

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

November 2021 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

## “Fishing Northwestern Montana’s Kootenai River and Yaak Drainage” with Tim Flagler

*Nov 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 7:00PM*

After his barn-burning March visit, PPTU welcomes back nationally-renowned fly fishing expert Tim Flagler! Since a number of PPTU members like to head out west to fish, we thought it would be great for Tim to talk with us about a less-traveled section of Montana, where one can actually fish miles of crystal clear alpine streams without seeing another soul. He will also give us a tying demo of three of his favorite Big Sky Country flies: a Last Chance PMD, Parachute Purple Haze, and the Chubby Chernobyl. To round it all out, Tim will share info on his two upcoming July 23 - Aug 5, 2022 Kootenai River trips (details at Linehan Outfitters: [fishmontana.com](http://fishmontana.com), or [www.tightlinevideo.com](http://www.tightlinevideo.com) - limited slots so act fast!). Tim’s fly tying recipes and trip info will be shared on the PPTU listserv.

### **About Tim:**

Tim Flagler is the owner of Tightline Productions, L.L.C., a video production company located in Califon, NJ. Although he produces video programs over a wide range of topics, his specialty is fly fishing. Tim is a well-known fly tying instructor. His YouTube videos are some of the best in the business and his YouTube channel, [practicalpatterns.com](http://practicalpatterns.com) currently has over 80,000 subscribers and 24 million views. Almost every week he produces a new fly tying or “how to” video which appear not only on his YouTube channel but on Midcurrent and the Orvis fly fishing blog as well. They’re also featured on Trout Unlimited’s national website and in the Orvis Learning Center. In addition, he has a regular column “Beginner’s Masterclass with Tim Flagler” in Fly Tyer magazine. Many of his tying videos take the viewer well beyond just the tying of the fly and show what it looks like underwater, what natural it represents and how it can be fished.

Tim’s a fixture at the Fly Fishing Shows - giving presentations, teaching classes and often as a Featured Tier. He enjoys guiding year round for [Shannon’s Fly & Tackle](http://Shannon’s Fly & Tackle) in Califon, NJ and since the summer of 2020 hosts annual trips to Patagonia in the spring and to the Kootenai River in MT.



– *Karan Singh*

### Monthly Chapter Meetings – Virtual Until Further Notice

Time and Day: 7:00 PM unless a new time is stated, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December

**Virtual Link:**

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84470114122?pwd=ankzOFJhYkFnV2dBRUo5RlVJeGRxZz09>

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

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### Contact Us:

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

## Presidents' Column - Alan Burrows



While it will be November when you read this, it's the morning of October 20 as I write it and I am due at the hospital by 10 for my hip replacement surgery. With luck I will be comfortably walking when this is published and be ready to return to the streams and rivers by December. So, if I seem a bit preoccupied, you will know why.

It seems we are finally moving on the Brighton Dam oxygenation issue. At least we seem to have gotten someone's attention before bringing in the senators and representatives that make government office cringe. I am sure that Jay will have more to say as we move forward. I can only hope that we get some movement quickly.

Trout in the Classroom hit a couple of snags worth mentioning. With an unprecedented 11 new schools this year, we blew through DNR's Aquatic Resources Education Grant money. That said, the chiller manufacturer would not ship without pre-payment and we were still short a bit over \$3000. Thanks to our understanding Board of Directors, PPTU lent Maryland DNR \$3270 to pre-purchase 5 chillers since their rules would not allow pre-payment. They assure us they will honor our invoice to them.

That left us short \$3250 to equip all the new schools. I contacted the MAC Chairman Don Haynes. Don contacted a couple of the chapters in the Council and let me know that MDTU had budget money set aside for youth education and they were going to give TIC a donation. We are all thrilled and can now move on with the program that has made PPTU famous.

"Can I still fish for trout in November?" you might ask. The answer is a resounding YES! November offers us some unique opportunities. Both salmon and steelhead run up tributaries to the Great Lakes in order to spawn. Does salmon up to 40 pounds sound like fun? Your reel will sizzle like never before. In my experience steelhead seem to average between 25" to 30" and have been known to put on quite a high jumping show. Finally, there are the brown trout that follow these guys up the spawning trail because they know there will be eggs for breakfast lunch and dinner. These browns are regularly over 24" and hungry.

Your best chance for Salmon is probably the Salmon River in New York. No doubt we will have some chapter members making runs up there as the reports come in. While the Salmon River also gets steelhead, fisherman also have success in the Lake Erie Tributaries near Erie. PA. Again, watch our Groups page for ad hoc trips. Lastly, Oak Orchard Creek in New York has all three but is renowned for big brown trout. This is a trip I have not made yet and I guess I will need to wait another year but I have heard members talk about fishing there.

Add to all of these opportunities the fall stocking of both rainbows and browns throughout Maryland and there are still plenty of reasons to go fishing. So go out, wade in a stream or river and enjoy our clean cold waters.

If you don't want to get cold feet, stay tuned to our virtual chapter meetings. Karan Singh has a lineup of great speakers throughout the rest of the year. Plenty of conservation, fly tying and fish eye candy coming soon.

I also want to thank Ray Miller who volunteered to Chair the Mentor Committee and his team of six volunteers. I know Joe Robinson has already been out with someone this fall. I believe that Ray had at least 2 or 3 more people interested in the program as well. PPTU is once again unique in the Mid Atlantic Council area in that we offer a mentor program to those who are new to fly fishing.

OK, that's it for now. Off to the hospital!

Alan Burrows  
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)

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

On October 13, several PPTU members float stocked the Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest area with 400 robust brown trout. Hopefully they will hold over the coming winter and gives some sport long after the leaves have dropped. Thanks to Brian Sirotkin, Andrew Geffken, and Jeff Holland for pulling those boxes down the river from Eden Brook Drive in south Columbia.

We are now in contact with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission about what can be done to fix the dissolved oxygen situation below Brighton Dam in the summer. Cannot say at this stage where we will go, but that is encouraging.

At some point we need to consider a major trail clearing one day at the Havilland Mill Road area below Brighton Dam before we stock (hopefully!) next February. Am sure the multiflora roses are enveloping our trail system! A call for volunteers for a Saturday work day will go out when we have our equipment lined up. Stay tuned.

A safety reminder that the upper Patuxent is in a hunting zone, No Hunting is allowed on Sundays. I would still urge any fishers to have hunter orange on their head or upper body any day of the week they try fishing the stream this fall. A nice time to fish, but stay safe!





## Steelhead Fishing - Ken Bowyer

The PPTU website has 2 articles on steelhead fishing; [Steelhead Primer](#) by Dennis Covert and [Erie Steelhead Fishing](#) by me. The latter article was just updated. Most important are the [Access Maps](#) on the FishErie website. While November tends to be the peak month, I had one of my best trips to Erie in January 2008 ([photos](#) & [report](#) on the PPCTU forum) and I've also had a couple of good trips in February.

Our friend Richard Lewis mentioned for current information and postings on where Pennsylvania steelhead are running and biting consider joining and following this Facebook group:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/658012697693979/?ref=share>

So far this is starting to be a bang up year for steelhead....large numbers of steelhead are currently already being caught in the Pennsylvania Lake Erie tributaries.



## Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) - Jay Sheppard

September started our annual cycle and now is the time to consider making your Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC). As a Chapter we are not allowed to assess dues or fees for membership. Along with our other fund raising events, we ask for a \$20 ASC each September to sustain the chapter's administration costs, educational programs, and community service projects including:

- Room rental for the monthly Chapter meetings (when they resume).
- Trout in the Classroom program that teaches primary & middle schoolers the importance of cold water fisheries to our environment.
- Support to TU fly fishing & conservation camps in Virginia and Pennsylvania, sponsoring attendance by high school students.
- Support of the Project Healing Waters program at Ft. Meade and Walter Reed that provides recreational activities to wounded warriors.
- Support the Mayfly Project for foster kids by being taught to fish and use fly rods.
- Free copies of the Conservationist for local fly shops, State agencies and other conservation organizations.
- Conservation projects that restore trout habitats in rivers & streams across Maryland.

To be clear, PPTU does receive a tiny amount back for members' annual dues to the national TU. This only totals a few hundred dollars annually. Your dues to national TU are separate and apart from any ASC, which is a donation to the chapter to help cover its expenses each year. PPTU does not mail renewal notices to anyone. If you see a renewal notice in the mail regarding TU, it is from the national offices. PPTU no longer handles renewals of national membership dues.



You can pay the ASC in several ways:

- At the next chapter meeting (whenever that might be) by cash or check.
- Go to [pptu.org](https://pptu.org) and use our PayPal portal: <https://pptu.org/j-d/donate>
- Mail a check payable to PPTU to our PO Box (see last page).

Your contributions are most appreciated!

### Moved? Changed Email?

If you have retired, moved, or changed your email address, please let us know. Send an email to [membership.pptu@gmail.com](mailto:membership.pptu@gmail.com) or go "old school" and drop a postcard in the mail (see address on last page).

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!*



### Fish Art Studio - Bob O'Donnell

I ran across this website recently and thought the membership might find it interesting.

<https://boldcoastburns.com/>

Many moons ago as a child I received a wood burning set as a holiday gift and enjoyed many hours playing with it at the workbench in our basement. I never turned out anything as interesting as the images

on Dylan Stewart's website, but it was enjoyable and I appreciate the effort and artistry that goes into the fish art displayed. Check it out and see what you think. After looking at the artwork, also take a minute to look at the video about Dylan and his art:

<https://boldcoastburns.com/pages/about>

### Tackle & Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

Santa is coming! At least, if they can unload some of the container ships in our ports of entry in time!! I thought a small discussion on rod selection might be useful for those thinking of getting a new rod. Fly rods have two main purposes: casting a fly to a target and fighting fish. One would not take a cue stick or surf rod to do battle with pan fish, nor would one use an ultralight outfit to try and catch tarpon or Chinook salmon. That seems evident to most fishers. So let's dive into the weeds a bit about fly rods for our sport of trying mostly to catch trout and other salmonids.



Below is a table of my estimates of some of the main characteristics of fly rods that we typically are using. The table does not have all sizes to keep it simple. One can easily extrapolate for other sizes above or below one of the given fly line sizes. Most trout fishers use rods for #4 lines through #6 for their trout fishing. A few use the ultralight #2 or #3 rods for their specialized fishing for brook and other small trout.

Light fly lines cannot cast large, air resistant flies, while the larger lines can. Conversely, the larger lines make more noise when they hit the water for the sensitive trout to hear. So anticipated sizes of the flies one will be casting is a very important consideration. One can always adjust a leader system to cast almost any fly: very long leaders for heavy lines to cast small flies or very short leaders to

cast heavy flies with a light fly line. Note that the rods in the table are all using the same basic leader for comparisons.

As indicated at the beginning, we do not want to fight a large fish on a really light rod without fear of either breaking the rod or losing the fish, and vice versa for rods for larger line sizes fighting small trout. So a range of factors usually drives our rod selection on any given trip: wind, water, and size of the fish and flies. Small forested streams like the upper Patuxent have little wind, while out West the wind seems to blow constantly. A relatively placid spring creek does not compare to a broiling river where a small fish can get into the heavy current and pose a challenge. In winter one may be tossing large attractors but in the summer tiny midges and ants.

If budget is an issue, consider a rod that is two sizes larger or smaller than what you already have. My primary rods these days are all 9' rods for #4, #6 and #9 weight lines. I know other fishers who use rods for #3, #5 and #8 lines for the bulk of their fishing. Just suggestions. Modern graphite rods can easily handle a wide range of line sizes. So hope this table is of use to readers. There is no one rod that can handle all the variety of fishing we do.

**Table of Fly Line Size and Expected Usage**

Line Size	Line Weight (gm)	Fly Sizes	Max Fish (lb)	Max Casting Dist.	Typical Distance to Fish	Backing Test (lb)	Backing Amount (yd)
4	7.8	28-8	7	45'	30'	12	35
6	10.1	24-4	12	60'	35'	18	75
8	13.6	16-1/0	20	70'	45'	30	125



- 1) Assumed to be a tapered fly line or shooting head; weight based on first 30' after front taper.
- 2) Tippet strength should not exceed ~75% of the backing testing strength.
- 3) Size of fly includes heavy nymphs, streamers, and wind resistant dry flies on a typical 9-12' leader.
- 4) Maximum fish size could almost double if experienced fisher and few obstructions or little heavy current.
- 5) Maximum casting distance by a moderately experienced fisher with little wind and not made repeatedly for any long period.
- 6) Typical distance is that—majority of casts are approximately to fish at that distance.

*"They say you forget your troubles on a trout stream, but that's not quite it. What happens is that you begin to see where your troubles fit into the grand scheme of things, and suddenly they're just not such a big deal anymore."*

~ John Gierach

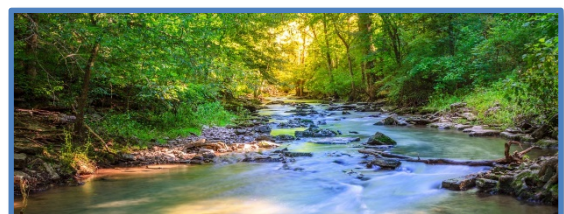
### Patuxent River Keeper - Bob O'Donnell

Many thanks to Fred Tutman, Riverkeeper & CEO of <http://paxriverkeeper.org/> for a great presentation at our October chapter meeting. To learn more check out the website.

The Riverkeeper movement was established in 2004 to build a grassroots movement spanning seven Counties, in order to carry the fire, keep the dream of clean water alive, and champion one of the most vital causes on earth: the defense of our natural environment and of the people who depend on it. That is what Patuxent Riverkeeper believes in and stands for. Clean Water, unflinching civic advocacy and the holistic and benevolent treatment of one of nature's irreplaceable and greatest prizes.

### Conewago Creek Closure - Jerry Gladfelter, ACTU

This is a reminder that the fly fishing-only section of the Conewago Creek will be closed during the Pennsylvania statewide firearms deer hunting season from Saturday, November 27 thru Saturday, December 11. This closure is for safety reasons as the landowners allow hunting on their property.





## Volunteer Mentors - Bob O'Donnell

Congratulations and many thanks go out to Raymond Miller for stepping up to chair PPTU's Mentoring program. Ray has been working hard to ensure the mentoring program lives on and is easily accessible to those new to our group and to fly fishing. Ray has assembled a team of volunteers to help spread the love. We plan on highlighting those volunteers in the near future on our website.

Thanks to all the volunteer mentors that have already started assisting folks on our local waters: Mike Abramowitz, Rudy Kasprzyk, Bob Kaiser, Bob O'Donnell, Lou Reichel, and Craig Vanderkolk.

## Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Not much else to say – folks are busy fishing!





## Contributions Welcome!

Send your contributions or article suggestions to the Editor 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: Bob O'Donnell**

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## Sucker Spawn

You'll want this fly in your steelhead box!

Sucker Spawn can be used anywhere, anytime, and it consistently produces fish. It imitates a cluster of eggs which is a staple for steelhead. Tie this fly in a variety of colors. Use natural egg colors during low clear conditions, and experiment with brighter colors during high off color water conditions.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qNFaPf8StEk>



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