

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

Apr 2016 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

# “Bass Fishing the Potomac”

## Jamie Gould & Randy Chandler

### *The Potomac River Smallmouth Club*

### *Apr 20<sup>th</sup>, 2016*

We are both pleased and very excited to have Jamie Gould and Randy Chandler from the Potomac River Smallmouth Club enlighten us on some warm water fishing action. We'll wade away from our typical cold trout waters and get our feet wet with some warm water Bass fishing action on the Potomac. It should be an exciting and informative meeting for all.

Be prepared to soak in everything you'll need to know about stalking one of the most exciting and best fighting game fish the area has to offer. Jamie and Randy will take us through tackle, lures, techniques and secrets of hooking up with one of the toughest fighting freshwater fish in North America. Highly regarded for its top water fighting ability when hooked – old fishing journals refer to the smallmouth bass as "ounce for ounce and pound for pound the gamest fish that swims".

Founded in 1988, the Potomac River Smallmouth Club is the Washington D.C. area's leading river fishing and conservation organization. They promote catch and release angling for smallmouth bass, support conservation organizations, publish a monthly newsletter, present monthly programs, and organize river trips for members. The Club also emphasizes knowledge of safe boating and wading skills as central to an enjoyable river experience. PRSC participates in various community sporting activities.

<http://prsc.org/>

– Alan Burrows



### 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, MD 20901  
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

I'm looking forward to this month's presentation as much as anyone in the chapter. I'm not sure when I got away from fishing for bass. It may have been sometime after our third child was born, or the year I was on travel every month, or perhaps shortly after we adopted our cat. I really can't pinpoint it, but other things just seemed to replace the extra time I had to stroll to our local lake and wet a line on a warm summer's morning.

When I was a youth and springtime rolled around you couldn't keep me from the water. It was also hard to hide that fact from mom. The first words out of her mouth as I stealthily tried to slip outside were, "Stay away from the creek". Now the local creek was full of coal dust that collected in the sand along its banks and additionally, on your clothes. It was hard to come back home, look mom in the face and try to tell her I wasn't down at the creek while my white socks and sneakers looked like I just got off a long shift in a Virginia coal mine.

The creek and local ponds held plenty of bass just itching to be caught. Hey, someone had to do it. Why not me and a few of my best buddies. No sense in me being the only one in trouble with mom. We would get up early, grab our rods, a clip on box of lures or small tackle box and hit the ground running. It was nice living close to water filled with fish. Mom might argue otherwise, but she eventually came around or perhaps gave in to the fact that I would continue this obsession with fishing. It may have helped that I eventually just kept a pair of old coal stained sneakers outside for my creek adventures.

One of my favorite things was tossing a purple rubber worm rigged Carolina style. A birthday subscription to Field & Stream gave me access to fishing knowledge I never had before. Lure of choice use to be a lead weight or bobber, hook and fat night crawler. The outdoor magazine articles soaked in and stuck like the coal dust. I was intrigued by different rig setups, new lures, ways of catching and using natural bait. New rods, reels, and line swam around in my dreams at night with thoughts of how to deploy

this arsenal of gear on the wary bass. I felt like I was starting to win the war of boy vs fish. It was exciting.

Feeling the tug and power a bass generates after being hooked is something you'll never forget. They'll do all types of acrobatics to get off and sometimes just leave you awestruck. Once while fishing a tiny farmpond I hooked into a decent fish about 14 inches or so. While reeling him in I noticed a wake forming under some weeds. Out of no where this huge bass attacked and tried to swim off with my catch. After a brief tug of war, the green Moby Dick jumped clear out of the water, shook his huge head violently and threw both fish and lure back at my feet. A catch & release moment I'll never forget.

Needless to say, I'm looking forward to this month's bass fishing presentation and hope it gives me the small nudge I need to go after some of these tough fighting guys again. Can't wait to gear up and head to the creek once more.

Until next month, tight lines!

Bob O'Donnell  
President, PPTU

## PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

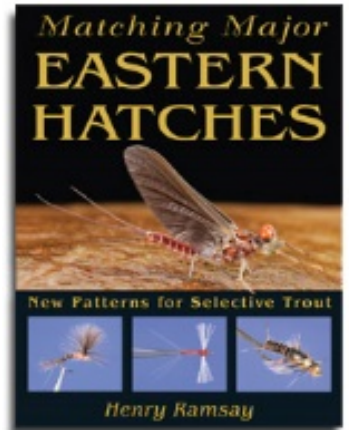
Ken Bowyer provides one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hip boots, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, etc. at nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.



Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or by E-mail:  
[kenbowyer@verizon.net](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net)

## Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

Last month I discussed some aspects of fishing a hatch. Many dozens of books have been written on this topic. You might want to invest in a few of them, as most are handy references. These can become especially important if you are headed to some other region of the country and want to learn a little about the hatches you could encounter on your trip. Ask around. Many of us old timers can suggest a few titles or just check a local fly shop.



Stonefly nymphs emerge by crawling out on some rock or structure and then flying off to some shrub or tree to first mate before returning to lay their eggs on the water. The moving nymphs and the egg-laying females are the most accessible to the hungry trout. The larger stones may spend several years crawling around the rocks in a stream before emerging.

Caddis pupae usually create a small bubble within their pupal skin, which sends them to the surface. Bead head nymphs with bright beads often work well. Most newly emerged adults rarely drift along for any distance. The big deal about caddis is that the adults survive for more than a day or three and come back to the stream over several days to lay their eggs as they skitter along the surface. Some adults do drift along when emerging or laying eggs.



It is the mayflies that usually get most trout fishers excited. Mayflies have a complex life cycle. They are the only insects that have two flying stages, the second being the only one mating and laying eggs. Nymphs may be short lived or very long lived. Knowing if the nymphs spend most of that stage in riffles and fast water is important to know. Some burrow into the bottom of the pools and swim to the surface to emerge. Some emerging mayflies will drift along the surface, while others may crawl out on a rock to emerge like a stone fly.



The first flying stage of a mayfly is known by anglers as the dun. The proper name is subimago. Duns are characterized by dull-shaded wings and are poor fliers. This stage usually takes a few minutes from emerging from the nymphal shuck to inflate its wings and get them hard enough to support flying. The dun is one of the most vulnerable stages for most mayflies. Some duns may float for 10–50' on the surface before they can flutter off to the surrounding trees and shrubs. When they leave the water they have only one basic motion: up and towards one side of the stream.

If the dun is not snapped up by a trout or a bird, its next job is to molt into the reproductive stage, the spinner or imago, over the next 24 hours or so. This stage is easily identified by the crystalline wings. When they return to the stream to mate and lay their eggs, they are very skillful flying machines. This stage is not usually accessible to trout until the final moments in the life of a mayfly: the dying spinner fall. The spinners may struggle for the first few minutes on the stream, but they are not going anywhere but where the stream takes them.

Knowing the life cycle is the first step in intercepting a hatch and catching trout. Knowing what time the hatch starts and ends, when any spinner fall or other activity might happen, and how the insects behave as they move from the bottom of the

stream to the surface and depart into the air is very useful.

Mayflies in the early spring are generally dark bodied. As the spring progresses the mayfly species tend to get paler and paler until they reach the apex with the all white fly of August. The fall hatches return to the darker mode. The knowledgeable fly fisher will not be tossing a pale sulphur in April nor a dark Hendrickson in June or July to just see if the trout are interested.

The early and latest hatches take place in the afternoon. As the weather warms in the spring, they become earlier or later in the day. By June, all hatches are at dawn or just before dark. In the fall this reverses. There are exceptions. Weather each day can play a big role. Cloudy-rainy days seem to bring a lot of bugs out on the water. Clear, hot days will often see little hatching after early morning until late afternoon.

Ask! If you hear the sulphurs are starting to hatch on the Gunpowder, make sure you find out the time of day and the size and color of that hatch. The early sulphurs are not matched by the late sulphurs and vice versa. Ask what times the grannom caddis are active on the Casselman and what kind of water they prefer. If the salmon flies (giant stones) are hatching on the Madison, find out exactly where on the river they are hatching and make sure you are as close to the beginning of the hatch as it moves up the river each day. If you learn the 17-year cicadas are emerging by the gazillions in an area, get there before it is over—the emergence lasts 5 weeks or so! Grasshoppers are great in the late summer and early fall, but big hoppers are not something to usually try in the early spring. Ants can work at almost any time of warm weather, but most flying ants swarms are in the morning.



Be prepared for the common hatches and you should have a rewarding day. Do some homework before you drive even 20 miles to a local stream, let alone a drive of several hours. And please share what you saw on your trip. Go meet that hatch. Enjoy the day at matching wits with the smart trout on many of our streams! Beats a day cutting the lawn or fixing the roof—jobs that still need to be done!

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

The final stocking of rainbows into the Delayed harvest section of the Middle Patuxent and into the Patuxent Tailwater below Brighton Dam was to have been on March 29. Some rainbows might be dropped at the bridges crossing the upper Patuxent Special Area. The flies-only tailwater will likely receive the majority of the fish in this final stocking—maybe 700 bows. The Middle Patuxent is to be stocked with 500.

As with all recently stocked trout, give them time to learn how to chase a fly being stripped through the water. Dead drift or hanging a subsurface fly in front of them are usually the best starting points. The trout that were stocked at the end of February and early March should be acting more 'normal' in taking flies by the time this is mailed.

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!*

## PPTU Fly Tying Class a Success - TroutWrangler

The intermediate fly tying class came to a close a few weeks ago with many students heading home with several artistic creations they whipped up at the vice under Bob Dietz's well planned and informative instruction. The students learned a great deal as Bob dove into the history and use of the flies and materials to create them besides passing down some valuable tying skills that the students can build upon to tie even more flies in the future.

The six week class was not just a technical experience, it additionally was a bonding sessions for members to share skills and give each other a hand where needed. Check out just a few of the flies tied during the class.



It was a fun time had by all. Congratulations to all the students that attended. You should be proud of the fly patterns you turned out. They looked amazing and should serve you well on the water. Many thanks to Bob Dietz for his excellent instruction and patience while teaching.

## Tenkara Podcast! - TU National

I thought I would share this - Daniel Galhardo, founder of Tenkara USA (a TU business member) has started a podcast! Here's a link to his latest podcast where he chats with Mark Cole about native and wild trout in Colorado and more importantly - Tenkara fishing.

Apparently Mark is a professor at Colorado Mountain College where he teaches fly fishing. I wish I had a Tenkara class in college!

<http://www.tenkarausa.com/myportfolio/chasing-colorados-native-trout-with-mark-cole/>

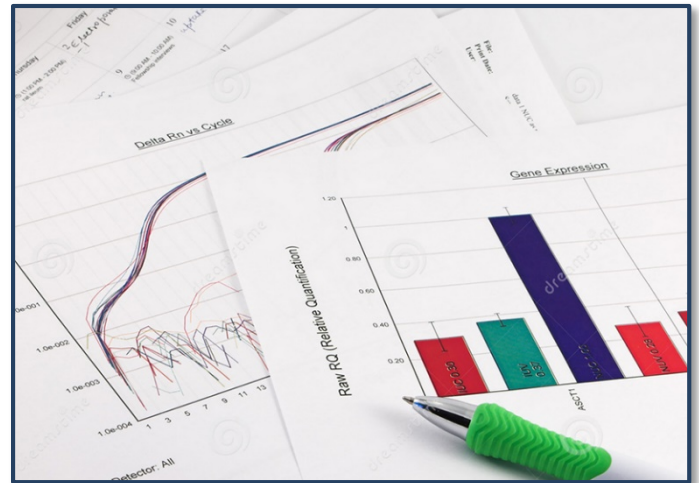
## The Fly Fisher as Scientist - Jay Sheppard

Science is a process of trying to separate facts from fiction. A hypothesis is postulated and data collected to confirm or disconfirm the hypothesis. When I was a preteen I tried to estimate how tall I would be by using my father's height and shoe size compared to my own shoe size. He was 6'2" with a size 8½ shoe, while I had a size 10 shoe and was only 5'4" at the time. My hypothesis did not fit the data! If correct, then I should have ended up a very tall basketball player instead of my actual shorter height of less than 6'.

As a fisherman, I have always tried to use science to help me catch fish. If a particular bait or lure was not working, then either change the offering or change where and how it was being presented. Do not continue flailing the same water with the same offering and yielding the same lack of results, ad nauseum. As an avid fly fisher for the past many decades, I now have to look through my boxes of flies and try to guess what the quarry will take at that time under those conditions. If my hypothesis is right, then I am rewarded. If there is no reward of a trout, etc. within some reasonable period with that fly, then change the fly! Change something! I think all fishers employ the 'scientific method' to their fishing efforts—some more than others. They conjure up a working hypothesis and then rigorously test it. Does this fly and presentation work or not? If they start seeing some interest in their fly, then maybe they tweak the presentation or adjust some other variable.



Most people have had minimal exposure to what the 'scientific method' is and how it can be used in everyday life. So it is understandable when they accept or reject some scientific report without fully understanding what is being reported. Almost all the scientists I have ever known have had a very inquisitive mind. They are constantly looking for 'more data' to support or disprove some idea—their own or others. I do think the earth is a sphere that is several billion years old, but I am always listening for alternative explanations that have some data to support that view. Being closed minded is not being a good scientist or fisherman! Being open to changing one's view on what will catch a fish or how something operates makes for a better life with more fish landed and better roses in the garden, etc.



Good science is published in the scientific literature. This means the research has passed through a peer review process to ascertain its potential validity. That is a big difference between a scientific journal and the general media. Peer review means other scientists working in that field can go over the data, methodology, calculations, and conclusions before publication. They can offer suggestions for improvements or an outright rejection.

A person may be one of the smartest on the planet and still do 'dumb' things. I was at a lecture by Nobel Laureate Linus Pauling in about 1970. He was a chemist then being paid by Big Agricultural to support the continued use of DDT. In the middle of his lecture, he took a glass of clear liquid and drank it after saying it was DDT. Was it DDT? Who knows! Could have been vodka or gin or just plain water for all any of us in the audience knew. If it was

DDT, what was the concentration? A dramatic stunt, but upon closer examination, unverifiable and potentially dangerous to Dr. Pauling or anyone trying to repeat it.

How often in our lifetimes have we heard reports that coffee or eggs are good or bad for us? (To be honest, I have no idea about the current thinking!) The average citizen is constantly bombarded by reports from all sorts of sources about what to avoid or use. It is a tough world out there. The Internet does and does not help. There is no peer review of any of the chatter on the World Wide Web. If anyone objects to some story, it is often lost or drowned out in the storm of social media.

So what is a person to do about reports of science? I would suggest you avoid listening to politicians first of all. Then I would not give much credence to a single news report or what the social media is presently spouting. Few politicians or journalists have a science background. They often miss the nuances of what some scientists are saying or even put a spin on the new information that is not supported by the science. Listen to numerous reports from a variety of sources. And above all, keep an open mind.



You may have heard a certain fly was working on that stream last year at this time, but this is another year, and the trout may be selecting something else. If you see trout actively feeding and you do not get any 'looks' at your fly, then the time to change is only a matter of a dozen or three casts. If you are not getting any action and seeing no fish then either move, change your presentation, or try another fly. Try new hypotheses. Test them with a few dozen presentations. If you are getting an occasional hit, tweak your hypothesis that you are then trying. In the face of continued rejections by the trout, do not

continue with the same hypothesis for the whole day and wonder why you went home with nary a hit, let alone anything to the net. Be a fisher-scientist and report your results! Your peers will give you rave reviews for unlocking the secrets of the trout that day on that water. All scientists and all experts have failures. As fishers, we have come to expect some bad days tossing flies at the water. Keep trying! Go for the Nobel of fishing! There is a golden trout awaiting you around the next bend. And enjoy your time on the water!

## Winner, Winner, Chicken Dinner! - PPTU Meeting

We had a blast at last month's meeting featuring George Daniel. George gave a very informative presentation and most of us walked away with some in depth knowledge on fishing streamers that we didn't have when we came in.



The highlight at the end of the evening was watching young Andrew Konieczny's expression as he learned he had won our rod raffle. Andrew is now the proud, and happy owner of a brand new Douglas 9' 4wt fly rod.

Congratulations Andrew and good fishing!



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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### Elk Hair Caddis

Although it's probably the ultimate "Western" dry fly, it was actually invented by Al Troth while he still lived in Pennsylvania in the 1950's. (It didn't really catch on until it was written up in the national magazines in the 70's.) He essentially replaced the somewhat complicated wing and front hackle of the Henryville Special with Elk Hair. His intent was to create a caddis emerger, but it was so hard to sink that he just gave up and finally called it a dry fly.

<http://howtoflyfish.orvis.com/fly-tying-videos/dry-flies/735-elk-hair-caddis>



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