

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

“Trout Stocking and Trout Management in Central Maryland”

Mark Staley

Maryland Department of Natural Resources

May 18th, 2016

Come to our last meeting of the Spring to hear everything you wanted to know about trout management in Central MD, including stocked trout, recreational wild trout, and the brook trout facets of trout management.

Freshwater fishery management is focused on non-tidal and cold-water fisheries. This includes the management of impoundments (lakes, reservoirs, and ponds), coldwater streams, and tidal freshwater streams. Management objectives include the protection, restoration and expansion of cold-water fish habitat, the enhancement of natural trout populations, stocking of hatchery-produced trout to enhance angling opportunities, and the maintenance and creation of public access to trout waters.

Join us for informative evening Wednesday, May 18th and learn what all Maryland DNR does for you behind the scenes. Have your questions handy, hopefully to be answered fully during this presentation as we welcome our guest speaker from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, Mark Staley.

Mark has worked as a DNR Fisheries biologist since 1988, all of those years spent working with trout in Maryland's 5 Central counties. Mark is also involved with the management of recreational fisheries in impoundments/reservoirs and tidal largemouth bass in the Upper Bay.

– 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

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Presidents' Column - Bob O'Donnell

Like kids in a candy store, a group of fishermen oohed and awed around the display set by the banks of the river. Hands trembled just a tad in excitement and anticipation as they reached for a strip of cane. Admiration in the workmanship was displayed both vocally and silently by all. A short walk in the grass leading to that first cast and ultimately that first big smile. Like a fine musical instrument, the bamboo rods played sweet music to those that cast them in the warm spring air.

Perhaps no other piece of sporting equipment invokes such reverence for tradition as the split-cane bamboo fly rod. For the last couple of years, a bamboo gathering has been taking place by the banks of the gunpowder. The chance to hold, admire, and cast a few rods seems to be turning into a PPTU annual event. For those that missed it this year... keep an out for the next time. It's worth a few hours out of your day. Trust me. The one drawback of the day? I want another rod.

Now, I'm not going to kid myself. I don't *need* a bamboo rod, I *want* a bamboo rod. Maybe it's partly the nostalgia and history behind fishing one. Maybe the slower action suits my casting style. It might be the fact that a bamboo rod loads and casts sweeter than anything else I'll ever cast. Accuracy, finesse, surprising power: more reasons to consider owning a bamboo rod. Plus I'm a sucker when it comes to good craftsmanship. I can appreciate the effort, time, and love that went into making a one-of-kind creation.

To others that may have the itch for something different in their fishing arsenal I'll share a little research with you.

How much are you willing to spend? Your answer to this question might cut your options in half. A vintage rod by a famous maker—such as this 1950 Dickerson—can cost as much as a car, whereas a mass-produced overseas model might cost less than a high-end graphite rod.

Does the name or brand matter? Some guys have always dreamed of owning a Winston or an Orvis cane rod because Grandad had one. Or maybe you crave a William Oyster or Rolf Baginski. Perhaps there's a nearby maker who isn't well-known, but you like the idea of buying local. There are basically three kinds of bamboo-rod makers: traditional rod shops (Winston, Orvis, Thomas & Thomas, Hardy, etc.), custom makers, and offshore companies (who produce less-expensive cane rods overseas).

Do you want a piece of art or a fishing tool? Bamboo rod makers often go to great lengths to provide one-of-a-kind pieces of impressive artistry and craftsmanship, but they can also create utilitarian fishing rods without the frills. Those exotic-wood reel seat, fancy guide wraps, and agate guides drive up the price, but they sure are beautiful.

How will you use it? There are so many different lengths, actions, and designs available that you'll need to do some research, talking to the rod maker or manufacturer. Will you use it for all kinds of fishing or just dry flies? You can't just say "medium-action three-weight" because there may be five different models that fit that description. Most custom craftsmen make rods with very specific, often quirky actions, so you'll need to cast several rods to determine which is right for your needs.

Many thanks to Jed Feffer for putting on the bamboo show again and additional thanks to all that shared the rods they've come to appreciate and love. When I figure out what fits me (and my wallet) I'll post a note for the group. Hopefully soon, as I'm finding myself dreaming at night, tossing dry flies to sipping trout with a slow, sweet bamboo rod. So far, I've only woke my wife up once.

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 🌻

Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

May is the peak of the spring hatches—mayflies, stoneflies, and caddis are out in abundance on our waters. Matching the hatch is one of the great mysteries and most enjoyable parts of fly fishing for trout. At some point during the day there should be something hatching to get the trout excited; it might be afternoon, morning or evening. Some days several different insects will be actively hatching—often all at the same time. One evening on the lower Savage River, I had a genuine smorgasbord of bugs flying and floating by me: more than a dozen kinds of mayflies, several stoneflies, and a small number of caddisfly species were all trying to avoid being eaten by the actively feeding trout and swooping birds. One had to be careful and keep his mouth closed or take the chance of inhaling some fresh protein.

We tend to focus our attention on the larger bugs flying off the stream. The trout want the easiest meal for the least effort. If that means taking dozens of #16 mayflies versus a single #8 stonefly, they will do it. This is especially true when the larger insects are only infrequently floating past the trout and there are

literally dozens and dozens of the smaller insects drifting past. The trout become selective in taking the most common and easiest prey available to them at that spot in the moving stream. A giant stonefly or large drake mayfly might fill their tummies quickly, but those larger bugs may only pass them once every 15–30 minutes at the peak of the hatch, if at all. Meanwhile, hundreds of smaller insects are drifting past during the same time period. In the case of that large orgy of insects that evening on the lower Savage, it was a #16 sulphur that was the bug most trout were seeking. One could try a Green Drake or a caddis, but few would show any interest and kept on rising to the more abundant sulphur mayflies.



Trout tend to get into a rhythm when actively feeding. They will rise at nearly clock-like intervals. The intervals are often 20–40 seconds depending on the trout, the insect and water velocity. Timing the cast to pass over the trout is the problem. Both the tiny window of surface area from which the trout is taking its prey but also the tiny window when it is ready for its next meal—that is the dilemma in making the presentation. Most trout are only willing to move a few inches right or left at the most. Add in the timing of the drift and one has another dimension to contend with! Casting the fly a few seconds after the trout has just taken its meal is usually met with zero attention.

How the trout is taking its meal is a clue to what it is feeding upon. A loud slurp means the trout's nose came out of the water and some air was sucked



into the mouth for what was likely a dun mayfly with high wings and about to fly off the surface. A tiny dimple followed sometimes by a glimpse of the back or tail means it is taking a dead insect with finesse; no need to rush taking that mayfly spinner or ant. A boil just below the surface may indicate the trout is taking emerging insects just before they reach the surface. Flashing trout at the head of the pool and well below the surface can mean either nymphs are being swept down from the riffle or drowned insects are being swept into the pool.

A good friend, who has been fly fishing since the 1940s, reminded me the other day that catching trout is predicated upon just five factors: presentation, presentation, presentation, presentation, and fly selection—in that order! So after one has figured out the right presentation, he or she might consider fly selection. In matching a hatch, I look at general shape, colors and size as the three most important factors. If there is any question on size, pick the smaller of two fly sizes to try. When it comes to color, look at the underside and pick something that closely matches that color with a possible shade towards the rest of the body. Stone flies have wings flat over the body, caddis have theirs like a tent covering the body, and dun mayflies have theirs upright above the body. Mayfly spinners and most other dead flying insects that land on the water have wings flat in the film. Nymphs and larvae need to be a close match for size and color. By size, we mean not just length but also thickness and shape in the right places. Most fly tiers make their flies a tad too thick-bodied compared to the naturals.



When all is said and done, may you catch so many trout this spring and summer that your arm aches and you have to rest often! Leave a few uneducated trout out there for the rest of us!! See you on the stream or next fall in the Conservationist.

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

We have no idea when it will start this summer, but likely by the end of June, the release from Brighton Dam into the Patuxent will have insufficient oxygen to keep the trout alive. So try to get out to this fun tailwater by the middle of June and enjoy catching the rainbows we stocked earlier. We are still actively trying to solve this oxygen problem. This tailwater has a lot of potential. It will not be as productive as the Gunpowder, but it is a lot closer to our chapter membership for a quick evening trip during the week!

The Delayed Harvest section of the Middle Patuxent goes to the use of bait and keeping two trout per day on June 1, so here is another local stream you may wish to experience later this month. Do not forget the Patuxent River special area above rt. 97; it should be fine all summer, if we have some decent rainfall to keep the flows up. The further you get away from the bridges, the more trout you should find that are willing to try your fly or lure. A lot of trout were stocked in this upper Patuxent section this year: 2000 browns and several hundred rainbows. Some were well in excess of 15"—a nice trout any time of the year.



This is the last issue of the Conservationist until September. If you are not a member of the PPCTU forum, check it out from the link on our chapter web site www.pptu.org. A lot of fishing information is exchanged on this forum.

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/PPCTU/info>

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!

Natural Resources Careers Camp – Sue Muller

High school students interested in forestry, fisheries, wildlife, or park management are invited to join teens from across the Mid-Atlantic at the week-long Natural Resources Careers Camp held July 24 to 30th at the Hickory Environmental Education Center in Garrett County. Students will explore related college studies and professions through hands-on activities with experts from a variety of conservation fields.

“This program is perfect for young adults who are planning a career in conservation, and those who may be interested in forestry or natural resources and want to see if this line of work is a right fit,” said Donna Davis, project forester for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

Students work in groups of six or eight led by wildlife biologists, foresters and other natural resources professionals throughout the week.

Another exciting part of the program is College Night, where representatives from West Virginia University, Penn State, University of Maryland, Frostburg University, Allegany College of Maryland and Garrett College speak about their programs. Professors and department heads will share information and material with interested students.

The Natural Resources Careers Camp is sponsored by Maryland’s Forest Conservancy District Boards, Allegany College of Maryland, the

Maryland Department of Natural Resources- Forest Service and the Maryland Forestry Foundation. The camp has been held annually for over 40 years.



Students who will be entering grades 9 through 12 next year and are interested in natural resources careers are eligible to apply. Applications are available at www.marylandforestryboards.org. Local Forest Conservancy District Boards interview, recommend and offer scholarships for students to attend the camp. Space is limited so interested participants are encouraged to apply online today!

Congratulations TIC Crew! - Howard County Public Schools News

Trout Unlimited Mid-Atlantic Council is partnering with the Howard County Public School System to connect students to the system of streams, rivers and watersheds that sustain them. The partnership was formalized with an official signing Thursday, April 7 at Hammond High School in Columbia.

Under the terms of the partnership agreement, Trout Unlimited will collaborate with HCPSS staff members to implement the Trout in the Classroom environmental program for grades 4–12. The program will teach students to raise trout from eggs to fry, conduct stream habitat studies and learn about the ecosystems.

For the complete article, check out this link:

<http://www.hcpss.org/news-posts/2016/04/2015-16-184/>

Appalachian Hellbenders! - Jim Keil

This is a great piece of video work that provides an intimate glimpse at North America's Eastern Hellbender, an ancient salamander that lives as much in myth as in reality.... and in many waters, myths are all that remain of these sentinel stream-dwellers.

Many thanks to Jim for sharing this piece! I recalled an incident years ago with a fishing buddy of mine where we came across one of these guys while seining the water for fishing bait. Good thing we were in the water. It saved our mom's from washing our shorts.



Check out this amazing video.
<https://vimeo.com/108512185>

Operation KARE - Bob O'Donnell

A friend of mine shared this note with me. Her son asked if she would share this special event with friends. I thought it was worth passing on to the membership and friends of PPTU.

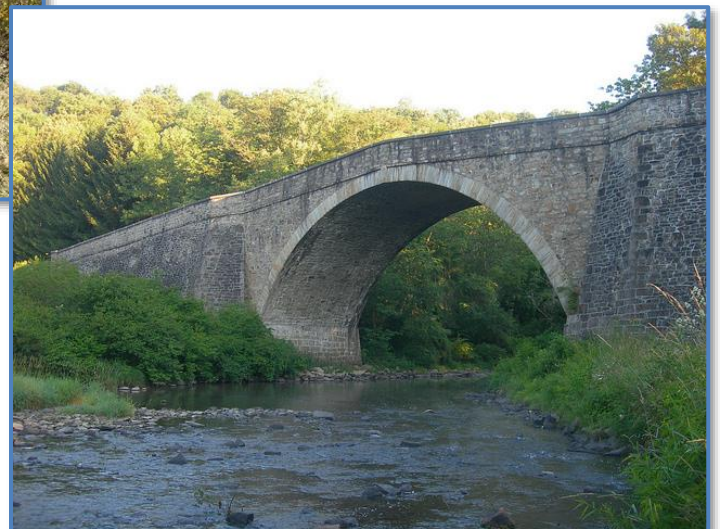
This is a charity event that her son's Kappa Alpha Order fraternity is involved with. They are trying to raise the funds to purchase a Track Chair for a wounded veteran. (More details on the website.)

If you donate, please use his Kappa Brother ID number which is #38.

<http://healteam6.org/healteam6/kare/>

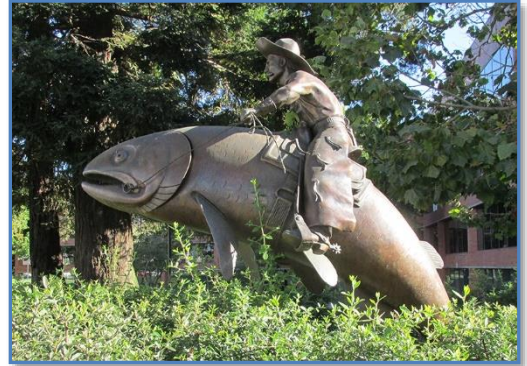
Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Keep the good stuff coming! Remember there's a lot of good info being posted on the forum by a lot of good people. Get your questions answered, post a photo and the details of your trips, and share with the other members. I know I haven't been fishing half as much as I would like and besides me, I'm sure others love to fish vicariously through the varied reports and photos you share.



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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**Mark Your Calendars – The BBQ Fundraiser is coming!!!
August 28th**



We're currently in the deep planning stages for setting up PPTU's **2nd Annual PPTU Barbecue Fundraiser**. Once again we'll be enjoying a day eating, fishing and relaxing by the water at Centennial Lake in Columbia, MD.

Set reminders in your phones, mark your calendars at home and work. Place sticky notes by your desks. Email postings will start appearing soon as we make final preparations. We hope to have more fun and see many more faces this year. See you there!



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