

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

February 2014 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

Marcellus Shale and Potential Gas Development in Maryland February 19th

Currently there is a de-facto moratorium on natural gas production in Maryland that has been brought about by Governor O'Malley through an Executive Order on June 6, 2011 entitled The Marcellus Shale Safe Drilling Initiative. The purpose of the initiative is to assist State policymakers and regulators in determining whether and how gas production from the Marcellus shale in Maryland can be accomplished without unacceptable risks of adverse impacts to public health, safety, the environment and natural resources.

In the executive order, the governor requested the Department of the Environment (MDE) and Natural Resources (DNR) to designate members of an Advisory Commission. The Departments in consultation with Advisory Commission were assigned a number of tasks and studies to address the stated purpose of the Executive Order. These will be reviewed.

Nick Weber as a member of Trout Unlimited (and our chapter) and as Chairman of the Mid-Atlantic Council was chosen to be a member of the Advisory Commission. Nick will share the outcomes of past efforts of the Commission, its current issues and what activities lie ahead. The efforts of the Commission are focused primarily on Garrett County and Western Allegany County where the natural gas deposits of Marcellus Shale are located. Nick's main passion and focus has been the preservation of the unique habitat and ecosystem that supports the most extensive brook trout system in the Southern Appalachians. It is clear that gas development can have significant impacts on habitat and the environment that not only affect people who live in Garrett and Allegany County, but also the significant tourism industry of that area which includes us fishers. The protection of the irreplaceable natural resources of the area is a responsibility for all of us and for future generations. Come hear about the developments of this initiative and hopefully answer most questions that you may have. Be advised that you will hear the word 'Fracking' used more than once.

On the Bench – Alan Burrows will be tying midges starting at 7pm. Come in from the cold and see some productive patterns being tied such as the Jujube, Wired, Diamond, and Rainbow midge.

– 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 - James Robinson

Another month has come and gone and it was a good month with a couple of big activities. On the 10th, several members of the Chapter participated in the 'Kamloop Express', the delivery of Rainbow Trout eggs to schools across the state – this year there are 68 elementary, middle & high schools participating in the program. If all goes well, more than 10,000 fry will be released in late April and early May. There are too many people involved in this program to thank each one individually but a big thank you is deserved by each volunteer who helped on the 10th.

Another big step was also taken to assure the flow of cool water into the Patuxent River below Brighton Dam, this time by WSSC. They hired divers who labored for about a week to pressure wash the rust, scale & gunk that was obstructing the debris grates and preventing the flow of cold water from the reservoir. Although it hasn't been tested yet, we believe this is a strong step towards maintaining this stretch of the river as a year around trout fishery. See Jay Sheppard's report on the Patuxent River for more information.

We also had a great Chapter meeting on the 15th – our annual fly tying extravaganza. This is one of my favorite meetings. I'm always amazed at the creativity that's on display by our very talented tiers. My thanks to Pati, Bob (both of you), George, Jed, Jim, Steve, Larry & Carl (I hope I didn't miss anyone and apologize because I have a feeling I did).

We also have a lot of things coming up in the next couple of months, starting with our speaker at the February Chapter meeting – our own Nick Weber. Nick is a Past President of the Chapter and has served on the Maryland board that is looking into the best practices and regulations for the drilling for natural gas in Marcellus shale in our state. Come and listen to what should be a very informative presentation on this topic.

We'll also have the raffle drawing at our February meeting – guided fishing trip with the West Branch Angler (on the Delaware River), Paul Kearney (in the Shenandoah National Park), Beaver Creek Outfitters (on Beaver Creek), Mike Heck (in south central Pennsylvania) and a Pentax WG30 waterproof camera are up for grabs. Contact anyone on the Board if you haven't gotten your tickets yet.

On March 1st, we'll have another fun filled day selling hot dogs & bratwurst (the best wurst at Bass Pro) at Arundel Mills Mall. If you have some time, come join us. If you don't have time, come hungry!

April 5th is Green Fest at Howard Community College. This is a gathering of organizations & companies involved on conservation & environmental activities in Howard County. Our Chapter sets up a table next to the Trout in the Classroom display, demonstrating fly tying and the highlighting the activities of Trout Unlimited & our Chapter.

And the start of the releases of the Trout in the Classroom fry will begin in late April. Already, Alan Burrows is scheduling releases from several of the schools in Howard County. From what I've heard, some of the schools are bringing 150 or more students so there's a real need for some volunteer support. We'll begin calling for assistance as soon as we have dates set & know what the teachers want to do. From experience, I know that the larger releases could use 6 or more volunteers to work with the students, demonstrating fly tying, talking about marcoinvertabrates, providing casting instruction, releasing the fry and many other subjects. You don't need to be an expert – just interested in working with multiple small groups of students for about 20 minutes.

And of course, we still have our fly fishing outings – both near & far. Check the web site (www.pptu.org) for the schedule. One trip is to Town Creek near Old Town, Maryland and another is a Steelhead excursion to Ohio – something for everyone.

Until next month, tight lines ...

Jim Robinson
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

Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

Selecting flies and tippetts have always been one of the biggest challenges to a fly fisher, especially if the angler is making his first approach to that stream in many weeks. I thought a little consideration of tippet choice might be worth exploring, although I have touched on this topic in the past.

The tippet is the weak link in the connection between the fisher and the fly. Too light and the chance of losing the fly to a fish or snag can increase to an almost certainty; yet too heavy a tippet and the fly might as well be attached to the end of a phone pole. Personally, I am awaiting the creation of 11X tippet material, which means 'non-existent', with at least a 5-lb test to use on my trips!

Thinner tippet means more movement by the fly will be allowed as it is held by the knot. Think of a #16 fly attached to some 30-lb mono vs. 1-lb mono. And vice versa for a #6 streamer! A large streamer attached to a fine tippet and being stripped rapidly through the water has little chance of being retrieved by the angler if a nice fish or a snag gets hooked. Many years ago, I was in a fly shop near a nice trout stream. An angler in wet waders came in and had a big smile on his face as he asked for another dozen streamers. He was out of them, having had a great morning hooking up with lots of trout on the river. When asked what was the largest he had hooked or landed, he replied, "None!" When pushed further, he indicated that he was using 6X tippet and was just hooking up with the standard 10" wild trout in the stream! No wonder he was losing all those flies. As most know, I am very stingy with my flies on a stream and try to avoid losing any at almost any cost—a fly shop or tying vise is usually not that close at hand.



There are a lot of tradeoffs in any choices we make. Too light a tippet, and it may not cast the weighted streamer; or too heavy and it will not drop a lot of "S"-curves to give us a long dead drift. So what are the major considerations in choosing the tippet for a particular situation?

Presentation is the single biggest factor. Is the fly going to be dead drifted on the surface or below, or is it going to be actively fished on a tight line? If one has several feet of slack between the tip of the rod and the fly, one has a bit of leeway on the strike—that is, in how far the rod tip can be moved before pressure is applied to the hook. Too much slack and the rod has to be moved a great distance to set the hook. No slack in the presentation, might even mean giving line when a strike is detected to let the fish hook itself; at the least it means moving the rod tip even a few inches might apply too much added pressure to the tippet, and the fly/fish will be lost. Even on a tight line, a wet fly or streamer

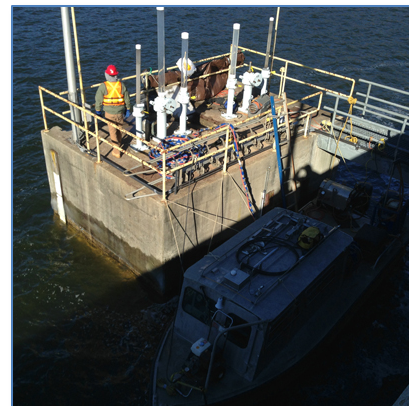
should be able to move a little in reaction to the micro-currents and not just to the pull of the line and leader by the angler and river.

A short tippet will usually cast the fly straight out, while a very long tippet of the same size will usually collapse to leave many "S"-curves. The latter is great for a small dry fly but terrible for a heavy streamer or nymph, while the former is much better for the heavy fly that will be on a tight line.

In sum, I like a tippet that maximizes the amount of action the fly will experience during the presentation; e.g., will it move or twist in a tiny micro-current or from a gust of wind? I gage the sizes of the fish I can expect and try to keep the tippet as light as I think I can use to land a really large fish from those waters. I only use the really heavy tippets when the conditions allow: murky water, large fish that are not leader shy, lots of debris to be snagged, etc. 🌻

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

Really great news to report this month, hopefully! The WSSC hired a dive team to completely clean the entire rusted trash screens protecting their intake control gates. The screens were essentially rusted close—almost no water could pass through them. This cleaning took almost 5 days and was completed January 10. The expectation is that we will now see cold water coming out next summer when we need to have it. This does not mean the tailwater will be running at 55° all summer. In fact it will be closer to 68° most of the time. There is precious little cold water storage in Triadelphia Reservoir. It is only 54' deep compared to Prettyboy's >125' depth that supplies the Gunpowder.



There are two sides to the outlet control tower on this dam. Each side can be releasing water from differing depths as needed. To start the spring, only the top two control gates will be open. The Patuxent tailwater will be allowed to warm to the high 60s before any of the cooler water is even tapped into by opening a lower control gate. If next summer follows last summer that will be in mid-June when the upper layers of the reservoir reach that temperature. At that point The river will be running in the high 60s most of the time. By early September, one or both of the bottom gates will have to be opened to finally tap into the coldest water that remains. We are just not certain how many years we can survive with the limited cold water available each summer. Pay close attention to the USGS web site for the Patuxent River below Brighton Dam: flow and temperature changes, in particular, before going fishing in this tailwater. table flows and temperatures will usually be the better fishing.

We will soon be working with DNR-Fisheries to come up with a stocking plan for this coming season. Last year we float stocked about 2500 trout down the flies-only tailwater—about 1.5 miles. A similar number was also stocked into some 6 miles of the upper Patuxent Special Trout Management Area (lures and flies). I doubt if we will alter those numbers significantly, but we will see.

If you have not gotten an email from me recently, I do not have you on my special list for potential volunteers to help stock our local waters or do other local stream projects. These stockings are never on weekends. You must have chest waders and some experience wading streams. If you would like to help float stock the trout, drop me an email: jmsheppar@aol.com.

January 2014 Outing Report – Big Spring PA - Dennis Covert

Pulling into the parking area of what's known as "the ditch" at Big Spring it was 10:36 am and the air temp was 24 degrees. There was a light dusting of snow on the ground and a 15 mile an hour wind that pushed the rising steam in small puffs across the creek's warmer surface. The forecast had been for cloudy skies and temps rising into the low 30's,

but the revised forecast that morning had clearing skies with a high of only 25; so in other words just a beautiful winter morning.

Joe Robinson, Yang Chang, Josh Collette, & Ken Bowyer were already in the parking lot waders on and talking strategy. Me, Lou Reichel & Bob O'Donnell piled out of the truck and struggled to pull waders on over layers of winter clothes. I could hear Bob on the other side of the truck harrumphing about tying knots with cold fingers that didn't cinch down properly, while I fought to tie tippet onto a stiff coil of leader while the cold wind crawled down my neck.



About the time we got everything together a fish boiled the surface right in front of us and warmed me up considerable and most likely everyone else. Just who struck first I don't know, Joe caught a brookie from the ditch while I got a couple small rainbows out of the run just below. Either way everyone's spirits were bolstered with fish in the net. Joe got his on a Walt's Worm; mine on a Cress Bug the other on a Walt's Worm.

Around 12 pm Lou and I decided to head on down to the next bridge parking lot where there was more room to cook lunch. It was a good move because we found lots of fish stationed out in the runs. In the next hour I got a couple more bows in about that same 8-10 inch range, while Lou hooked a big bow upstream on a red Midge Pupae Emerger, not sure of the fly size. I never saw a guy so happy to lose a big fish; he said just getting good enough to fool a fish that size was enough for him. Lou said he had him on for awhile but the fish wrapped

the leader around the rock he had been holding in front of and busted off. As I said earlier, there were lots of fish out, and several large ones, but other than Lou's all the big'uns proved to be shyer than we were sly. The smaller fish would sometimes give chase and once in awhile take, while the larger fish would either ignore the fly or spook and slide away as the fly came close. Throughout the day I saw a healthy population of fish ranging in sizes from two to three inches close to the weed beds all the way up to a couple that approached steelhead size. All afternoon fish in small pods moved up and down stream grubbing midges by side shimmying on the stream bottom to knock the Pupae loose.

Around 2 pm we had some lunch; hot bean soup, boiled brats, chips & soda which did a lot to warm things up. Then back on the water. A few fish had began to rise and I did get one on a #22 CDC Parachute Midge Pupae, a 10 incher hanging just back from the big Bow I was casting too. This 17-19 inch fish spent most of the afternoon hanging just in front of a rock below the bridge, and would rise once in awhile to something neither I nor Bob could see. Throughout the afternoon I think everybody in the group had a go without moving him except maybe to spook him out of his lie for a little while.



By three O'clock it was getting noticeably colder but we didn't want to quit. The wind had picked up a little and my fly line was freezing in the guides just about every cast, and I would have to dip the tip top in the water to free up the line. By 4 pm the temperature had dropped down to 22 degrees and the wind had picked up a little, we'd had enough. Pretty nice day overall, maybe a little chilly but the fish were there and taking just often enough to keep things interesting.



The next outing is to Big Hunting Creek, not sure of the date just yet, waiting to see what the weather brings. February is sometimes the coldest outing of the year and the creek has in some past years filled with snow and frozen up for short periods. Other years it's been close to 70 degrees with herds of marauding midges and stoneflies. Just have to wait a little; I'll post the date at least a week or two ahead. 🍄

In the Media - Bob O'Donnell

The more I tie flies the more fascinated I've become with all the materials and techniques used to create these tiny jewels we use to fool trout. Recently I shared a video with Bob Dietz on a technique I haven't seen. And Bob, in his mentoring role of instructor, passed on another interesting technique to me – both by the way showcase one of the best patterns you can have in your fly box, the Pheasant Tail Nymph.

Tim Flagler of Tightline Productions ties a Micro Pheasant Tail Nymph:

<http://vimeo.com/84027222>

...and Bob's response, Lou DiGena ties a Sawyer Pheasant Tail nymph at the Sparse Grey Matter Fly Tying Fest in Califon, NJ:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J6-KqCE2ya4>

You'll be amazed at what is missing from this fly pattern. Amaze me by emailing me the answer. 🍄

Fly Tying Marathon - Project Healing Waters

We received a note from the Program Lead for the Project Healing Waters Fort Belvoir Program. The Fort Belvoir and Quantico PHW Programs are bringing back the Fly Tying Marathon on February 22 at the National Museum of the Marine Corps in Quantico, VA. The details are below. At previous tying marathons, PPTU had a good-sized contingent attending. For questions please contact:

Bob Gartner

Program Lead

Project Healing Waters – Fort Belvoir

Home: 703-250-6524

Cell: 202-494-5778

Location: National Museum of the Marine Corps

Date: Feb 22, 2014

Time: Block 1 - 0900-1245;

Block 2 - 1315-1700

Each block is restricted to 75 participants. Participants are permitted to sign up for both blocks and to tie for the full 8 hours.

Register: Participants may register for Block 1 and Block 2 by emailing: phwquantico@gmail.com. Registration is first come, first served.

Participants are to bring all tools and materials to tie the fly patterns of their choice. Flies created at the event will be used by Project Healing Waters Participants on outings throughout the year. All flies will be collected and distributed to various Project Healing Waters Programs across the nation. Tiers may request a tax deductible donation receipt that will be provided on site.

The following patterns in various colors and sizes are recommended: Woolly Buggers (all variations), Clouser Deep Minnows, Hare's Ears (bead head and standard), Copper John's, Prince Nymphs (bead head and standard), Black Beauties, Chernobyl Ants, Eggs, Griffith's Gnats, Humpies, Muddler Minnows, Pheasant Tails, Royal Wulffs, Slumpbusters, San Juan Worms, Zonkers, Lefty's Deceivers, Adams, Elk Hair Caddis, Chronomids,

Soft Hackles, Czech Nymphs, Midges, Poppers, Dahlberg Divers, and just about anything the tiers are willing to tie!



PHW Quantico and Ft Belvoir will provide light refreshments (sandwiches, chips, and drinks) throughout the day.

The National Museum of the Marine Corps has two full service restaurants, Tun Tavern and the Devil Dog Diner, that will be open for tiers desiring meals and beverages. 🍷

Marty Laksbergs, USMC Ret.

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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!





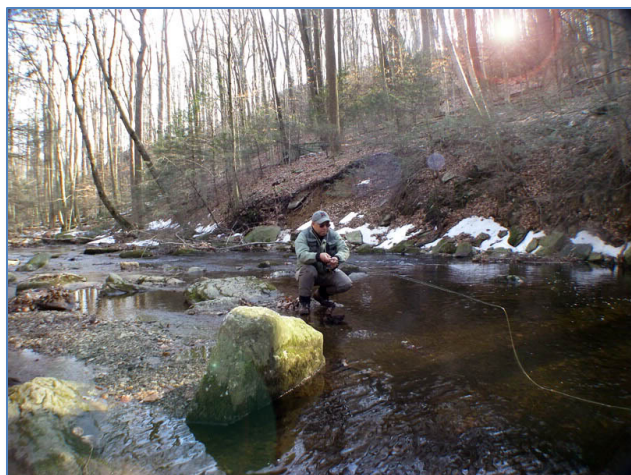
Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

Editor: Trout Wrangler
Phone: 410-733-0638
Email: TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com

Little Black Stonefly

Stoneflies spotted on the Gunpowder!

1/17/14



Big Hunting Creek

Current PPTU Outing Schedule **More info on Website!**

Feb (TBD) - Big Hunting Creek; **Maryland License**

March 15 - Town Creek; **Maryland License**

March 27,28,29,30 - Ohio Steelhead; **Ohio License**

April 3 - Potomac Shad; **DC License**

April 26,27 - Casselman River; **Maryland License**



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