



February 2005

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, February 16

A Grand Slam!

A glance at the title might have my fellow TUsers thinking that I'm already dreaming about warm summer days when the Nats first take the field. But in the fishing world, a grand slam is a reference of a different sort. First popularized in the salt, it refers to the catching of three difficult species – tarpon, bonefish and permit – in one day on the fly (why it wasn't called a Grand Triple I'll never know). It has since been extrapolated to other species in different waters. My personal favorite is the Brown Water Grand Slam – gar, catfish and carp.

At our next meeting, we will be hosting Pete Cook, the man who caught the 1st official Cutthroat Grand Slam, consisting of 4 major species of cutthroat trout. Pete is the former President of the Potomac Valley TU Chapter, a founding member of Yellowstone Fly Fishers and an expert in all things cutthroat. He will be giving a slide show presentation – “Trout Fishing May Be A Cutthroat Experience” – that will discuss fishing for these wild beauties, their geographic distribution, and efforts to restore their populations in key watersheds.

So come learn about cutthroat trout from the first Cutt Slammer. His presentation is sure to be a home run! ■

—*Sebastian O'Kelly*

**** Inclement Weather Notice ****

In cases of inclement weather and the possibility of cancellation, contact any member of the Board (see p.2) the afternoon of the monthly meeting OR watch the PPCTU list serve.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

We all struggle to find a balance between our family, work and recreational activities. Participating in PPTU offers a means to accumulate some time outdoors, alone or with our family and friends, that offers psychological and physical rewards to each of us.

In a fleeting moment, it might be easy to think of the Chapter as a fishing club. But that is but one dimension of TU, since it certainly is possible to go fishing without the bother of organizing and maintaining a formal organization involving hundreds of individuals and thousands of dollars. I suspect most of us look towards this organization as more than an opportunity to associate with kindred spirits, realizing of course that membership entails the conflict of more time and attention away from family and work.

None the less we make those choices willingly and continue to find respite from the daily humdrum in such activities as picking up trash from streambeds, staffing a management position in the Chapter, distributing trout over miles of streams to maintain a fishery that can be enjoyed by many, selling tickets to raise funds so that we can support the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program or the creation and maintenance of new fisheries throughout the state. ▶

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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

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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A strange lot are we!

I suspect it is something like wanting our cake and eating it too, and then agreeing to do the dishes afterwards. So we organize a Chapter, staff the necessary management and administrative functions, organize, execute and maintain new and continuing conservation projects, tell a few tall tales, spend a little discretionary money to help out the economy and still deal with living in a hustling, bustling society.

Throughout the years we find some spare time to help out, each in our own way; some of us drift away or have to leave the area and then return to renew friendships. Volunteers cycle into and out of administrative positions on the Board- it's an "extra effort" to be sure, but it is satisfying and we still do it. Some even get a little time to fish!

As luck would have it we have some new vacancies for a few of us to make that extra effort. We currently have vacancies in the Outings Chair, Membership Program Chair, Youth program Coordinator and Vice President position. Our chance to succeed!!

Please help out if you can. A lot of people — each doing a little bit to help — keep the workload lower for everyone. ■

—Lou Boezi

'05 Proposed Outings

The Chapter regularly sponsors monthly outings to area trout waters. Here is the proposed schedule for Spring, 2005. More details on these trips are available on the web at www.pptu.org.

- February (TBD), Saturday trip to Beaver Creek, MD
- March (TBD), Trip to Falling Springs Branch, PA
- April (TBD), Trip to Rapidan River, VA
- May, Memorial Day Weekend Trip to Western MD



Upping the Ante in Penna.

Fly fisherman who are beckoned each year to Pennsylvania's top trout streams should plan on taking a few extra bucks along with them when they purchase their licenses. The going rate for the state's 2005 non-resident fishing license and trout stamp rings in at \$61, up from \$39.25 in 2004. That is one year, 47 percent increase.

So how does the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission justify this?

"Establishing license types and associated fees is a delicate balance. In Pennsylvania, no tax dollars are used to fund PFBC programs," said PFBC spokesman Dan Tredinnick. "Instead, we must rely on income from the sale of fishing licenses and boat registrations. These fees have not changed since 1996 and some haven't been altered since 1991."

But a one-year increase of 47 percent?

"We like to think the 2005 prices strike a reasonable balance between the direct cost to the angler and the exceptional fishing opportunities they make available," Tredinnick explained in an email.

I suspect many of us who regularly fish in Pennsylvania will continue to do so in 2005. The lure of fishing the heritage streams in the Cumberland Valley or hitting the Little J and other blue ribbon streams like it are a huge draw for many in the Washington – Baltimore area. I for one can't wait to hit that secret little brook trout streams that I discovered last year.

When I first heard of the increase on the Chapter list-serve, I was dismayed by the big fee hike and was hard pressed to find a precedent for such a huge jump in license fees in a single year.

But I have since come to terms with the increase and plan to purchase a PA license. That brookie water that I referred to is just too good a deal for \$61. In fact, I am certain there are sections of that small mountain stream that haven't been fished over in years. That and the fact that the water is located in a pristine forested environment is priceless to me and I hasten to say, I'd be willing to pay a good deal more for this unique privilege ►

Still, I sympathize with those who will conclude that \$61 is simply not worth it. This is especially true if you can only manage a few trips each year.

Of course, one alternative is to take advantage of one of the fish for free days in Pennsylvania -- Saturday, May 28 & Sunday, June 5. I imagine there ought to be some nice hatches about then, too. ■

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Wading is as important a skill in fishing for trout as casting and fly selection. If one cannot get close enough to a trout without spooking it, then he or she is not very likely to catch it or many others, regardless of his casting abilities or choice in flies. Wading is not simply walking with boots on wet rocks. It takes a fair amount of practice to wade without taking a serious spill, unless you are walking on firm sand in shallow water.

All terrestrial animals make a note of the terrain they are traversing. It may be subconsciously, but we all are generally aware of the ground over which we are walking or running. We can therefore focus a lot of our attention to other matters: conversation, the trees, cars, whatever is around us. If we are wading in turbulent, muddy, or deep water over our knees, then we have a real problem that we are not prepared to handle without some training. Think of walking through your house or across your yard with a mask over your eyes—or at least so you cannot see the ground. You have to use your toes to determine what is out in front of you.

Good wading means you must *feel* your way across the bottom. There can be sudden changes in depth or an obstacle, such as a log or root, to your passage. To *feel* your way means that you do not shift your weight to the leading foot as you normally do when on dry land. The leading foot must explore what is in front of it: smooth rock, tall rock, deeper bottom, whatever. Only when a firm foothold is found is the weight of the body shifted. You cannot take as large a step as you would like, either. For years I have practiced 'continuous, tiny steps' in much of my fishing. When exploring up a stream, ►

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Conservation Update

Board Approves Increased Conservation Activities for Chapter

In a previous issue of *The Conservationist* we outlined the major recommendations from the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Chapter Conservation activities.

The Board has considered these recommendations in light of the level of activities and volunteerism currently experienced in the chapter, the potential for the Chapter to provide the necessary financial support for an expanded range of projects and the expressed desires of members to increase our conservation agenda.

The recommendations were considered and debated over several months which resulted in the following decisions:

- The Chapter will continue the Patuxent River spring clean up relationship with the Izaak Walton League's Damascus Chapter and will expand this activity to include a scheduled second annual stream cleanup in the fall on another stream.
- The Chapter will support local Western Maryland groups and the Mid Atlantic Council's (MAC) efforts to develop and maintain a wild Brook trout fishery on the Merrill Farm in western Maryland. Initially this will involve staff support to MAC; subsequently it can involve significant stream improvement and maintenance activities.
- The Chapter will provide financial and labor support to the Beaver Creek Watershed Project.
- The Chapter will offer support to the Patapsco Valley Chapter's effort to maintain Morgan Run stream.

These new and/or expanded initiatives will provide new challenges to our membership. We will announce these activities as they are scheduled in this newsletter, on the PPTU web site ►



and at membership meetings. As they are developed, the increased resources necessary to conduct the major in-stream projects will become clear, as will the additional volunteer labor requirements. The expanded programs undoubtedly will take up some of our on-stream fishing time, but they are an investment that is necessary to preserve our fine sport. ■

— Lou Boezi

Tying Bench

If you haven't had enough fly tying yet and want to get some more first-hand information by watching a demonstration, be sure to come early to the meeting. If there is enough interest generated, this could become a regular feature for our monthly meetings.

We plan to have a table set up for a tying demonstration between 7:00 pm and 7:25 pm. We will be tying patterns that should be in your flybox when fishing waters in the Mid-Atlantic region. So come early, and stop by the table to pick up the tying directions and get an eyeful of knowledge on springtime must for your fly box. ■

— Nick Weber

Bass Pro—Spring Fishing Weekend

February 26 and 27, 10 AM–4 PM

The third annual fly fishing weekend at OUTDOOR WORLD at Arundel Mills, Hanover, MD, will be held February 26 & 27 at this mammoth store found just off RT 100 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (RT 295). There will be a number of local fly fishing gurus on hand to answer your questions on fish or saltwater fly fishing. Talks on "Getting Started in Fly Fishing," "Maryland Trout Fishing," and "Bay Fly Fishing" will be offered several times each day. Casting demos will be held on the pond out front of the store almost continuously, weather permitting. Our chapter, with the help from other local TU chapters, will be manning an information and membership table, as well as giving fly tying demonstrations each day. Bring a friend and come visit the Bass Pro OUTDOOR WORLD that weekend. For directions call 410-689-2500.

I need some help putting up some signs on the stream this month. If you can help, send me an email (jmsheppar@aol.com) or call (301-725-5559). This will most likely be any day of the week.

We will be float stocking brown trout in the next several weeks in the upper Patuxent Special Area (and Middle Patuxent Delayed harvest section). If you have chest waders and can help on a week day, please get in touch with me ASAP. If you have had an email from me by the time you have read this, no need to contact me re stocking or signs. There will be a sign up board at the monthly meeting on February 16. This is a great way to see a large section of the stream, since we walk 1½ to 3 miles of several sections. Float stocking spreads out the trout at the start, and from there they will move up or down the river over the next several months. Scattering the trout reduces competition and means that there should be a few trout every few yards to start the season. The past 2 years have been very wet, and we therefore expect great flows again this summer. Many rainbows were stocked last October, and more will be planted in the next month or so, too. There are holdover browns and even a couple of rainbows from last spring's stockings.

Don't forget to carry your card with the 800-phone numbers for the DNR Police and the Park dispatchers. If you see anything that appears illegal or other emergencies, please call them immediately with as much information as possible (location, license plate, description of individuals and vehicle, etc.). If you have lost the card, please get one or more ASAP at the next chapter meeting. The 24-hour numbers are as follows: MD Parks & Forests=1-800-825-PARK (-7275) for reporting problems on State lands and for DNR Catch-a-Poacher Program=1-800-635-6124 for issues off State park or forest lands. If you have a cell phone, please carry it in a Zip-lock bag while on the stream—you never know when it may be useful. ■

—Jay Sheppard



Tackle and Tactic Tips

(Continued from Page 3)

I am constantly moving, although the actual distance covered may only be a foot or two over several minutes. I want to avoid going from stock still to moving several feet all in a few seconds. This sudden movement of my body can spook the trout. I can also slip and **really** spook all the trout within a hundred feet with my sudden emersion!

The three toughest wading streams in Maryland in my estimation are the North Branch, Savage, and Yough, in descending order of difficulty or likelihood of taking a swim. Certainly studs and a wading staff will greatly help everyone on such waters. However, we must still practice *feeling* our way across the rivers. In looking back at many of my own spills, I think most were where I had been standing for a long period casting to some rising fish and then suddenly trying to move. I had forgotten I was in a stream and did not *feel* my way to the next placement for one of my feet. Often I was actually stepping back and again forgot to *feel* before I actually shifted my weight. Lastly, keep your body low in tough wading situations. Balance is a lot easier with a lowered center of gravity.

In summary, take shorter steps and *feel* where the foot is going to go before you actually shift your weight to it. As one last precaution, take a change of clothes along, too. If you plan to fish any of the three rivers named above, take **TWO** changes! ■

—Jay Sheppard

ADDRESS CHANGED?

If you have moved or see any error in your label on this newsletter, please advise **both** the National TU office and this chapter with **separate** notices. Our mailing list is maintained apart from the National list; we do eventually get the notice of address change from National TU, but it is often a few months before it affects your newsletter and other mailings. Please help us help you. Thank you.

This past fall we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. First, make sure we have your correct address, including 9-digit Zip, and that your dues are paid up. If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy. For future reference, we try to mail the newsletters about 15 days before the next meeting.

Around the Stream

Last month's Fly Fishing Show in College

Park, proved to be a big success for both the organizers and attendees alike. When I arrived on at the Show, the place was a zoo, crawling with people. I was curious to know just how many people attend these types of things. So I posed that question in an email to the organizers. "That's a good question," said **Gerry Serviente** of the Fly Fishing Show. Serviente said that there isn't an accurate way of counting attendees but he noted that the aisles were busy, the seminars were full and the demonstrations were crowded. "If not the best attendance ever at the show, it was a close second. Probably about 3,500 in two days."

The Chapter also had some success in signing up some new members – 28 in all. We also had 29 renewals. As usual, **several Chapter members stepped up** and volunteered their weekends to help our cause. Many thanks.

Depending on your perspective the Fly Fishing Show treated some Chapter members better than others. Your trusty newsletter editor, for example, limited himself to spending no more than \$40 but he blew those good intentions out of the water when he stopped by **English Angling Trappings** at the suggestion of **Dave Wittman**, who himself was in the market for some snowshoe rabbit foot hair. I can't think of a better way to blow a paycheck than buying an array of feathers and a patch of badger fur. If anyone picked up the Kangaroo fur at this shop, I would be anxious to know what you plan to tie with it?

Word on the street had it that **Joshua Forster** had cane on the brain. Some folks spotted Joshua walking out of the show with a rod tube and there was some question as to whether it was concealing some bamboo. Joshua confirmed that he did not purchase a bamboo rod, but said he tested a pair made by **William A. Harms** of Sherman's Dale, PA. So what was in that tube? It was a R.L. Winston 3-piece 7' 6" three weight. He also picked up a Ross Rhythm reel. Both were purchased at the **Angler's Lie** booth.

Larry Vawter was also in the market for a fly rod and found what he was looking for at none other than **West Branch Angler**. Larry, of course, was the big winner of the West Branch guide trip ►

trip at the Club's November raffle. Larry settled on a 9 ft 5 wt from Orvis and noted that he was able to save about \$150.

Let's hope that Larry and Joshua don't fall victim to the New Fly Rod jinx that befell **Robert Simpson** in 2004. Robert, who was accompanied by **Lou Boezi** on the Chapter's injury list for much of the previous year, said, "After breaking my leg last April, I never got to use the new rod I bought at last year's show. So this year's purchasing was restrained." Robert bought himself a second spool for the Battenkill 3/4 reel, a few leaders and tippet material and some sparkly chenille. By the way, the rod that Robert bought has yet to be used!

Speaking of the injured reserve list, **George Owens**, had both of his knees replaced in October and the Fly fishing Show served as one of his first outings since the operation. As such, George spent more time downstairs at the Show than he normally would otherwise. George took in some presentations, including **Wendell "Ozzie" Ozefovich's** *The Underwater World of Trout* and **Bill Horn's** *Bonefishing in the Bahamas: Affordable Dream Experience*. George picked up three-dozen discount flies to use this spring and a copy of Ozzie's video, *Discovery*.

Jim Delio, who acknowledged that he's been tardy with renewing his PPTU membership, said that this was his first Fly Fishing Show. "I spent about a hundred bucks, impulse purchases all," . Among the goodies that Jim took home was a DVD on tying wets and a subscription to *Fly Fisherman*.

Jay Sheppard picked up some Frog Hair leader material that he said he wanted to try out. And **Bob Serrano** picked up the two-volume magnum opus *Trout* by Ernest Schwiebert for \$100. Bob must have a lot of moves in diplomacy because when I saw him at the show he indicated the asking price was \$150.

Jim Greco said his wife **Pam** bought him an early birthday present -- a beautifully crafted Signature Concept net. Jim noted that the synthetic polyester net bag is completely impregnated with rubber. He said there were two main advantages: (1) the bag is kinder to fish because it supposedly removes less slime than conventional bags and that the rubberized bag is much less prone to getting hooks snagged in it. ■

Chapter Assessments

Every so often we need to explain to our members why we have "assessments" of \$15 per year. Many years ago, we had a print shop owner as our editor who did the newsletter at no cost to us. Our annual costs for these and other expenses were very small. Then, we lost our printer/editor. The great variations in both delivery times and reliability caused us to shift from using bulk mail (Third Class) to First Class mail. We also increased the size of the CONSERVATIONIST to some six or even ten pages. All these greatly increased our costs.

We also have been providing extra copies to nearby tackle shops, State fisheries offices, and the media, all of which now amount to about 250 extra copies per mailing. We also provide new members a packet of the past year's newsletters and other information. The other main costs to the chapter are the rental fees for the rooms at the Senior Center.

Your dues to National TU are not returned in any meaningful amount to the chapter after the first year. We do receive a rebate for each new member we sign up of \$15, and \$.50 per member each year from the national organization, but that is all. The chapter has no other sources of income to defray these administrative costs, and those mentioned amounts do not go very far after the first year of membership. Commercial advertising is not practical, as the few shops and others could not support much of the more than \$4,000 annual administrative costs of the chapter. These local shops do contribute to our raffles and other fund-raising events.

What we have had to do is simply ask each member to pay a share of these **administrative** costs. We strongly believe that any monies we receive as donations, such as at raffles and other similar sources, should go **only** towards the resource. We have made significant contributions to other major fishery projects all over the country. Locally, we have purchased trout, float boxes, signs and boards, and in stream materials using the donations and contributions. Lately, the bulk of our efforts have been towards the Trout In the ▶

Classroom (TIC) program. In summary, the Board members do feel that if you want it, you have to pay for it. Donations go to helping the resource, not to help any individual cover his newsletter postage and printing. Only two-thirds or three-quarters of our PPTU chapter members pay the assessment. As a reminder, full time high school and college students are waived the annual assessment. Just send us your expected graduation date. See back cover for other details on the assessment. ■



PPTU Mentor Program

Available to members of PPTU current with their dues, Ken Bowyer or Paul Prevost will conduct one on one streamside 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

Contact Paul at 202-244-0168 or e-mail: pprevost@hotmail.com

If you would like more details on this Chapter educational program, please visit our website at www.pptu.org/mentor.shtml. The 2004 Mentor Program Report was recently posted. The report gives detailed information about who participated in the program, where they went, what was taught and what was caught. Check it out.



COOL CONSERVATIONIST THOUGHT OF THE MONTH

"Catching trout with a bit of bent wire is a rather trivial business, but fortunately people fish better than they know. In most cases it is the man who is caught. Trout fishing regarded as bait for catching men, for the saving of both body and soul, is important, and deserves all the expense and care bestowed on it."

— John Muir
In Our National Parks

Membership

THE POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER of Trout Unlimited has two membership categories: **Regular or Family** (\$15/year assessment) or **Student** (free). The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. The assessment is totally separate from Trout Unlimited dues. Send correspondence, change of address, or assessment payable to POTOMAC-PATUXENT TROUT UNLIMITED, PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915.

Chapter and national TU expiration dates are indicated in the mailing label as PP-0905 or NTU-0905.

PPTU Needs Your Help

PPTU still needs to fill the following positions in the very near future. Some of these positions have been vacant for several months now and if it weren't for some members doing double-duty, who knows where we would be. If you've been looking for opportunities to help out the Chapter, or even if you are a brand new member, now is the time to make the move. If you want to know more about what all is involved, please contact Lou Boezi at 301-593-5889.

- **Vice President**
- **Outings Chair**
- **Membership Chair**
- **Youth Program Coordinator**



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FIRST CLASS MAIL