

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

An Evening with Joe Bruce *November 19th 2014*

We are pleased to welcome Joe Bruce to our November meeting. Joe has over 50 years of experience and will be sharing some of his knowledge on subjects such as fish behavior, tying and conservation. Joe is an author, tier and guide and this will be a great opportunity for our members to ask questions and listen to some great stories. Until “retiring” Joe also operated the Fisherman’s Edge Fly Shop for 15 years.

This will really be a great evening for everyone with a true expert. Joe has great stories and insight from decades of experience. Please come with any and all questions for Joe. I’m sure this will be a very educational event!

– Marc Hutzel



On the Bench – Bob O’Donnell will be the featured tier for the 7 PM hour. And yes, he is tying Sucker Spawn.

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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Stream Committees:

Paint Branch: Joe Robinson 301-565-3267
Northwest Branch: Joe Robinson 301-565-3267
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Patuxent: Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559

Mid Atlantic Council Delegates:

Nick Weber 301-774-2806 / 301-919-2026 (cell)
Bob Dietz 301-854-6893
Marc Hutzell 240-499-4945
Vice Chairman Resources: Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559
Carl Smolka 301-929-1365
Bob O'Donnell 410-733-0638
Jim Greene 301-652-3848
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Presidents' Column - Bob O'Donnell

Last month I learned a valuable lesson while competing in PPTU's annual One Fly fishing event. A lesson I think is worth sharing.

Many of us hurry to get to a stream, gear up, and head directly for our favorite hole or stretch of water. I know I do. Sometimes we have our day half planned out in the car while making the drive to our local streams. We lock our cars and trudge directly to our planned location, most times ignoring the innocuous stretches of water around us.

While fishing the One Fly contest I headed to one of my favorite stretches and I spent 20 minutes fishing a pool with no success. Before wandering away, I placed a quick cast in some skinny, riffled water right above the pool and immediately caught a small trout. I then proceeded downstream. After 45 minutes of fishing one of my favorite stretches – nothing. I scratched my head and moved further on downstream. I managed another small fish by accident in some similar water and then the light went off – don't ignore this water!

I proceeded to walk downstream putting my fly into every tiny riffle and side run that most of us would simply walk by, or in some cases – just step over. All the trout I caught that day came from sections of the river one would normally pass up. Granted, most of the fish were small but they were fun, brightly colored, and adding up quickly. Much to my surprise, I hooked into a couple of decent size browns. One 12 incher put up quite a fight in his hiding spot by the stream edge. Any one of us would have quickly hopped over the water looking for a better place to drift our flies. It couldn't have been more than 24" wide and a few inches deep. That fish found a home to settle down in. Perhaps he knew he was safe from most of us.

Most of the fish were not huge in any respect, but I had a blast that day. I happily claimed the title "King of the Three Inch Fish" as I walked back to the parking lot to greet the other anglers.

I was almost ashamed to say how many inches of trout I caught, 43” in total. One after another young of the year trout found my fly interesting that day. It was exciting to hold the small jewels in my hand knowing that they’ll grow a bit longer, heavier, and hopefully be there next year for another angler to catch and enjoy.

Lesson learned? Change your habits. Try fishing water you wouldn’t normally fish. Trout are amazing creatures capable of hiding right in front of you. If you’re lucky, you’ll surprise yourself with a few jewels of the river. Worst case, you’ll get some excellent casting practice in. I hope more of you will join us next year for PPTU’s annual one fly event. As the winner of this year’s event, besides obvious bragging rights, I also get the opportunity to represent our chapter in a day of spirited competition as 24 anglers take to the Rose River in Virginia to support Casting for Recovery.

By the time you read this, Lou Reichel and I should be back from fishing in the Mid-Atlantic program of Casting for Recovery’s 2Fly4Hope fundraising event. Hopefully we’ve represented PPTU well. 🌸

Until next month, tight lines!

Bob O’Donnell
President, PPTU
One Fly 2014 Winner and...
“King of the Three-Inch Fish”



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 Tips - Jay Sheppard

Hook points are literally on the front lines of catching any fish. Without them, fishing becomes little more than teasing fish—not unlike teasing a cat with a laser pointer! Our first chair of the chapter Paint Branch committee was the late Dick Blalock. Actually, he fished nearly all his trout waters with dry flies that did not even have a bend in the hook, let alone a point. Dick only wanted to fool the trout into taking his fly. That does not work for most of us.

Having a sharp point is crucial to any hookup. Over the decades I cannot count the number of times I have not hooked a trout taking my fly—actually feeling the fish on the end of the line! However, when I brought the fly in for inspection, I discovered that the point was bent (usually UP!) or missing entirely. Regular inspection of the fly for

both a point and clearing of any debris is important. I do it almost routinely after any resistance is felt on the end of the line.

A dull hook point can also contribute to non-hookups! If you lightly drag the hook point across your thumb nail at a very flat angle, it should try to dig into the nail. If not, it needs sharpening right then and there. Sharpen by dragging the point over the hone along three sides: top and each side to form a pyramid-shaped point.



Barbless is the only way to go in this sport. If you buy your flies, carefully crush the barb down on all the flies as you place them into your boxes. There are no valid reasons for any fly for trout or other salmonid to have a barb. The main purpose of the barb was to hold the bait onto the hook. Any barbless fly under any tension will not back out of the fish's jaw. The barb requires a tiny bit more pressure to be pulled through the boney jaw bone of a fish. On really light tippet, that slight extra pressure could mean the immediate end of your connection to the fly.

Many years ago a couple of buddies and I were fishing in Pennsylvania when a nearby angler kept missing the landing of any fish. We could see the rod bend, but almost immediately it would be straight up with no fish on the end of the line. After an hour or so of watching this, we asked if the angler had checked his fly. He said he had. We went over and looked at the fly. Yes, the barb was gone, but so was the whole point of the hook! He had thought that "barbless" meant taking off the hook point.

Before I start to tie any fly, I not only flatten the barb down on those hooks with a barb, I also check the strength of the hook point afterward by dragging it over my thumb nail. About 1 in 20 hook points fail right under the barb in my experience, even being very careful on applying the pressure on the barb. As most know, barbless hooks are far easier to remove from clothing or skin, too!

Speaking of tying, I much prefer ring-eye hooks for flies sizes #18 and smaller. The more standard turned-down eyes of my hooks get in the way of the hook point on the smaller flies. This is especially important for hackled dry flies. Older, turned-up eyes seem to leverage the hook point out of the jaw when there is any pull by the tippet, so I avoid those hooks! Ring-eyes give a more reliable straight pull on the hook without any unwanted leverage. 🌸

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

WSSC and DNR are still perplexed by their September readings of very low Dissolved Oxygen (DO) below Brighton Dam. Nobody has yet come up with a reasonable explanation as to the cause of such low DO that extended all the way down to Mink Hollow Road. DNR did a quick look using their electro shocking gear in mid-September and found a number of fish, including one feisty rainbow at Haviland Mill bridge. So the apparent low DO did not seem to be suppressing the fish at that point or in the pool just below the pipeline below the dam. Very perplexing!! We have asked DNR to do an electro-fishing survey of the tailwater some time this fall. When we have the results of that effort, we will post them for all to see.

Now for what may be good news: WSSC dam operators now (mid-October) think that the draw down of the Triadelphia Reservoir will not start until next summer—maybe!?? We will closely follow this repair work planning. It may be possible to stock some trout next winter below Brighton Dam and then lose them in June or later to this work event. We will continue to work with both WSSC and DNR to see what is feasible. Once the draw down starts, this trout fishery will be done until the reservoir refills after the repairs. We will likely not know WSSC plans until January or even later. We will keep the membership advised. 🌸

Savage River – “A Special Place” - Trout Wrangler

In case you missed the list server chatter, TU has listed the Savage River as one of 10 Special Places! The organization’s 10 Special Places report focuses on areas that are rich in fish, game and natural beauty, and that have for generations provided abundant opportunities for hunters and anglers.

There is more detailed information on the Savage River watershed and also a video clip featuring PPTU's own Nick Weber:

<http://www.tu.org/special-places/savage>

Nick never looked so good! 🌸

Brook Trout Angler Creel Survey - Matt Sell

Maryland DNR Fisheries Service will be kicking off a voluntary angler diary program this winter in an effort to obtain some state-wide creel data on brook trout. This information will give the Fisheries Service valuable angler data at the state-wide level, and they need your help! If you are interested in participating, please email Matt Sell (matt.sell@maryland.gov) for more information.

Many thanks to Matt for his great presentation at last month’s meeting. I hope a few PPTU members will sign up and give DNR some good data to use. 🌸



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!

2Fly4 Hope Fly Donation - PPTU Board

We have a very generous and talented group of members. You guys never cease to amaze. We thought you would like to see the culmination of your efforts in support of the 2Fly4Hope fundraiser. Several members put their best efforts forth and delivered on our request for fly donations. Take a look at these boxes! Who wouldn’t want to bid on those gorgeous flies?

First off, we would like to say thank you to all who took the time to send in flies. What a great selection! And, there was a prize involved for your efforts. The winner will be drawn at random during our next monthly meeting. Good luck to all the members who contributed. 🌸



The MD Guide Books are Coming! - Lou Reichel

The NEW “*Guide To Maryland Trout Fishing: The Catch-and-Release Streams*” by Charlie Gelso and Larry Coburn will be available to our members soon! The chapter has ordered a large quantity and will make the books available via our library at the monthly meetings.

This version of the guide is completely revised and updated, including two new streams and updated maps. There are 16 trout streams, with detailed information on hatches, tactics, and access plus a list of major Maryland fly shops and other important resources. Definitely pick one up! 🌸

Brook Trout and Climate Change - via Chuck Dinkel

How Native Brook Trout Streams Will Weather Climate Change – by Dr. Nathaniel (Than) Hitt
USGS Leeburg Science Center, WV

Native brook trout are threatened by climate change in Appalachia. However, previous climate change models have not considered how groundwater upwelling may affect the resiliency of streams to maintain temperatures conducive to brook trout.

“We want to understand what the relative importance of thermal stress is and interactions with other stressors like changes in invasive species showing up or changes in prey availability or other factors that we can control.”

The first invasive species these brook trout will encounter is the brown trout, which is native to Germany. “Brown trout are a prized game fish in some places and they also are known for displacing native brook trout,” Hitt said. “It’s not clear though how that displacement effect interacts with the temperature effect. In warming streams maybe that’s where brown trout are able to displace brook trout fully whereas in the colder streams perhaps they’re able to coexist and persist in the same stream reach.”

Than Hitt's presentation addressed some of these issues with data from Shenandoah National Park and the southern Appalachian mountains, and put this information into context for trout streams in the Catoctin area. Presented at the Catoctin Nature Center, Middletown, MD. October 1, 2014

Data for the study was primarily from streams in Shenandoah National Park with some from Catoctin Park, Thurmont, MD.

Their model is based on data taken June 20 plus 50 days (summer). This is the period of greatest stress for brook trout. The following is a brief summary of some of their initial and preliminary analyses.

1. Stream flow is a more important factor than temperature change. The model uses temperature changes of 1.5 – 3.0 deg over a 30-50 year period
2. It is not known how well brook trout will adapt to increases in stream temperature. Warmer water temperatures might result in increased growth rate of fish as up to a point they will tend to feed more as the water temperature increases.
3. High winter flows can contribute to low Young of Year (YOY) due to the impact the flow has on the eggs in the gravel at this time of the year. Brook trout spawn in the fall and the fry leave the redd in the spring
4. Warmer stream temperatures result in brookies spawning later in the fall of the year. Spawning is triggered by cooling water temperatures.
5. The YOY leave the nest in the spring. The later they spawn the later they leave the nest. This can result in smaller fingerlings going into the summer stress period and result in a lower survival rate.
6. Preliminary data suggest that when brown trout and brook trout are in the same stream brookies tend to spawn later in the fall. Brown trout might become an invasive species in warming brook trout streams. In some cooler streams brook and brown trout might be able to coexist.
7. Water temperature correlates with increases in the air temperature in some streams; in other streams there is low correlation.



8. Streams in the same general water shed can vary greatly with respect to how they are influenced by increased air temperatures.

9. Ground water temperatures play a role in how well a stream and brook trout adjust to increases in air and water temperatures.

10. Than's study and analyses are far from complete. There are many competing influences that need further study.

11. Than's work indicates that brook trout thermal habitat will be less sensitive to air temperature increases than previously assumed because groundwater will buffer stream temperatures. It is not possible at this time to infer that this will increase brook trout survival because habitat fragmentation (from thermal barriers) may negate the benefits from localized groundwater inputs.

Note: Before submitting this information for publication I emailed it to Than for review. He provided a couple of corrections and also answered a question I put to him in my email dealing with macro-invertebrates.

12. Questions on macros. What might be the impact on macros in brook trout streams affected by warming temperatures? Would insects in warmer streams tend to hatch at different times than presently?

Than's response: "We'd expect to see changes in species composition (less plecoptera, for example) but this may be offset by increases in other taxa. Not sure. The question re: hatch timing is the right one to ask."

For further information: This YouTube video of Than's talk at JMU is very similar to the one presented at the Catoclin Nature Center and contains many of the tables, charts and graphics that Than used.

"Spatial structure of stream thermal sensitivity affects climate change forecasts for brook trout" given at James Madison University in 2013.

– Than Hitt

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm1XKGTqQFM>

Members Catch - PPTU

There have been a lot of nice photos floating around of fish caught by our members. Thought I would post a few. Enjoy!





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

Frenchie Nymph

Since we can't seem to stop talking about it, here's a video link on tying the "Frenchie".



<http://www.orvis.com/news/fly-fishing/video-how-to-tie-the-frenchie-nymph/>



Return Address:
Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
Wheaton, MD 20915