

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

“North Branch of the Potomac”

Harold Harsh

November 16th, 2016

Until recently, the North Branch of the Potomac River was considered to be so degraded by acid mine drainage, that it would never support fish populations of any kind. For most of the century the ground water flowing from abandoned coal mines has polluted the river with iron, aluminum and sulfuric acid, lowering the water's pH level to a point where fish and the invertebrates they feed on could no longer survive. Thanks to the dedication and hard work of individuals from the DNR's Freshwater Fisheries Division, the Bureau of Mines and other agencies, the North Branch is now on its way to becoming one of the finest trout fisheries in the east.

Prepare yourself for the fly fishing experience you thought existed only in your imagination. Do you fantasize about boulder strewn canyons and wild rivers where the airborne tactics of 20" rainbows and the bulldogged determination of trophy browns test both your skill and knots?

Do crystal mountain streams cascade through your mind where cool mist veils the forest and hungry brook trout await your fly? If you long for a place where fly fishing is still a sport of solitude, the North Branch of the Potomac is where your wildest dreams become reality.

Come check out the show as Harold Harsh guides us down one of Trout Unlimited's 100 Best Rivers and learn more about this Western Maryland jewel that offers the most unusual trout grand slam in the East.

<http://www.springcreekoutfitter.com>

– 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

My morning started with our cat curled up in a tight ball between my legs, looking a lot like a purring tribble. (For all you Star Trek fans out there.) No discernable head or tail, just a big ball of fur. We had gone to bed with the window cracked to allow some fresh air to trickle into the room. The temps had dropped a good bit overnight and kitty found his comfy spot of warmth. I guess winter is knocking at the door.

The cold air and warm coffee in the morning reminded me its steelhead season – time to tie egg flies and other enticing patterns for those running fish. A few reports have already trickled in from upstate PA of folks hooking up on fresh chrome coming in from Lake Erie and finding their way up the tribbs that dot the shoreline.

If you've never tried it, fishing for steelhead can be quite the experience. As a first timer, I was lucky enough to have a few experienced friends around me to watch and learn. My suggestion for anyone going for the first time would be to do the same or hire a good guide.

The steelhead season usually runs from late September through May and guides can vary significantly. Questions you may wish to ask a guide before booking a trip include: (1) their years of experience; (2) whether they operate full-time or only part-time; (3) whether the guide you are talking to will guide the trip or might it be passed off to another guide; and (4) the duration of the guided trip.

A good place to start your research is right within your own chapter! There's plenty of experience to go around and you'll get a lot of great answers and recommendations from our group. PPTU has done several steelhead trips in the past and there will be more to follow. Several members can easily recommend flies, rods, reels, and techniques along with a list of guides they themselves have used.

In the winter, gloves are a necessity. Chest waders, insulated pants and thermal underlayers are nice as well. Polarized glasses are a must. When the water is not too high or cloudy, steelhead can be "hunted" or spotted in the creeks. Rod choice is up to you, but a 9' 7wt seems to be about right to handle the flies and extra weight you might be tossing around. If you are not sure of foot, spikes and/or a wading staff are a good idea as the shale bottom of Erie streams can be quite slippery. Yes, I have experience. Take my word for it!

Ok, I got a little off track as our Fall steelhead trip actually takes PPTU in the opposite direction to the waters of the Salmon River in New York. Besides steelhead, trophy brown trout abound and the king and coho salmon are still lingering as well. What an opportunity to catch all three varieties - steelhead, brown trout & salmon. Can't wait to see the trip report by Thanksgiving. Hopefully its not a turkey!

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.



Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

Size does matter! Many of the tactics that we employ when fishing rely on matching the hatch. If the trout are consuming a bug that is a half inch long and you offer something that is much larger or only half that size, you more than likely will get refusals. Midges are not going to be imitated by a #12 royal Wulff. Conversely, mature grasshoppers are not going to be matched by a #16 hopper pattern.

If the trout are keyed in on a particular prey item (terrestrial, mayfly, etc.) that is drifting past them in large numbers, they can become quite choosy. This is especially true on virtually all our Eastern waters and many well-pounded streams of the West. If a #14 sulphur is not working and you see lots of rising to naturals of the same apparent size, consider dropping down to a #16. This becomes important to those fishers who either are buying their flies or those who are just starting to tie their own. The reason is that often the bulkier bodies such flies often possess makes them appear larger to the trout. Flying ant, caddis, and stonefly imitations can be just a tad too bulky, which makes them appear larger than the naturals the trout are seeing. Dropping down a hook size is often all that is needed to gain the trout's attention.



This size factor seems to become more and more crucial as the flies get smaller and smaller. A #22 Trico may not entice as many as a #24 on the same stream here in the East, while out West the larger fly will usually do quite well. On heavily fished waters, the really small flies often work much better than the #18 and larger patterns. I think the main reason is that most retailers rarely offer a wide variety of flies in sizes smaller than #18. So our local trout rarely see smaller flies. Blue-winged olives, ants, Adams,

Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or by E-mail:
kenbowyer@verizon.net 🐞

renegades and many other popular patterns can be real fish catchers when in size #20 or even smaller.



There are probably a few cases where a larger fly pattern works better than a smaller one. Other than some streamers fished in murky waters for really large trout, I cannot think of any cases where larger flies of the same pattern might be better. In general, when in doubt use a slimmer and perhaps smaller size to match the hatch.

Size also matters in other things. Recently, I noticed my waders were leaking. Badly! In looking back at all my chest waders I have had over the decades I came to realize that 90% of these leaks with the old waders were coming in one specific area: the insides of the lower leg. The area on the inside of the legs between the ankles and knees seems to always wear badly. Looking a little closer, I now understand that my choice of wader size is the culprit. I was taking off-the-shelf, commonly available sizes that fit my foot (extra wide) and my waist (also extra wide!). Those store waders had much longer inseam measurements than mine.

In looking at a number of posted reviews on a variety of waders, I see a large number of consumers who also report lots of leaks on the inside of the legs below the knees. I cannot get the reviewers' sizes and wader choices, but I think I have the solution. Make sure that the inseam of the waders matches your own inseam. The puckering of the legs if the legs are too long causes those folds to wear against each other at some very specific points. I note that some manufacturers now offer waders where the legs are made without a seam down the inside of the leg.

That probably does help reduce the wearing of the fabric, but likely not completely.

When I went online and looked at several waders, I found that there were many more sizes available than was offered in the stores that gave me a closer fit in what I need. The stores and shops simply stock the most popular sizes. Go online! My next pair has a matching inseam, along with adequate waist and foot sizes. I expect to get a lot more than my usual 6-9 years out of a pair of chest waders. Stay tuned!

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!

Patuxent Report **- Jay Sheppard**

A crew of volunteers float stocked the Middle Patuxent River delayed harvest section on October 19th with some 400 rainbows. These should offer some sport to fishers for the rest of the fall and through the winter until more stockings take place next February and March. If you would like to help float stock our local streams, please let me know at jaymsheppard95@gmail.com. You need chest waders and be able to walk easily down the middle of a river for a mile or more. DNR only provides the trout during the week, usually Tuesdays through Fridays. If you can help, you will be placed on a mailing list for announcements regarding stocking dates and streams where we need volunteers. You get to not only see new sections of local streams, but where the pools and riffles are for future fishing opportunities. The list is also used to announce stream projects such as cleanups, tree plantings, etc. These usually happen on weekends.

If you are fishing the upper Patuxent River special area (lures & flies) this fall, be aware that most of the stream is in a public hunting area. No hunting is allowed on Sundays in State Parks, but one would still be well advised to always wear some bright cap to keep others from mistaking you for a game animal.



A few holdover trout should be in this upper river section, and wild trout can also be found, especially above Rt. 94. I have hardly encountered any fishermen on this river at this time of the year. Hard to find quiet trout streams within 25 miles of the two major city centers.

Didymo News - Chuck Dinkel

Here's a very interesting article that discusses the link between low phosphate levels in streams and the spread of didymo. Another interesting conclusion is that its spread is probably not related to felt boots. It's already in the streams.

<http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20140922-green-snot-takes-over-worlds-rivers>

Thank You PPTU! - Casey Peltier, CFR

Dear friends at PPTU,

Thank you so very much for your very generous donation to our appeal for funds to stock Beaver Creek in September. We were able to properly introduce our ladies to fly fishing, secure in the

knowledge that fish would be caught! You know this means a lot.

Yours,
Casey Peltier
Casting for Recovery, Mid-Atlantic

Casey's request for help came across our desk and it didn't take much effort for the board to agree to a donation for some fish. This is but a small example of the good YOU as members of PPTU do when you support the chapter. Pat yourselves on the back because you all have managed to put a big smile on the faces of several ladies who deserve it.

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make
a donation to:

**Potomac Patuxent Chapter
#236 of Trout Unlimited**

[Get started](#)

amazonsmile

PPTU Beer Tie - Bob O'Donnell

Just a reminder that the PPTU Beer Tie is a perpetual event happening the 2nd Monday of each month at Old Line Wine Spirits and Bistro. Come check it out some night.



<http://www.oldlinewine.com/>

What's the Bucket Raffle??? **- Bob Kaiser**

At each of our eight annual chapter meetings we hold a "bucket raffle" that distributes 7-10 prizes to lucky winners. This activity has been a long-

standing tradition at PPTU, adding some fun to the meeting and contributes about \$900 each year to help fund the Chapter's efforts. Buying some tickets at each meeting is a fun way to support the organization and get a chance to win some nice fishing-related prize. Separate raffles are occasionally held for high value items, like rods, reels and fishing trips.

Currently, Bob Kaiser leads this activity. In September 2015, Bob took this activity over from Nick Weber, who bequeathed to Bob a mountain of knowledge, materials and prizes. Nick took over from Bob Dietz... who took over from ... and on and on. Tradition, ya know!

Prizes number 7-10 per meeting, and are usually fly fishing related. We strive to have at least one box of hand-tied flies that are relevant to the season, one 'grand' prize (such as a nice sling or chest pack), and a selection of other items, such as tippet, leaders, forceps, nippers, hat lights, mittens, fly tying materials, books and videos, in each raffle. So where does all this stuff come from?



Bob solicits donations from fly shops, other retailers, and individuals. Expert fly tiers Marc Hutzel, Gene Cyprich, Bob Dietz, Jed Feffer and others have contributed flies in the last couple years. We are fortunate to have received several donations of flies, materials and gear from current and former members, and even non-members. Bob inspects, sorts and schedules this for the raffle. Most of the prizes come, however, from shopping ... scouring the web for deals from retailers, buying during bulk, end-of-season and off-season sales to secure good prizes for the least possible expenditure.

So, get yourself to a meeting, buy some tickets and win some prizes! Bucket raffle tickets are sold from about 7:00 pm to the start of the evening's program, when winning tickets are drawn and prizes are distributed. Bucket raffle ticket prices are two for

\$1.00 or fifteen for \$5.00. If each meeting attendee purchased just \$5.00 of tickets, we would easily meet our budget target.



Have ideas for prizes? Have something to donate? Want to tie some flies for us? See Bob at a meeting or contact him at kaiskat4@yahoo.com.

Dec 1st Fundraiser - Beer Call!!! - PPTU Board

This is an awesome opportunity to help support our chapter while exploring your community, enjoying nature, and if you're up for it, sampling some really tasty craft beers at the Waredaca Brewing Company in Laytonsville, MD.

As Montgomery County's premier farm brewery, Waredaca is committed to sustainability, local ingredients and brewing beer using the best practices possible. All of their beers include something grown/produced on the farm and their production schedule is directly related to harvest timing. The farm has been family owned for over 60 years, and their plan is to create a brewery that functions in harmony with the wide array of activities that make this Maryland farm what it is today.

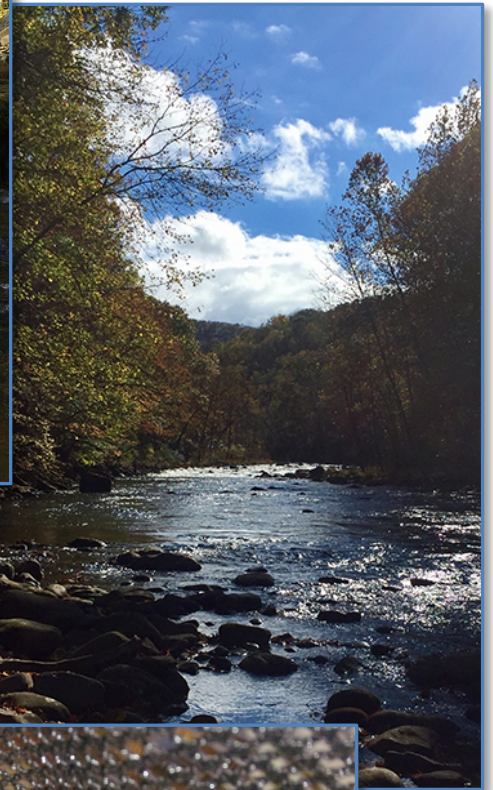


On the evening of Dec 1st a portion of the sales of the craft beer sold that night will go to PPTU! So mark your calendars to get out to the farm and help support your chapter. Bring your friends, tell your neighbors and let's have some fun. More info to follow on our website and via emails. In the meantime, check out Waredaca.

www.waredacabrewing.com

Members Catch - Trout Wrangler

You guys have been nothing but busy! Traveling, spey casting clinics, photo essays, conservation events, etc. Geez! And I'm stuck at work all day. Glad the forum exists for all of you to share your stories and photos. I'm sure there are others like me getting bogged down with work and enjoying the outdoors through your wonderful postings. Keep it up!



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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Clown Egg



No matter how you feel about egg flies, you simply have to applaud this ingenious method of tying the Clown Egg. By using just thread, McFlyfoam, and a special tool, Tim Flagler sets up a production-tying system that will let you bang out a dozen of these effective patterns in no time. And you can use this technique to make egg patterns of any size and color.

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



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