



April 2010

The *Conservationist*

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Spring Creek Round Up

April 21, 2010

Spring is in the air and your thoughts have undoubtedly turned to fishing. What is more intriguing than fishing some wonderful spring creeks with their wild inhabitants? And what will help your mind jump to some of these nearby trout meccas is to hear first hand from Mike Heck, a native of southern Pennsylvania, about his intense love of these streams and their fish. Mike lives in Chambersburg Pennsylvania and guides primarily in South Central and Central Pennsylvania. However, this love of spring creeks has found him fishing them in other states including Virginia, and even Montana. Come hear about his infatuation with these streams.

Mike Heck is author of the book "Spring Creek Strategies" and many articles on fly fishing. In addition, he has created several effective fly patterns and is a very accomplished fly tier as well. All of this knowledge has led him to become a well known guide in Pennsylvania where he applies his knowledge on a daily basis for his clients and his own fishing enjoyment. Mike will undoubtedly share many of the tactics that he uses on skittish spring creek denizens as well as sharing the wealth of knowledge he has for use on them in terms of gear and patterns.

Before or after his talk get him to sign a copy of his book and pick up a box of his famous spring creek fly patterns. Mike will be sharing a little extra time with us at the Tying Bench so come early – see article later in this issue. See his web page at www.fallingsprings.com. - by *Nick Weber*

We note with sadness the passing of long-time chapter member John Coburn, on February 27, 2010 at the age of 81. Throughout his life, John pursued his interest in the natural world and environmental issues. He wrote an outdoors column for the El Paso TX Herald-Post in the 1980s; promoted environmental legislation; and edited and wrote articles for regional fly fishing and environmental magazines and newsletters. He had leadership roles in the Boy Scouts of America, the Sierra Club, Trout Unlimited, and the Federation of Fly Fishers. John was a serious fisherman from age six and went on to become a master fly fisher, fly tier, and teacher. In 1999 the FFF Oregon Council named him "Federator of the Year."

He was instrumental in starting Project Healing Waters (PHW) at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, DC, and served as its first Executive Director until 2009. PHW uses fly tying and fishing as therapies to help Wounded Warriors recover from their physical and emotional injuries. PHW was John's pride and joy and he was planning to start a chapter in Springfield when he died."

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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, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

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President's Column

Spring has Sprung

I am so looking forward to spring and summer. You will never hear me complain again that it's too hot - not after this past winter.

Winter is just about behind us now and spring has sprung. That means my tulips and daffodils will soon be blooming. The trees will be in bud, all of the winter storm damage will be tended to, and the lawn will be re-seeded and fertilized. There may possibly be some interior or exterior painting as well. I am starting to survey and make my list of things to do, but one thing is missing - when am I going to take time for myself and go fishing. I spent the winter tying flies when I wasn't shoveling and I need to try them out. So I need to get to the chores so I can go out and play with my toys as my wife refers to my fishing gear.

I came upon my New Year resolutions just the other day. They were buried under other important papers. As I scanned the list, I came across item number 4 - Take a Kid Fishing. Now this is a great reason to get out of the house for a couple of hours. I have not volunteered for a sponsored Kids Fishing Day in the past. Business and work have always gotten in the way, but that will change this year. How much fun this would be watching and aiding a youngster who may have never fished before to catch their first fish. Now that's rewarding!

The Maryland Chapter of Trout Unlimited has scheduled "City Catch" for Saturday April 10 at Leakin Park in Baltimore. Someone who volunteered last year has told me that many of the children had never fished before and he enjoyed every moment of his time with them.

PPCTU will be sponsoring some Kids Fishing days this spring and the first one is scheduled for May 1st at Martin Luther King Pond in White Oak, Maryland. Other dates and locations will be announced in our next issue of this publication. So why not volunteer some time, help bait a hook, and watch a child catch a fish. This will more than likely be an impressionable moment that will last a life time for you and surely for the children. Please contact us, if you can lend a hand. Thank you.

Larry Vawter

Early Meeting Segments begin at 7 pm

Nick Weber

Tying Bench

This month will find a special guest at the Tying Bench. Mike Heck, our program speaker, will share some additional time with us and tie his shrimp pattern. This is one of his go to flies for spring creeks due to their abundance in these waters. Mike says "Trout have the upper hand if you don't have shrimp and cress bug imitations in your box." So come to the early segment and see Mike create his imitation of a shrimp that you will find in his box and in the selections he will have available.

Angler's Corner

Come by the Anglers Corner and check on the planned outing for Central Pennsylvania. If they return in time, you may also hear the tales in person from the recent outing to the Salmon River in New York. Dennis Covert, our Outings Chair, and undoubtedly some of his cohorts will be telling all about what to consider in the way of patterns for sulfur and other spring hatches you may encounter. It should not take much convincing why you really should consider these fishing experiences with some of our fellow fishers. Have an idea for an outing, share it with Dennis.

Have an idea for an article, or something you'd like to share with other chapter members? Material is welcome (and cheerfully accepted). The deadline is the 12th of the month for the next month's issue.

Please send articles, ideas, etc, preferably in MS Word or in the body of the e-mail to earthmomjo@hotmail.com. (Note: This is a new e-mail address.)

*Thanks
Joanne Kla, Editor*

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM BEGINNERS & BEYOND

Ken Bowyer and Tim Pawlowitz provide one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants 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.

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.

Tim at 410-203-0369

or e-mail tpawlowi@msn.com.

Address changes? Moved?

Please keep us up to date on your addresses. We have saved a lot of money in recent years by using email to alert members that their Annual Supporting Contribution is expiring or some other important information. We frequently have the Post Office returning undeliverable copies of the Conservationist from members who have moved without letting us know. Send an email to Jay Sheppard (jmsheppar@aol.com) with any changes.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Existing members should renew their TU membership using any of the following methods:

Mail your Renewal Statement to TU National Call Customer Service at 1-800-834-2419

Navigate to www.tu.org. Click **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left. You will need your login name and password.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Jay Sheppard

Line handling in fly fishing is an acquired skill. It needs to be practiced regularly to keep the effects of currents from altering the desired drift of the fly. One cannot cast a fly onto a body of moving water and expect everything to remain the same. The line, leader and fly are all moving downstream at various rates. And that is the main issue: various rates. Carefully watch the bubbles, leaves, or other objects floating on the surface. They do not move down the stream at a uniform rate. Bubbles only inches apart can be circling each other or suddenly move upstream for short distances—sometimes longer distances.

If the objective is to have the fly mimic the movement of a floating insect, then the leader and line need to be manipulated to prevent drag on that fly. Most of the line movement relative to the fly and the rod tip must be counteracted by mends to the line. This is most important when the cast is directly across the stream and less so when it is made directly upstream. In the latter case, the fly, leader and line are usually moving at the same speed and in the same direction, at least for most of the time. In the former case, the fly, leader and line may have dozens of micro currents affecting that section of the line or leader. A slower current or back eddy has the effect of removing slack from the line and leader on either side; at the same time faster currents speed other sections of the line and leader, which also removes slack for the neighboring sections.

Knowing when to strip in line and when not to do so are important to eliminating or increasing the drag on the fly. Drag is good if you are using a swimming attractor such as a streamer. It is not good for a dry fly imitating the dead drift of an insect. In some cases, feeding line out past the tip of the rod is needed to alter the drift. During all of this, where the rod tip is held relative to the point where the line touches the water is also crucial.

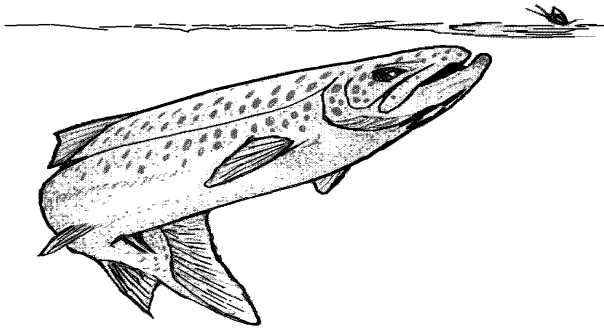
For most of my fishing the rod tip is held only a foot or so above the water. I may be striping in the line to actively swim a woolly buggie or other attractor through the water. The rod tip might follow the line or it might be slowly moved up stream or down. When trying to dead drift a fly, I still hold the rod tip fairly low most of the time. When casting anywhere upstream of my position, I want to make sure that no loop of line forms downstream of the rod tip. Such loops will be removing slack from the line out past the rod; if continued too long, all the slack can be removed. If I do get a hit with all the looped line below my rod tip, I have to remove the slack to have any chance of setting the hook.

Whole books have been written on handling line. Obviously I have only scratched the surface to get the fly fisher to at least think about what is happening to his line, leader and fly on a moving stream. Fly fishing for trout is a real challenge because of these and hundreds of related factors. The fly must be presented in a fairly precise manner, the rod moved and the line adjusted, etc. For anyone just getting started in fly fishing all of these factors make for many unsuccessful days on our trout waters.



I urge beginning fly fishers to ignore trout for the first part of their learning curve. Focus on small-mouth bass! Precise casts with carefully selected flies are not necessary. Generally, if you can get the attention of a bass, you are very likely to get a strike by these aggressive fish. During all of this bass fishing, one learns how to handle the line, manipulate it as it lies on the water, and then retrieve it in various manners to affect the fly

Further, one also learns how to fight fish with 10 or 20 feet of fly line dangling from the reel. If you are just getting started, chase smallies this spring and summer, then try selective trout on our well pounded waters.



Patuxent Report

Jay Sheppard

Saturday, April 10, is a major cleanup day for our local waters. We need help cleaning the river banks and rivers themselves. Nick Weber is organizing a cleanup of the Patuxent below Brighton Dam. If you want to help that morning in this cleanup, contact Nick (heritagero@aol.com or 301-774-2806) for details on where and when to meet. There is another cleanup on the upper Patuxent above Triadelphia Reservoir this same morning. Volunteers for this

other cleanup meet at 8:30 AM at the Izaak Walton League on Mullinix Mill Road just east of Damascus. Volunteers are given a free lunch afterwards by the IWLA chapter members. Let me know if you plan to help on this effort on the upper Patuxent (jmsheppar@aol.com).

In either case, this is a great activity for the whole family. Bring waders or boots, gloves and maybe a heavy rake to pull items out of the water.

The upper Patuxent Special Area was stocked with 1100 brown trout and 1000 rainbows in March. The river below Brighton dam had 1000 rainbows and 750 brown trout float stocked in this Flies Only section. On the Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest section in south Columbia, 1000 rainbows and 650 brown trout were carefully float stocked last month as well. Flows for the rest of the spring should be excellent after all the winter precipitation! Go fish!!

TROUT UNLIMITED TRI STATE CONSERVATION & FISHING CAMP

Sunday, June 27 to Friday, July 2, 2010
Graves' Mountain Lodge - Syria, Virginia
Adjacent to Shenandoah National Park

The Camp was organized to provide high school youth with a week of outdoor experiences that help them gain firsthand an appreciation of the value of their coldwater fisheries resources. Twenty-four high school students currently in the 8th, 9th, 10th, or 11th grade, or will be 13 years old by June 2010 are eligible to attend. Both males and females are accepted. They enjoy an exciting week of hands-on action packed fun in our mountain stream environment that will help them become a skilled angler and an experienced conservationist.

Youngsters learn firsthand from officials of the National Park Service, professional conservationists with state natural resources agencies, environmental educators, professional fishing instructors and guides, and experienced members of Trout Unlimited.

Students don't need any special experience or equipment—the Camp can provide it. All that is needed is to be interested and want to attend. The cost of the six-day, five-night Camp is \$650. Full or partial funding is available for any camper who requests sponsorship to attend the Camp. For more information – contact and application form, see www.tucamp.org.



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