

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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



Brook Trout and the Shenandoah with Paul Kearney *April 17th*

This month we are fortunate to host Paul Kearney who is the Camp Director for the TU Tri-State Conservation and Fishing Camp. Paul is the former owner of the Thornton River Fly Shop in Sperryville, VA. He has been fishing and guiding in the Shenandoah National Park for almost 40 years.

Paul will be sharing his in depth knowledge of fishing for native Brook Trout in the Shenandoah National forest. We are lucky to live so close to some wonderful native Brook Trout waters and Paul will offer tips on fishing there so we can all enjoy the Shenandoah a little more.

Paul will also spend some time talking about the work that he and many others do teaching the next generation of fly fishermen and women and conservationists at the TU Tri-State Conservation and Fishing Camp. Students who attend this annual camp gain a valuable education in conservation, stream restoration and fishing. Paul has served as camp director since 2005.

So please attend our chapter meeting on Wednesday April 17th with Paul Kearney. This is sure to be a very informative evening.

– Marc Hutzell



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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Presidents' Column - Dennis Covert

We're off to another busy spring. Our third hotdog stand fund-raiser netted almost \$1500 the first weekend of March. Two weekends later, on the 16th, chapter members assisted Owen Pochettino on his Eagle Scout project. In all 600 trees were planted above Haviland Mill Road for erosion control and shade along the stream in the meadow section above the bridge. Float stocking of area streams is well underway if not complete.

For the next couple of months give or take a week or two the spring Mayfly hatches will come in great succession; Blue Quills, Quill Gordon's, Hendrickson's, the list goes on, throw in all the different Caddis and Midges and I suddenly wonder if I have tied enough flies in all their variations. This is a time of year when I really envy the retired, they can fish every day, and if it rains on the weekend so what, they can just go Monday. For me, and I'm guessing for many other working stiffs out there, once a day off does come there is so much happening in so many places the quandary is which hatch and where to fish it. However, as quandaries go, it's a pretty good quandary to have, and just gives testament of all the wonderful fishing opportunities we have here in the Mid-Atlantic.

There is no other place I would rather be in spring than here in the East, it's gorgeous. From a distance the ridge lines are that lovely green hue, delicate and bright. Up close the woods pop with flowering dogwood, the forest floor strewn with violets and clumps of blue bells tuck close against deadfall. In many places spring gobbling and drumming can be heard above the rushing water, and if I'm really lucky I'll catch a glimpse of a Tom out in the open in full strut. Last year on Kettle Creek, while fishing a single pool, I could hear three separate grouse drumming on the ridges around me. At another spot a big Tom turkey that Lou flushed out of the timber flew so close and made such a racket I thought for sure a bear was coming out after me. I fell in the creek trying to turn around to see what and where it was. I laughed like

hell afterwards once my heart started beating again! I can't remember how many fish we caught on that outing, doesn't matter; what I do remember is the important stuff - what the air smelled like, how the cold wind stung my fingers as I laced up my boots in a snow shower, and the warmth of bright sunshine later that afternoon on Young Woman's Creek as I took a break to eat an energy bar and watch a stonefly crawl around on a dead log.

So let's all get out there and enjoy it, it won't last long; somehow busy as we may be we have to grab enough of it to last us all the way till next year. And remember to stick an empty bag in your vest; you might even stumble across some wild mushrooms. 🍄

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 🍄



Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

By April 2nd, PPTU and friends will have float stocked approximately 5100 trout in our three 'home waters' of the upper Patuxent Special Area (above Rt 97), below Brighton Dam (flies only), and the Middle Patuxent River Delayed Harvest section in south Columbia. The Middle Patuxent received 1500 trout (500 browns), the upper Patuxent 1100 (725 browns), and the Patuxent below the dam was stocked with about 2600 trout (1275 browns). I want to thank the nearly four dozen volunteers who helped move these trout up and down those streams. Without their help we would find all the trout clumped at the bridges and other truck access points. Also clumped there would be the local poachers, no doubt!

By early April we expect the USGS to have installed a temperature sensor at their existing gage station below Brighton Dam. DNR is paying for this annual cost (\$2100), and TU is paying for the installation (\$1000). We will now have real time temperature data of the river below the dam. Last August I did some careful temperature measurements up and down the river. Basically, whatever water comes out from the dam warms only a degree or so before it gets downstream of the pipeline crossing, which is about 300 yards below the dam. From that point to Rocky Gorge Reservoir the river gets no warmer or cooler by a degree or two at the most. The heavy canopy over the river prevents the sun from heating the water, but it also prevents any significant cooling. The daily temperature range is only a degree or two even a mile downstream from the dam.

The reason for the installation of this temperature sensor below the dam is simple. We continue to work with both WSSC and DNR on maintaining the river below the dam cool enough all summer to hold over trout. As previously discussed on these pages, we discovered last December that the trash screens in front of the control gates at several depths on the dam are clogged and have prevented any deeper, colder water from going through the dam. WSSC is trying to get those screens cleaned before the middle or end of May. If that happens, we can hope to have river water all summer that does not exceed about 69°. For the last

several summers, the river has hovered in the mid-70s or even higher for several months at a time. We are getting closer and closer to an all-year trout fishery that is very near to so many fishers. If you have not tried it yet, do so. The two main access points are from the Brighton Dam parking lot and from Havilland Mill bridge crossing. 🌿

Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

Spring is upon us! Time for some really serious fishing on a trout stream! Unfortunately, April is the month for showers that are supposed to bring May flowers. Streams can come up, and streams can get very muddy but seem to take forever to clear. An important tool for any stream fisherman is interpreting data that is now readily available on the Internet to gage when we should or should not go fishing. No use driving to a stream only to find it nearly dry or high and muddy.

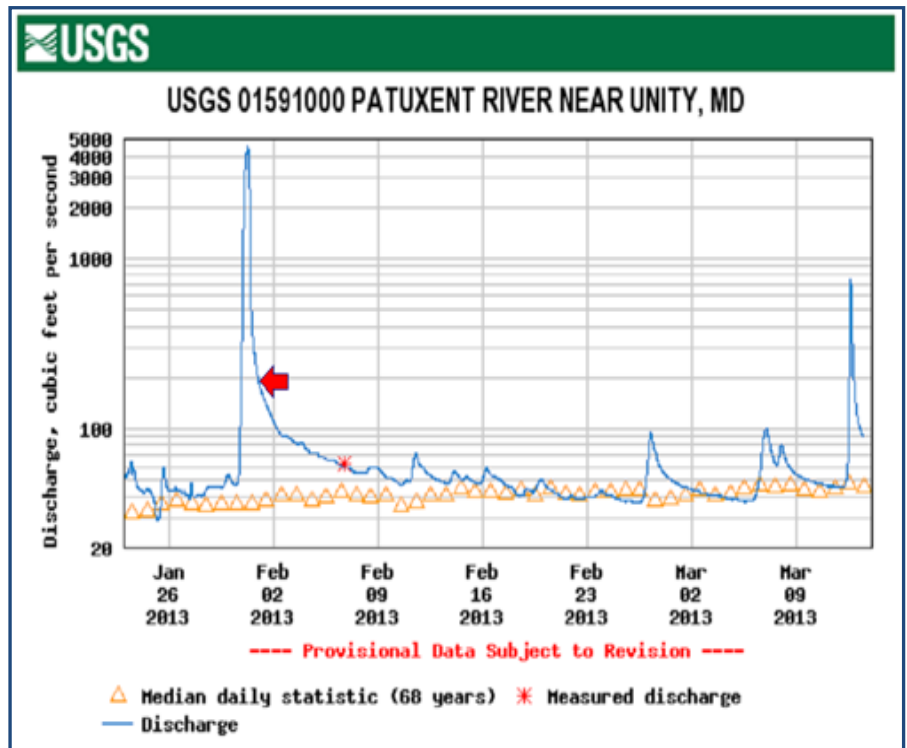
I have chosen as an example one of my home streams, the Patuxent River above MD 97 and Triadelphia Reservoir. There is a USGS station at the rt. 97 bridge that gives a perfect indication of what is going on at this stream—and perhaps others in the general region. The first graph is for most of this year and shows several flood events. The red arrow points to one of the biggest storm events to hit this watershed in several years or more. The stream channel can only hold about 1000 cfs before it starts overflowing the banks. That end-of-January flood peaked at ~4500 cfs. So a lot of water was flowing through the flood plain for a day or so.

The red arrow also points to the ‘point of inflection’ where the stream is not dropping as rapidly and the velocity of the water is greatly decreasing. At about this point, the stream should be clear enough for fishing. It may still be high and off color a little, but it is clearing rapidly. Trout take advantage of this part of the flood as they can now start moving about and see a lot of food in the form of dislodged macroinvertebrates and worms flushed into the stream. This is one of the

very best times to fish a freestone stream at the time of any flooding event. Cloudy water makes you less of a threat to a trout, and the latter are very hungry.

Note the approximate flow rate of the point of inflection. It is about 200 cfs. Any subsequent flood events for the next month or so must equal or exceed that flow to become seriously muddy. So even the little flow spikes in February and early March are not likely to result in any serious ‘thickening of the soup!’ The last flood event on this graph may have gotten fairly muddy for its peak flow until it fell below its own point of inflection, which is right where this graph cuts off.

The other feature to examine is the median flow during this period and where the actual base flow of this stream during this period falls. The river took nearly 2 weeks following the January event to get back to near the median base flow over the past 68 years. Base flows are the result of the past many months’ accumulated water stored in the ground. During a drought, the base flows get lower. During periods of higher than normal precipitation, the base flows act accordingly and are above the median base flow. As a side note, the major dip in flow a week before the big flood is almost certainly caused by major freeze that day that locked up a lot of water that was otherwise contributing to the flow.



Further, one must understand that 5 or 10 miles upstream, the Patuxent may clear many hours or even a day before the water at the gage station clears.

The above discussion concerns freestone streams. Spring creeks and tail waters do not act this way under normal flooding events, especially tail waters. However, one still would not want to think of wading the Gunpowder when it is running many hundreds of cfs or higher, even if it is very clear all the time right below the dam. So get on the Internet and see what streams are doing before you jump in your car. Our web site has many links to flow data in real time. Check it out and book mark those waters you often fish. 🐟

Volunteers Needed For Trout in the Classroom Fish Releases

This is a call for volunteers to help 26 Montgomery and Howard County schools release into local streams the trout raised in classroom tanks since January. Montgomery and Howard releases will start in late April and continue through mid-June.

TIC Purpose and History

Most of you know that TIC is one of the more successful programs sponsored by TU's Mid-Atlantic Council (MAC). By raising trout from eggs in pre-college classrooms TIC teaches youngsters the importance of clean cold water to trout survival. Through its activities, TIC paves the way for the next generation of recreational anglers and environmental stewards on whom the future of our waters and trout fishing depend.

The Potomac-Patuxent chapter of TU (PPTU) started the TIC program in Maryland. From three Montgomery County elementary schools, Maryland TIC now has spread to 62 elementary, middle and high schools across the state and gets its financial support from MAC rather than PPTU alone. Moreover, it's one of the largest TIC programs in the country managed and coordinated entirely by unpaid volunteers. It's also a successful example of government and non-profit collaboration. The Maryland Department of Natural Resources provides fertilized Kamloops rainbow trout eggs

and necessary permits to raise and release the trout, while TIC provides oversight and technical support to the program.

Releasing The Trout

The release program is one of if not the most important events of the TIC year. It validates students' success in maintaining a healthy environment for trout growth and is the final stage in the linkage between student caregivers, their fingerlings and their local watershed. It celebrates students' time and effort in raising the fish and enables them to make connections between classroom conditions and what they observe taking place in the natural world around them. It's a treatment for what Richard Louv, the noted environmentalist, calls Nature Deficit Disorder.



And for volunteers it's always an enjoyable event because the students are so involved, excited and committed to giving their trout a good send-off into the wild.

TU volunteers always have an important part to play in release programs. Their main roles are:

1. transport fingerlings from the school to the release site (PPTU can provide coolers and portable aerators to keep the fingerlings oxygenated in transit)
2. demonstrate fly-tying (a table and chair can be available on-site)
3. familiarize students with fly-casting through demonstrations and elementary lessons (student fly rods and reels can be made available)

Volunteers also can help with stream surveys of macroinvertebrates (kick seines, magnifying insect viewers and identification cards can be made available) and other aspects of release programs.

The release site for Montgomery County schools is Little Seneca Creek at The Lodge at Boyds, on Clopper Road (Route 117), a ten-minute drive from Exit 10 off I-270. The main release site for Howard County schools is the Middle Patuxent River at the end of Eden Brook in Columbia. Some schools have arranged their releases at the riverside park just below Brighton Dam. A number of schools also have teamed up for joint releases.

Release dates and schools so far confirmed are:

HOWARD COUNTY

Wednesday, April 24 - Oakland Mills Middle School

Wednesday, May 1 - West Friendship/Swansfield elementary joint release (full day)

Thursday, May 16 - Burleigh Manor (full day)

Wednesday, May 22 - Hammond Elementary (4:30 PM)

Friday, May 24 - Murray Hill Middle School (4 PM)

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Thursday, April 25- Westbrook Elementary School (0900 on)

Friday, April 26-Tilden Middle School

Thursday, May 2 - Holy Cross (0815-noon)

Tuesday, May 7 - Sligo/Wood Middle schools

Tuesday, May 14 - M.L.King Jr Middle School (probably AM)

Tuesday, May 28 and Wednesday, May 29 - Briggs Chaney Middle School - Patuxent below Brighton

Dam Tuesday, May 21 - Benjamin Banneker Middle School (9:30 AM-1:30 PM)

Thursday, May 30 - Gaithersburg/Cabin John Middle Schools (9:30 AM-1 PM)

Friday, May 31 - Westland Middle/Sherwood High School/Sandy Spring Friends School (9AM-1 PM)

Wednesday, June 12 - North Chevy Chase Elementary School (10 AM-noon)

If you can make time available to help with any of these releases, you'll find it both stimulating and enjoyable. The most your participation will require is a half day, and a number of employers now have charitable service programs which give employees time off to volunteer for non-profit organizations such as Trout Unlimited.

To sign up or for further information about Howard or Montgomery County TIC releases, please contact Jim Greene via email at: jgreene@waterwisp.com or by phone at 301-652-3848 you can also contact Jim Robinson via email at: jrobinson@fm.umd.edu or by phone at 240-396-3922 concerning Howard County releases.



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!



They're Coming Back! - Jim Greco



This year you may once again be catching trout that have overly distended bellies looking like they have been gorging at Mom's Thanksgiving table. That's right; from as early as late April through May and part of June of 2013 cicada brood II will reappear after lying dormant for 17 years. For the full story go to this site provided by Jay Sheppard: http://www.magicicada.org/about/brood_pages/broods.php. See the distribution map by clicking on brood II in the table.

Many years ago, Pam and I went to the Green River in Dutch John, Utah and had the best fly fishing trip either of us have ever had. On that trip we only used one pattern, and that was a #10 foam cicada tied to match a local cicada hatch that started a few days before we arrived. We used about a dozen flies apiece each day we floated the river, and we didn't lose any flies. They just got so chewed up by the huge browns that were inhaling them they stopped working. No kidding, it was the trip of a lifetime with so many 16 inch to 23 inch browns, rainbows, and cuttbows taken, by the end of the first day we ran out of Band-Aids for our stripping fingers. That local hatch of cicadas was one of the periodical hatches that take place every year, and its numbers were small in comparison to what a 17 year emergence will be like.

Many people have been asking about it, so here is the pattern we used, and I have since caught fish with it here, too (bass and trout). When brood II emerges, I hope this pattern will work as well here as it did for brood X in 2004.

Cicada Dry Fly

Tied by Jim Greco

From a pattern used on the Green River in Dutch John, Utah

Hook: 2x long dry fly - Tiemco 2302 -

Mustad 94831 - in a size #8 or #10

Thread: 6/0 black Unithread

Body: 1/8" thick black closed cell foam for #10 or 3/16" thick black foam for #8

Thorax: black, ice/crystal chenille, densely wrapped over foam

Hackle: brown neck hackle palmered thickly through the mid section of the fly then clipped short

Legs: barred orange and black Sili Legs

Wing: 12 strands of black Krystal Flash then 8 strands of pearl Krystal Flash

Top: small piece of 1/8" yellow closed cell foam on top so you can spot the fly and make sure it is floating upright

Tying tips: Wrap your thread over bare hook to just over the barb then back to eye. Tie in black foam at head of fly then fold back the foam and begin tying it down about 2/5ths of the way to the bend of the hook. Apply Zap a Gap/super glue to the entire wrapped area to lock the foam in proper position. Just past the point, stop wrapping the foam down leaving enough black foam to extend 3/8 inch past the bend. Trim the black foam to a sharp, narrow triangle to match the cicada abdomen shape. Tie in black then pearl Krystal Flash for the wing, cutting it off about 3/8 inch past tip of abdomen. Tie in a large brown hackle. Tie in black Ice Chenille and wrap mid section. Palmer brown hackle to the back of the head and trim it all around to make the appearance of thicker body, being careful not to clip off any legs. Tie in two sets of legs on each side (two front -- two back, each side). Tie in a small piece of yellow foam on top for easy spotting of fly. If you don't see the yellow dot after the fly lands, give it a tug to right itself and show the yellow. Throw it to a big trout and hang on! 🐟



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
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Email: TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com



REMINDER! **- Youth Fly Fishing Camps Applications**

Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp

For boys and girls ages 14 to 17

June 16-21, 2013

<http://www.riverscamp.com/>

Tri-State Conservation & Fishing Camp

For 8th-11th grades, or 13 years old by June 2013

Sunday, June 23 to Friday, June 28, 2013

<http://tucamp.org/>

Sign up SOON!



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