

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

April 2015 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

## Mike Heck South Central PA Spring Creeks *April 15<sup>th</sup> 2015*

This month PPTU is excited to host Pennsylvania author and guide Mike Heck on Wednesday, April 15th. Mike will be sharing his knowledge and expertise on his home waters of South Central Pennsylvania.

Since boyhood, Mike has been blessed to have been able to learn the art of fly fishing on some of the hardest and most famous spring creeks in the country. He has been doing so for over thirty years. Mike Heck is the author of “Spring Creek Strategies” and also contributed to the book “Tying Dry Flies”. Mike has also had articles published in Fly Fisherman, American Angler and Fish and Fly Magazine. Mike has appeared in the TV show, “Road Trip USA”, a Discovery channel show that aired across Europe. Mike operates an Orvis Endorsed professional guide service for the Falling Springs, Letort, Yellow Breeches and many other South Central PA trout streams. Mike is also an innovative fly tyer with several patterns credited to his name. These flies include his Simple Shrimp, Big Eye Rainbow, Mike’s Midges Pupa, the Snowshoe Emerger series of patterns and his well know Baetis and Sulphur nymphs. You can find Mike Heck’s Trout Guides on the web at [www.fallingsprings.com](http://www.fallingsprings.com) or contact Mike by e-mail at [trout@mris.com](mailto:trout@mris.com) and also by calling (717) 816-7557.

Before the Mike’s presentation we will be viewing a short video made by PPTU member Ron Brooks during a recent cold weather float stocking of the Patuxent River.

– 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](http://www.pptu.org)

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### Presidents' Column - Bob O'Donnell

Ready to do some fishing? I know I am. I'm pretty sure I have a case of cabin fever. I've been outdoors recently but without a fly rod in my hand. Somehow a snow shovel isn't the same. Besides, the neighbors look at you funny when you start false casting with a shovel.

The fish in the streams are waiting for us. By the time you read this most Maryland creeks and rivers will have received their early stocking of fish. For those that have been out fishing and posted pictures on the server I say, "thank you". It's the only thing that has kept me going lately.

Hopefully winter's grasp has finally let go and we've seen the last of the snow this year. Hints of warm weather tease us with the heat of the sun, the smell of the earth as plants poke through the soil and flower buds just waiting to burst open and scent the air with their floral bouquet. My cat whined to go outside the other day and for brief moment was happy as a clam to roll around in the dust on the sun-warmed sidewalk. A few twitches of a stick to lazily bat at kept both of us entertained while sitting in the afternoon sunshine.

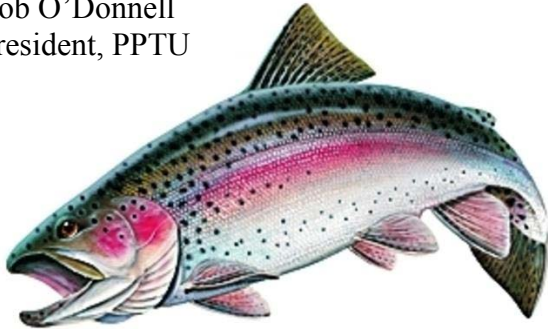
I've mentioned our cat a few times now and several people have actually asked me how the "fat boy" is doing. At least I hope they meant the cat! I do need to lose that winter bulge so my waders fit. Thought I would toss in a photo of my buddy and constant companion "monsieur pussycat" just for the fun of it. Here's all 17lbs of him.



Our companions, be them fur bearing or not, bring great joy to our lives. They can share both the warm days and cold, laugh with you and love you, and remind you that the simple things in life are best enjoyed together. I believe that is was Mark Twain who said, “To get the full value of joy you must have someone to divide it with.” So go enjoy the outdoors folks, go fishing, and by all means bring a buddy along with you to enjoy it. 🍷

Until next month, tight lines!

Bob O’Donnell  
President, PPTU



## 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)

## Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

I have been discussing hatches in recent issues. This month, I thought we might describe the various rise forms of the trout that we sometimes see when there is a hatch. There are only two or three reasons a trout will move. Food is certainly at the top of their list of reasons to move—go eat it! Escaping a predator or competitor are two more reasons and very obvious when you see trout suddenly scoot several yards or more in a blink of an eye. If the trout is a decent sized fish, it may also be seen chasing its smaller brethren to exclude them from his territory, especially if there is not a lot of food drifting past.

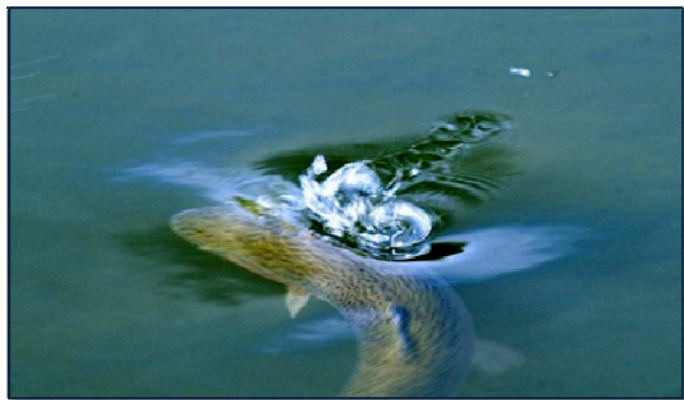
Prey that is drifting along at the same general depth as the lurking trout will be taken by simple movement to the right, left and up as needed to intercept the nymph or drowned insect. Things get interesting for the fisher when the prey is on or near the surface. Most trout do not like to hold in water that is less than about a foot deep, unless there is a lot of drifting insects going by. They are susceptible to predators; shallow water makes them really nervous! So, the trout are typically coming from deeper water to the surface to intercept a bug of some sort. How they capture that food item is how we learn what the trout are doing—clues to what type of insect they are preying upon at the time.

If the insect is riding on the surface film and is not struggling to escape into the air, the trout has learned that it has a bit of time to rise to the surface and take the item. This is the usual rise form we see on most hatches: a ring suddenly appears, as the nose of the trout breaks the surface and leaves a ring expanding across the surface. There are several major variations of this simple rise form.



Small insects like ants and beetles are not going to suddenly fly away. They are well imbedded in the surface film and do not stick high off the surface by more than a fraction of an inch, at best. The trout just has to get his nose slightly into the surface film and the fish can just take the insect into its mouth. If the insect is a mayfly dun that has its wings rising above the surface by maybe a ¼ inch or more, then the trout has to get its nose further out of the water. As the trout turns to go back down, a small bubble of air may escape out of the gills. The higher the nose comes out, the bigger the bubble that usually forms in the middle of the rise.

If the fisher sees trout gently sipping, he knows it has to be something in the surface film. If the attack is sudden and violent, then the prey is escaping the surface and the trout learns it must grab it while it can or it will be untouchable in a matter of a second to two. Some caddis and a few mayflies emerge like a missile from a submarine: no pausing on the surface. Some trout will try to intercept these insects just after they break the surface and we see these leaping trout. Fun to watch, hard to imitate!! At the other extreme are midges and other insects that will hang suspended from the surface film. The rise form here is a barely perceptible ring—the trout has no need to get its nose out of the water. One sometimes sees a small wave or bump just under the surface but no large ring. I have seen trout more than 20 inches taking small prey under the surface, and if you did not see the fish come up, you likely would miss its take of the prey.



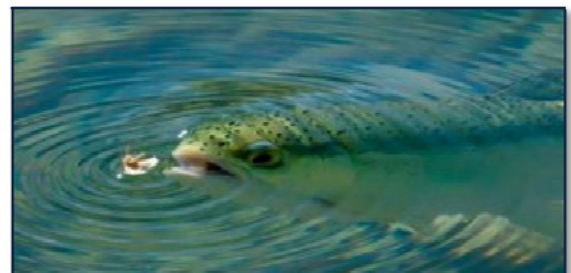
So insects such as ants, beetles, and mayfly spinners and still born emergers are taken with a simple rise that barely disturbs the surface. Big “protein packets” that may escape at any moment may produce violent rises: cicadas, hoppers,

crickets, large stoneflies, etc. Small to medium sized mayfly duns drifting on a cold day may take a minute or more to get airborne and the trout act accordingly—clear rises often leaving a bubble behind.



When there is a large hatch of flying ants, mayflies, or other insects, some trout will sit at the head of the pool and simply take the drowned insects that are often flushed down through a small water falls or rapids. Why go to the surface and possibly expose yourself to an avian predator if the food is being delivered a foot or two below the surface? Carry some ‘drowned’ versions of some of your common mayflies, stoneflies, etc.

We need to understand how the insects are getting to the surface, how long it is taking them to emerge, and how long they may drift before taking wing. Trout at the head of the pool may be feeding on the rising nymphs or drowned duns. Trout a few yards further downstream maybe selecting emergers or active duns. Fish in the middle or tail of the pool may be feeding on the cripples and duns that are taking longer to take wing. As we look up a pool we may see different rise forms appearing. Knowing which stage and how the fish are attacking their chosen quarry can tell us which pattern to try and how to present it to get the trout to succumb to our offering. I have stood in a pool with 20 different kinds of insects fluttering on and over the water! Rise forms tell us a lot of what each trout is doing. Watch, learn, and then go fish! 🍷



## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

The weather in late February and early March really screwed up the stocking we had planned with DNR. The upper Patuxent and Middle Patuxent were still frozen over, so DNR had to cancel two stockings and was only able to reschedule one of them. The big brown trout stocking will not take place until early April on the upper Patuxent and Middle Patuxent. Rainbows were stocked in both of those sections, as well as the Brighton Dam tailwater, in late February. The Middle Patuxent was so iced over that day that the crews split up the loads and was only able to dump the bulk of the fish in the middle of the Delayed harvest section at two points near the middle.

If you wish to see a nice 8 minute video of the stocking we did below Brighton Dam, check out this: <https://youtu.be/aBIE0792aQg> 🐾

Thanks to Ron Brooks for making this happen!



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!*

## Casting for Recovery - Rod Raffle! - Casey Petlier

CFR rod raffle still has tickets available for \$20 each. If you are interested in purchasing tickets and helping out the Casting for Recovery Mid-Atlantic chapter, visit their website by checking out the link below. Its easy to do and your ticket and thank you note will arrive in the mail shortly afterwards.

1<sup>st</sup> prize is a handmade 8'4 wt fiberglass rod by Zeb Tonkavitch of Snowman Custom Rods.

2<sup>nd</sup> prize is a custom made 8'3 wt with inlaid abalone grip in a CFR rod case. 3<sup>rd</sup> prize is a Casting for Recovery TFO outfit which includes a 5 wt rod, Deschutes reel, fly line and backing, CFR rod tube, flies, leaders, tools, and fly boxes. Everything you need!

Go to the CFR website and scroll down to the Rod raffle ad and use the purchase tickets here link. <http://castingforrecovery.org/cfr-mid-atlantic/> 🐾

## Project Healing Waters Fly Tying Event - Larry Vawter

A young man by the name of Tim Bradberry is trying to put together a fly Tying event to benefit Project Healing Waters . This event is similar to one being organized at Ft Belvoir/Quantico Programs. All flies tied will go to the national organization to benefit wounded warrior fishing events nationwide.

Tim is planning this event to be held at The American Legion Post #60 in Laurel Maryland. The date has been set for April 11th, and the time is forthcoming. Some of his plans include casting demonstrations, kids fly tying, and also show the Veterans of the Post how to tie flies. Food will be available at a fair price. He is also looking for help from some fly shops to set up tables so they can sell their wares. Tim is a very enthusiastic 18 yr old who is an avid fly fisherman who is trying to do something good here.

Seen as how I am the Program Leader of the closest Program to this event I feel its my duty to aide this young man anyway I can. So I am asking for Volunteers who would be willing to come down and tie some flies for the day and help me help him in aiding our Wounded Warriors and Veterans.

I ask any of you interested in helping out to respond to me directly so as not to take up space and clog the Listserver. 🐾

Larry Vawter  
Program Leader  
PHWFF at Ft Meade

[thecarptman@msn.com](mailto:thecarptman@msn.com)



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.

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### **Mike's Midge Pupa**

**Hook:** Orvis Wide Gap dry fly, #18-#20

**Thread:** Gray 8/0

**Abdomen:** Olive goose biot

**Thorax:** Thin strip of black dry-fly foam

**Gills:** White CDC feather



Read more: <http://www.flyfisherman.com/featured/mikes-midge-pupa/>



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