



April 2007

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

So You Want to Go Wild and Native?

By Nick Weber

This is something I have been itching to do ever since I began fly fishing in the DC area — to explore the wild and native trout of the Old Dominion.

And who better to talk about these treasures than a Virginia Native Son named James “Chubby” Damron?

Chubby’s talk, *“Destinations and Tactics for Virginia’s Wild and Native Trout,”* will set you on the path. He is a lifelong resident of Charlottesville, Va. and learned to fish at an early age.

Chubby bought his first fly rod at 14 and began fly fishing for stocked trout and native brook trout in the Moorman’s River, just 30 minutes from his home.

After chasing bass and walleye in area waters for a time, he packed away the warm water gear and picked the fly rod up again and began to chase trout throughout Virginia and other states as well as the Rocky Mountains.

Chubby began guiding 6 years ago at the suggestion of a friend, who observed his skills at fly fishing for trout and his willingness and patience at helping others learn the sport. Come and let Chubby guide you to his favorite haunts and hear how he fishes them.



Virginia’s Wild and Native Trout

Wednesday, April 18

7:00 PM

(see bottom of page for directions)

****Guest Speaker****

James “Chubby” Damron
Virginia Fly Fishing Guide

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Monthly Chapter Meetings

Time and Day: 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday except December, June, July, and August

Place: Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

Directions: From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First right onto Forest Glen Road. Pass Holy Cross Hospital and go across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

The Conservationist

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Contributions in the form of clip art, articles, conservation activities, trip reports, letters, fishing and conservation news, tying tips, book reviews, and essays about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or Microsoft Word attachments. Authors should also include their phone number and a brief descriptions of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

EDITOR: Matt Baun
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Nick Weber

Hurray! Another conservation success has occurred for a nearby river, its recreational viability, and for its future as a potential trout fishery. On Saturday March 10, nearly 40 persons came out to plant 150 trees and shrubs along the Hawlings River on Brighton Dam Road in northeast Montgomery Co.

The beauty of this little stream is inspiring and it has much to recommend it for future recreational development. In addition, virtually all of the Hawlings River except for a couple of small parcels lies within the public domain. Stop by the river where it crosses Brighton Dam Road and see the efforts that the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection and the Maryland National Capital Parks and Planning Commission have undertaken.

We have also gotten some encouraging news that the Department of Natural Resources has tentatively approved a plan to restore the simple dam on Bush Cabin Run, a tributary of the Gunpowder near Masmore. The dam will provide a barrier against brown trout incursion into the upper parts of the run where wild brook trout are in evidence. There may be an opportunity as early as this summer to help with the project by working in the run area to reclaim some of the materials washed down stream after the flood blowout a couple of years ago. We will keep you posted as this project develops. We are also contemplating a riparian planting at the confluence of Silver Run and the Gunpowder just above Pretty Boy Reservoir sometime in the next year.

Continue to look for candidates for the Conservation and Fishing Camp at Syria VA, to be held the last week in June (article on page 5). Our Chapter has a history of supporting a summer conservation and fishing experience for the young people in our area. Please encourage any youngster of appropriate age to apply. We earmarked \$1000 for this activity.

If a candidate is accepted for camp, you may approach the Board for reimbursement up to the cost of the camp fee. We will apportion the available amount equally for each camp among all who request consideration. If the total allotted amount is not used for candidate fees, the remainder will be donated to the camp for operating expenses or other campers who were not sponsored.

Also, bring a youngster to Kids Fishing Day (see details on page 4) and get them started early to enjoy the special recreation that fishing provides.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

BY JAY SHEPPARD

‘Matching the hatch’ becomes the mantra of any fly fisher who chases salmonids. Matching a hatch on the surface of the stream is fun, frustrating, and exciting all at the same time.

When prey is appearing regularly and readily available to the trout, the fish will focus their attention only on that prey. A hatch can be of a wide variety of aquatic or terrestrial insects. More commonly, we see aquatic insects such as midges, stoneflies, caddis or mayflies emerging from their immature stages to become reproductive adults. Hundreds of good books and many a magazine article have been written about all the various hatches one might experience. They can give you predictions of where and when to intercept a particular hatch and what flies and tactics might be more successful. Such references are really needed to become a successful fly fisher matching the hatch.

One does not need to know the Latin names of the insect to match the hatch. Certainly, the trout do not use Latin when they devour the insect! One does need to know some basic science to help predict the behavior of the trout for the major kinds of insect groups. Some aquatic insects rise to the surface, rest for a variable period of time and then flutter off. Others may crawl to a log or rock and then emerge a short distance above the water surface. Still others may rocket to the surface like a Polaris missile launched from a submarine: they make no pause as they reach the surface and instantly fly up and away.

Watching trout is always informative, especially when a hatch is underway. An almost imperceptible sip usually indicates the prey is in the surface film and not about to flutter off; the trout has all the time it needs to close its mouth around the insect. A small splash or slurp, often with a subtle bubble left behind, shows that the trout is after an insect that is on the surface, is about to take off, and has wings that extend above the surface to some extent. A large splash, often with the trout in a wild leap, may mean it is chasing an insect that just shot to the surface, and the trout is trying to reach it before it is more than a few inches above the surface, not unlike a defender in a football game trying to intercept a pass.

Obviously, if you can capture or closely observe one of the insects, you will learn even more before you tie a fly to your leader. You can learn size, coloration, shape and maybe what group of insects to ►

which it belongs. Midges and craneflies are non-biting cousins of mosquitoes. Caddis look like moths with slender antennae and wings that fold like a pup tent over the body. Stoneflies have large antennae, tails that are less than half the length of the body, and wings that lay flat over themselves and the body. Mayflies have two flying stages (duns and spinners in fly fisher parlance). When at rest, the wings are held together and vertically above the body; they have long, fragile tails that may exceed the length of the body.

Depending upon a wide variety of factors, the trout may be feeding every few seconds or only once every minute or so. One watches to see how regular the trout are rising. If the prey drifts by infrequently, the rises may also be unpredictable. If there are lots of insects all the time on the surface, the fish will likely get into a real rhythm of rising: 20, 30, 40 seconds between takes. In many cases, the issue is timing. You have to simply time the cast and drift so the fly arrives over the trout during that several second window when it is most likely to rise for its next meal. If the insects are not overly abundant, I often try to cast the fly 5–12" downstream of the next mayfly, etc., that I see in its feeding lane. No use letting the trout take the natural just before your fly arrives!

I prefer to be to one side or the other of the trout and not be casting directly over it with the leader. As long as the trout continues to rise to naturals I will try to get my fly timed to arrive when it is most likely to be taken. If it is a long time between rises, I may let the fly drift downstream or even pick it up in my hand to soak up time. With shorter rise intervals I may be picking up the fly and recasting every 10–15 seconds. However, the last thing I want to do is dump the fly in front of a wary trout when it is not ready for another meal and have it see that my fly is a fake because of drag or some other giveaway. Casts must often be within a few inches to get the positive attention of the trout.

No matter how good or bad the cast, once it is on the water never pick it up until the fly is well behind the trout. A really quick way to turn off the trout is to pick up the fly right in front of the fish, even if a foot or two to one side or the other. Take your time. Be patient. If the trout takes the fly and is not hooked, then you have lost that match and need to move on to another trout. If it rises part way and rejects the fly, you have also lost and either have to change flies (e.g., often to a smaller size) or move to another rising trout. Expect to be frustrated and impatient for success; careful casts with the proper fly will be rewarded. Enjoy the spring!

Patuxent Report

By Jay Sheppard

Approximately 4150 trout were stocked in the upper Patuxent Special area (above rt. 97), in the Flies-only section of the Patuxent below Brighton Dam, and in the Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest section in south Columbia.

The stockings took place in the first 12 days of March, which is a little later than usual. Of this total, 2650 were brown trout and the rest were rainbows. The browns were stocked the afternoon before a large flood event that night and we expect many of them had not yet acclimated to a nice hole and moved downstream.

Reports a week later of some trout moving several miles downstream into unstocked waters were received. Hopefully, more than a few braved the floods and will give us some play time later this spring and into the summer. Watch the PPTU list serve for reports as the spring progresses.

I want to thank the nearly 40 brave souls who helped us stock these streams this spring; some covered several miles of stream to spread the trout out for future fishers.

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM BEGINNERS & BEYOND

Available to members of PPTU current with their dues, Ken Bowyer will conduct one on one stream side fly fishing instruction. Interested members must show commitment by having waders or hipsters, 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.

Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or e-mail:
kenbowyer@comcast.net.

PPTU's Kids' Fishing Day!

By Paul Vicenzi

On Saturday, May 5, PPTU will sponsor its annual Kids' Fishing Day at Martin Luther King, Jr. Recreational Park in White Oak, Md. The free event will be held at the park's lake **from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**, weather permitting.

PPTU sponsors Kids' Fishing Day with the Maryland Department of National Resources and the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission to introduce youngsters and their families to an appreciation of and respect for the environment through the sport of fishing.

PPTU volunteers are needed to help the kids with their fishing, bait hooks and rig tackle. Power Bait and worms will be provided. Participants should bring their own fishing rods, as well as warm clothing, drinks and snacks.

The park is located at 1200 Jackson Road, east of New Hampshire Avenue in the White Oak area of Silver Spring. To reach the lake, follow New Hampshire Avenue to Jackson Road, go past an elementary school and swim center. The lake will be on the left across from the park's tennis courts. To volunteer for the event, contact **Paul Vicenzi at 301-650-2087.** ■

Upcoming PPTU Outings

By Dennis Covert

April

There are two outings planned for the month of April; on the 14th we will meet on Deer Creek for Hickory Shad, and on the 28th & 29th there is an overnight to Yellow Creek in Pennsylvania .

May

Join us for the traditional May outing to Western Maryland the 26th, 27th & 28th. We will staying at the Casselman Inn in Grantsville next to the Casselman River .

For more details contact Dennis Covert at 410-74-8337 or denniscovert@hotmail.com

Riparian Buffer — Planted!

By Jim Keil, Conservation Chair

On Saturday, March 10, we planted another 150 trees in the Hawlings watershed above Brighton Dam Road. You might recall that in October 2005, PPTU President Nick Weber led an effort to get the chapter and other volunteers to plant 200 trees in the same area.

Despite having to postpone this spring's planting due to poor weather, we still had about 40 volunteers, ranging in age from 12 to 70 or more. There were Girl Scouts, TU members, high school kids, parents, old hippies, and southern farm boys. It was great to see so many young people, especially, willing to get up early on a day off to do some good for our air, water, and soil.

The river itself was looking sublime. The heavy-equipment work that the Montgomery Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and Park and Planning had done two years ago is clearly having a terrific effect on stabilizing the banks and allowing sediment to get up onto the terraces and riparian. Plus, it's really quite pretty. Many of the trees that we planted 18 months ago are doing well, despite the deer and mile-a-minute. And, yes, there were rising fish in the project area, at least one of which was an 8-inch trout. Another member saw another trout on a sandbar. I don't know if these were holdovers or fish up from the reservoir, but seldom are conservation rewards so concrete and immediate.

On Wednesday, prior to the Saturday planting, PPTU members Carl Smolka, Nick Weber, Dennis Covert, Bruce Eberle, and Patrick Masler (with ATV driver Tim Begley) pre-sited the pin oak, silky dogwood, silver and red maple, river birch, sycamore, pawpaw, and black willow. Then four courageous and sturdy fellows wrestled a bucking post-hole digger until there were 150 8-inch holes in the Hawlings riparian. This Wednesday preparation was essential to Saturday's smooth operation. With the aid of the Wednesday preparation and the enthusiastic Saturday diggers, we had most of the trees planted by 10:30 Saturday. We took a coffee and donut-hole break and then spent another hour and a half installing plastic screens around most of the trees to keep the deer and beaver at bay. ►

County has promised mowing to keep the mile-a-minute down, and if that doesn't succeed in keeping the invasives in line, then they have vowed more aggressive measures. I'd like to thank, first of all, Nick Weber, without whose efforts the planting would not have gone so smoothly. Thanks also to Cathy Nutter for coffee and munchies and her husband Bob for the photography, and members Arnie Strand, Ken Bowyer, Larry Vawter, Sandy Burk, and several newer members I apologize for not knowing.

The Izaak Walton League provided volunteers and funds from a National Tree Trust grant. Park and Planning loaned personnel and shovels, gloves, and pruners, and with their help along with representatives from DEP provided technical assistance, ran a tree planting tutorial, and took the lead on the Saturday planting. I don't know anyone who didn't have a good time on this outing. The weather cooperated; kids ran around, shrieked, and generally enjoyed themselves, and our chapter promoted the restoration of one more cold-water resource. There's always room for you to help. Please join us next time. ■

Youth Fishing Camps

By Paul Vicenzi

The Board of PPTU has again earmarked funds to provide financial assistance to our young participants in either of the two nearby fishing camps. A total of \$1,000 was approved and will be available for reimbursement of youth camp fees.

In the event the chapter has multiple participants, the funds will be distributed on a pro rata basis. Contact Paul Vicenzi at pvicenzi@starpower.net, if the young person is accepted and you wish to seek reimbursement.

High School aged girls and boys are encouraged to apply. But, you'll have to act quickly, the application deadline is quickly approaching.

April 16, 2007 is the application deadline for the TU Conservation & Fishing Camp, in Syria, VA. The TU camp runs June 24-29, 2007 at a cost of \$500. For more info and application instructions, visit www.tucamp.org. ■

Annual Supporting Contribution

The Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) is separate from TU dues. Members of the **Potomac-Patuxent Chapter** of Trout Unlimited who make an ASC of \$15 each year will receive *The Conservationist* for one year, and be entitled to other PPTU benefits such as the mentor program, outings, and reduced rates for the Fly Tying class. First-year TU/PPTU members for whom the Chapter receives a TU rebate do not have to pay the ASC, but they are still eligible for ASC benefits. High School and college students are also eligible for ASC benefits. Members of other TU chapters may also make an ASC to PPTU and receive *The Conservationist* and ASC benefits. When you pay the ASC, please indicate whether you wish to receive this publication by mail or email, and be sure to provide your contact information. Your expiration for *The Conservationist* — as well as expiration for your ASC benefits) — is indicated on the address label as “PP-0907” (September 2007) or a later date. Send payment to the address listed below. If you have questions about the ASC or to check on your eligibility for ASC benefits, please contact the PPTU President (Contact info on Page 2) or visit the Chapter’s website at www.pptu.org/join.shtml.

TYING BENCH & ANGLER’S CORNER

Don’t miss out on this month’s regular monthly features “Tying Bench” and “Angler’s Corner during the chapter meeting on April 18. These sessions occur concurrently beginning at 7 p.m. (See Front Cover for directions).

Angler’s Corner — Stop by to chat with Dennis Covert about the upcoming trips to Yellow Creek and Western Maryland. In the process of developing our outings, Dennis scouts and fishes a lot of water in the surrounding area. So don’t hesitate to pull up a chair and talk about streams in Pennsylvania as well as Maryland. Dennis would also like to hear about one of your favorite streams as well. Maybe he will organize an outing to it, if you are willing to share its secrets.

Tying Bench — This month an easy to tie, never fail nymph will be unveiled by Ken Bowyer. Ken is eager to share his Peacock Bead-Head Nymph pattern that he assumes may simulate a caddis pupae. It is one of the go to patterns in his fly box that catches trout from spring to fall. Stop by and



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