  
Publicity: Bob O'Donnell 410-733-0638  
Raffles: Bob Dietz 301-854-6893  
Refreshments: Rodger Johnson 301-275-2593  
Trout in the Classroom: Jim Greene 301-652-3848  
Chuck Dinkel 301-831-3637  
Water Quality: Carl Smolka 301-929-1365  
Webmaster: Ken Bowyer 301-627-7154  
Jack Benoit 202-244-1040  
Youth Program: VACANT

### **Stream Committees:**

Paint Branch: Joe Robinson 301-565-3267  
Northwest Branch: Jim Keil 301-588-8375  
Middle Patuxent: Jim Robinson 301-490-5358  
Patuxent: Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559

### **Mid Atlantic Council Delegates:**

Nick Weber 301-774-2806  
Bob Dietz 301-854-6893  
Larry Vawter 410-750-8264  
Vice Chairman Resources Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559  
Carl Smolka 301-929-1365  
Bob O'Donnell 410-733-0638  
Jim Greene 301-652-3848  
Pati Nicholson 240-508-7864  
Dennis Covert 410-740-8337  
Jim Robinson 301-490-5358  
Lou Reichel 410-730-5150



## **Presidents' Column - James Robinson**

Greetings to all as we begin a new year with the new Officers & Board of Directors ready to serve you, the membership of our Chapter, and the mission of Trout Unlimited to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Our calendar is rapidly filling out with exciting outings to local & far flung waters, interesting speakers and topics at our monthly meetings, an ever expanding Trout in the Classroom program, weekly meetings with members of the recovery battalion at the Fort Meade Project Healing Waters program, continuing efforts to maintain a sustained cold water release into the Patuxent River below Brighton Dam, new initiatives by Howard County Recreation & Parks to improve access to the Patuxent at Haviland Mill Road, an Eagle Scout project to improve access above Haviland Mill, continuing efforts to maintain the good financial standing of the Chapter by hot dog sales at Bass Pro in October, our annual fund raiser in November, and our big raffle in early 2014. And this is only a partial list of all the things we on our plate.

I am re-organizing the committee structure of the Board based on the committees established by our 2012 by-laws – Education, Communications, Financial Development, Membership and Conservation. As these Committees get organized, I'll be asking them to provide regular updates to you by way of the *Conservationist*, our regular publication, on their activities and volunteer opportunities.

Speaking of volunteer opportunities ... as a volunteer organization, we rely on the support of our membership – you! In the few years that I have been a member of this Chapter, I've seen a number and variety of opportunities to volunteer time to the myriad of activities we support. I'd like to challenge each of you to commit some of your time during the next year ... just 5 or 10 hours over the course of the year would make our work much

easier for everyone. Here are just a couple of examples:

- 1) On October 26th, the Chapter will be selling hot dogs, bratwurst and sodas at Bass Pro at Arundel Mills. If you can give us an hour or two of your time (from 9 AM until about 3 PM), this is a great time to meet other members of the Chapter and show the public the kinds of activities we are involved in like Project Healing Waters & Casting for Recovery.
- 2) We critically need someone to run our Barrel Raffle at our monthly meeting. This takes about 1 hour per meeting. We already have a number of prizes. We just need a person or two to run it. Contact any Board member at or before our September 18th Chapter meeting.
- 3) Our meeting coordinator, Marc Hutzell, is looking for fly tiers for the Tying Bench at each of our meetings. You don't need to be an expert tier ... just willing to demonstrate an interesting or favorite fly. This takes less than an hour at one meeting. Contact Marc.
- 4) Trout in the Classroom is rapidly expanding. This past spring, there were 67 schools in the program. We are anticipating an additional 20 schools in 2014. Learn about the operation of the program at their annual training in November. The critical times are the day that the eggs are delivered to the schools in January (a couple of hours per person) and the days that the trout are released in April & May (many require 5-6 volunteers committing 4-6 hours) but there are other opportunities between delivery & release. Skills that are helpful (but not required) tying flies, teaching casting, macro-invertebrate identification, water testing and releasing the fish. Contact Jim Greene, Chuck Dinkel or me.
- 5) Project Healing Waters meets at Fort Meade every Thursday evening for a few hours. Giving a few hours of your time to our soldiers & their families would make their recovery go smoother. How about giving a couple of hours just once ... or one a month ... or twice a month or every week. If you're a veteran, you know how important it was to know that someone outside the military cared about your well-

being. Contact Larry Vawter, Pati Nicholson or Carl Smolka.

I look forward to seeing each of you at our monthly Chapter meetings and our many activities.

Until then, tight lines. 🌸

## **PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & 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](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net) 🌸



## **Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard**

This has been a busy year for work on the tailwater section below Brighton Dam. A couple dozen members and friends stocked about 2500 trout this past February and March. We had a tree planting with the Boy Scouts. There were a lot of fly fishers trying their luck on this section. We did some stream cleanup and maintained the foot paths.

There was a major flood event the last days of January that had water running over Haviland Mill Road.

Howard County Recs & Parks contacted the chapter in the spring to consult on a possible handicapped fishing area near their parking lot off Haviland Mill Road. Nick Weber and I met with the county and state parks people, as well as their consultant, a trail builder with a lot of experience constructing such trails in this region. The proposed trail would leave the parking lot and head along the hillside as it goes downstream about 100 or so yards before reaching the flood plain. The proposal is to have one or more sets of steps down to the water's edge from the high embankments. We had asked for a long platform along the side of the stream to be just above the river level, but that appears to be unworkable on that side of the river.

PPTU also hired a diving crew to go down on the reservoir-side of Brighton Dam to clear away the growth we thought was blocking the flow of colder water. The control tower on the upstream side of the dam has a set of large trash screens that keep major debris from being sucked into the valves and turbines that are in the bottom of the dam. Between the screens are a set of three control gates that can be raised or lowered to access water at those three levels. One set is on the Howard Co. side and the other is on the Montgomery Co. side of the tower. These gates are situated at about 12', 40' and 55' depths. The bottom gates are located at the



very bottom of the reservoir and can access the coldest available water in the summer months.

On July 24 the divers went down and discovered a lot about the dam's trash screens. These old screens were largely rusted shut. Only a small fraction of the water at any given depth can pass

through them. Fortunately, the upper 20' of the trash screens had been replaced by WSSC about 15–20 years ago and were relatively easy to clear of their growth and debris. During this diving operation the valves in the bottom of the dam had to be locked shut for the divers' safety. In order to keep flow to the river, the northernmost flood gate was opened a small amount. The water at the bottom of the flood gate was 79–82°! We had expected the water to be in the mid-70s. So the river ran very hot for about 6 or 8 hours that day, which was otherwise a very pleasant day with air temps barely getting into the 80s.

WSSC has put the replacement of the old trash screens on their to-do list. How soon they will be able to accomplish this work is unknown at this date. Hopefully, by next summer. In the meantime, we have learned a great deal about manipulating the water temperatures with what little water we can access through the largely clogged screens. This has been a very wet summer, so we think we can manage reasonable water temps below 70° for the rest of this summer. What we do not know is how many trout survived that shot of hot water on July 24. DNR has promised to do a fairly thorough electro-shocking survey of the tailwater as soon as the weather cools down. They also are looking into availability of more trout to be stocked this fall after the electro shocking survey is completed.

On the same date as the divers went down to work on the trash screens, WSSC employees were out in the reservoir taking temperature readings from the surface to the bottom. The top 10' was ~85°, while the bottom 10' was 50°. Although that cold water looks enticing to any trout fisher, there is actually very little storage of cold water in that bottom 10' of this reservoir. In comparison, Prettyboy Reservoir that feeds the Gunpowder tailwater is about three times as deep and has a commensurate much larger storage capacity than Triadelphia. Our goal in working with WSSC is to keep the water in the tailwater at a range of 65–70° all summer. We simply cannot have 50–60° temps with such a small storage capacity.

As we go to press, I have had several reports of fishers catching both brown and rainbow trout in the tailwater since the July 24 operation. So at least some trout survived the 6–8 hours of very warm water. One of the trout that was caught was a

fingerling of about 5–6" that was released in May by one of the Trout in the Classroom classes. So a very small rainbow survived, too! Slowly we are getting a sport fishery established below Brighton Dam. We just need some patience and understanding. 🌸

## **Membership Reminder Conservationist**

As a Chapter we are not allowed to assess dues or fees for membership, and therefore depend on the Annual Supporting Contribution, along with other fund raising events to sustain the chapter's administration costs (primarily room rental at the Schwienhaut Center); education programs that teach the importance of cold water fisheries to our environment to primary & middle schoolers in the Trout in the Classroom program and high schoolers who attend TU camps in Virginia & Pennsylvania, Project Healing Waters at Ft. Meade that provides recreational activities to wounded warriors, Casting for Recovery for survivors of breast cancer, and Conservation projects that restore Trout habitats in rivers & streams across Maryland.

The Conservationist is provided electronically to those members who provide financial assistance via the Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) to the Chapter. Our fiscal year runs September to September. The date on the subject line indicates when your ASC expires and if it is 0913, it expires this month. If your check for \$20 is already in the mail, thanks for your support. If you would like to renew on-line, please go to our website. If you would like to mail a check, please send it to:

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU  
P.O. Box 2865  
Wheaton, MD 20915

If you have any other membership questions, feel free to contact me at: [membership@pptu.org](mailto:membership@pptu.org) 🌸

Thanks for your support,

Carl Smolka  
Membership

## **Tackle & Tactics - Jay Sheppard**

Mending the fly line is a major advantage over any other form of fishing. One cannot alter by more than a few feet where line cast by spinning or similar tackle has landed. Floating fly lines, once they are cast, can be further manipulated to alter the effects of currents and wind upon the leader and the fly. This advantage cannot be over stated. On moving waters, the fly line, leader and fly are all subject to the effects of the multitude of currents. Some of these effects are positive and some are negative in a single presentation of a fly. Most seem to be negative in my experience.

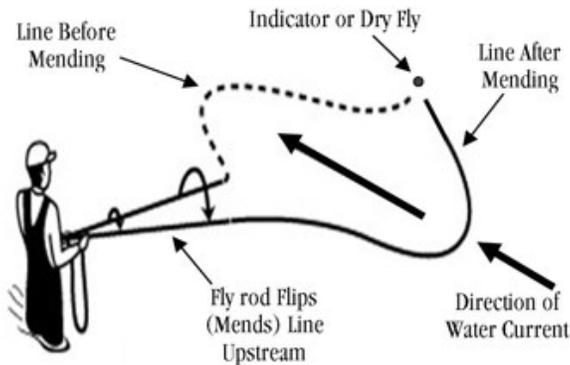
A dead drifted fly needs to mimic the bugs and other items riding the surface in that same small portion of the stream. It must float along as though nothing is attached to it. Unfortunately for fly fishers, we need to be connected to the fly to not just retrieve it for the next presentation but, hopefully, land any trout that gets hooked. If the line and leader are about 30' long when laying on the water there can be innumerable currents affecting them along this whole length. Some currents will be fast, others slow; some will be moving downstream, others upstream; and some water may be perfectly still and not moving at any speed in any direction.

### **[Click here to see a video on mending by Orvis](#)**

Likewise, for any nymph or other wet fly presentations the currents can change the course and speed of the line, leader, and fly. Some water is actually moving upward, and other water may be moving downward in this third dimension that dry flies do not usually encounter on the surface.

Mending is the manipulation of the fly line to change the effects of the currents upon the leader and fly. This is not 'casting' the line once it is on the water, but rather it is a repositioning of the line after it has been cast. This is done by gently picking up the line with the rod tip and placing it somewhere else. Mends that directly impact the leader are usually not good mends for dead drifted flies. Generally, if one mends the fly line upstream from its present position, that slows the effect of the currents on the fly, and vice versa. The latter is

useful with using streamers or other attractors that need to be moved briskly through the water column; it can, under certain conditions, be used to skate a dry fly over the surface. The first mend can be of nearly all the fly line, but each subsequent mend must be of a shorter segment of the line, usually only about half of the previous mend. I rarely can mend more than three times on any drift.



In fast water conditions, one must be prepared to mend the instant the line lands on the water. Waiting several seconds can then prove impossible to overcome the currents by any subsequent mending. One can also mend toward the fly not just to either side of the line itself. Sometimes that tosses a small loop of line that permits the leader and fly to drift even longer.

As with nearly everything fly fishers do in this sport, mending is something that must be practiced all the time that one is on a stream. Practice picking up the fly line with the rod tip and laying it to either side of its original position. Practice mending the line so that its tip does not move more than an inch or two. Observe the immediate and long term (several seconds after the mend) effects of each mend on the fly and try a different mend on the next cast to the same spot. Next to accuracy in the cast, mending is one of the most important skills a fly fisher needs to master. 🐟

## Tying Parachutes - Jay Sheppard

As much as I love to tie flies, I have tended to avoid writing articles on tying. I am simply an average fly crafter! Yes, I have done this for about 40 years but I have not really kept up with all the

innovations coming out every year. Over the summer, Charlie Gelso and I got into a discussion of tying parachutes. After I explained how I did my wing posts and hackle, Charlie suggested I write this up for the readership of the Conservationist.



I cannot remember where I learned this method of tying parachutes, but it has worked very well for me for several decades. First, the wing post has to be tied in and lashed down properly. I want the wing to arise vertically and back from the eye about 25–30% of the shank length. The length of the wing post should never exceed the length of the hook shank; shorter is OK. The butts of the material (hair, poly, etc.) are laid forward toward the eye and lashed down on the top of the shank. As with most lashed materials, I take the thread and do one or two turns on the bare hook shank and then return back to lashing both the material and the shank with the thread. I then raise the wing post at right angles to the shank and do figure-8s around the base to hold it upright. These lashings go around the wing post in a counterclockwise direction when looking down from above. (Left-handed tiers reverse all my directions.) Two or three turns are made around the post, then a similar number around the base in front of the post and then back up on the post for more turns. This is repeated several times to lash the post in a vertical position.



The next thing to be tied onto the hook is the hackle. The hackle needs to be good quality and the individual fibers about equal to the length of the whole shank. Tie the butt of the hackle on top of the butts of the wing post, dull side down and with the plane of the hackle parallel to the table top. The hackle stem is lashed right up to the base of the wing but not onto it, and it is pointed directly away from the tier.

The thread is now quickly passed back to the end of the shank, the tails (or shuck) are tied on, and the thin abdomen of the mayfly is dubbed forward all the way to the just behind the eye. When going past the rear of the upright wing, I try to add a little extra dubbing in support to the wing before continuing up and around the butts of the wing. The thread is left hanging just behind the eye. Now the hackle is wound around the wing post.

This is a critical part of the whole tying process. The hackle is held so that the dull side always remains facing downward. The hackle is wound in a counterclockwise direction around the base of the post with each successive wind going underneath the previous wrap of the hackle. This tightens the previous wraps as they are forced upward. Generally, I usually need about three turns of hackle, but on some occasions I might use four, and very rarely five.



Upon completing the final wrap of the hackle, as it comes around to my side of the wing post, I then take the hackle up, forward and over the far side of the dubbed body toward the eye. The hackle stem and hackle pliers should now be hanging downward right behind the eye. Now it is only a matter of tying off the hackle and the fly. I usually need to temporarily lift up the hackle fibers that jut out in front of the fly so I can do these finishing wraps of the thread. As a finishing touch, I add a

tiny drop of vinyl or other flexible cement to the very base of the wing post immediately above the hackle wraps. Before it dries, I pull the front half of the wing post forward and the rear half backward. This will usually produce a silhouette of a mayfly wing from the side and hardly any silhouette from the front or rear view. I should mention that I do not ever use coarse deer or similar hollow hair for wing posts—they are too fragile. I prefer calf tail, poly, or similar materials.



This method of tying produces few, if any, hackle fibers that point either upward or downward. The fly is well balanced and will be quite realistic. Perhaps most importantly, it is very durable and floats very well. 🐝

### Reminder

If you spot poaching please place a call to the

**Catch a Poacher Hotline**

**At**

**1-800-635-6124**

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



Rainbow Fly Reel  
by Abel



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

**Editor: Trout Wrangler**  
Phone: 410-733-0638  
Email: [TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com](mailto:TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com)



**Foam Ant**  
- *Good summertime fly pattern*



Return Address:  
Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU  
P.O. Box 2865  
Wheaton, MD 20915