



The **Conservationist**

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

January 2012

Published monthly except
June, July, August and December



Annual Fly Tying Demonstrations ***January 18, 2012***

Please, join us at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, January 18th, 2012 at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD when the Potomac Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited will present our annual fly tying demonstration. Join us at this chapter meeting to see our most talented local tyers show off their skills and favorite patterns. Come learn how to make it easier to succeed at this intriguing sport of fly fishing.

Charlie Gelso and Dave Pratt will be tying favorite trout flies that we will all find useful in our fly boxes. Carl Smolka will astound us with the way he ties the realistic SMS Beetle; while PHW coach/tying instructor, Pati Nicholson, will tie a special pattern she finds quite effective while sharing her table with wounded warriors from our Project Healing Waters program. Once again our talented George Vincent will join us to tie the WD-40 emerger, and expert tier Jason Beckstrom will be showing off his bonefish fly tying skills. A favorite young tyer, Charlie Dissinger, will be manning our novice and kids table, hooking our newbies on the ever popular Patuxent Special. The lineup of tyers will be concluded with Jim Keil presenting his productive Green Drake wet fly.

Come to this meeting, and share with us one of the season's most popular presentations.

Hope to see you all there.

Jim Greco

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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President's Column - Dennis Covert

Happy New Year! I hope Santa brought you all the fly fishing goodies you were Jones'n for. As winter's grip sets in many of us will be spending long winter evenings bent over our tying vices reflecting on the defeats of last season visualizing victories in the next; conjuring up new patterns or improving old ones, fishing them in our mind's eye as we spin hair and wind hackle.

Change is inevitable, not always welcome, but often unavoidable, and this year the board is seriously considering changing the distribution method of the *Conservationist*. It has been proposed that starting in September the *Conservationist* will only be made available in the electronic version. The driving forces behind this change are twofold; printing and postage costs have risen to roughly \$3,000 dollars annually, our chapter's largest yearly expenditure, and, electronic dissemination of information has become the accepted norm worldwide.

For years I thought, and I'm guessing many of you as well, that the Annual Supporting Contribution was dedicated solely to supporting the costs of producing and distributing the *conservationist*. However, that thinking was and is inaccurate. As a Chapter we are not allowed to assess dues or fees for membership, and therefore depend on the Annual Supporting Contribution, along with other fund raising events, to sustain the chapter's administration costs, educational programs, and community service projects including:

- Room rental for the monthly Chapter and board meetings at the Schweinhaut Center
- Trout in the Classroom program that teaches primary & middle schoolers the importance of cold water fisheries to our environment
- Every year we either sponsor a few high school students to attend, or make outright donations to support TU camps in Virginia and Pennsylvania

- Year-round Project Healing Waters program at Ft. Meade that provides recreational activities to wounded warriors
- Conservation projects that restore trout habitats in rivers & streams across Maryland.

As with any other type of business or organization, when costs outpace income the board is faced with the challenge of doing more with less. We know many of you hold the Conservationist near and dear, therefore, we are using the January President's Column to convey this proposed change to the membership in order to provide adequate time for comment before implementing any changes. The most effective way for the board to trap and collect your comments is for you to send us an email at mail@pptu.org (you can find this link at the bottom of the homepage at www.pptu.org it's listed under "Conservation Activities").

I want to stress that we are at the beginning of this process. Our objective is to make changes that are both acceptable to the membership and remain fiscally responsible. We seek your input.

In the meantime enjoy the winter. If you've been casing your rods till spring then you've been missing out on the joys of dark water running through snowy woods. It's always a good idea to fish with a buddy in winter, a fall or slip resulting in a conk on the noggin or a broken bone can be dangerous anytime but especially in freezing weather. Have fun be safe! 🍁



PPTU Mentor Program Beginner's & 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 🍁

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

Hunting season continues until the first week of February in the State Park above MD Rt. 97. However, Sundays are No Hunting days. If you are thinking of trying a warm, mid-winter day, pick a Sunday until then. Or better yet, try below Brighton Dam and around Haviland Mill. Access via the dam parking lot is closed until March. A few hundred trout, mostly browns, were stocked in late October between the dam and the bridge. Spring stocking will actually start in late February—stay tuned! A sign-up sheet for volunteers to help in these next stockings will be at the next two meetings. OR you can let me know via email: jmsheppar@aol.com. 🍁

**Address changes? Moved?
Please keep us up to date on your
addresses.**

Please send any notices of corrections or change of address to: PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915. If we do not have your current address, including email for those being notified electronically, we cannot send you future issues of the Conservationist.

Tackle and Tactics

- Jay Sheppard

In deference to our meeting this month, I am going to depart from my usual topics and mention a number of fly tying tricks I have picked up over the decades. Just as there is more than one way to skin the cat, there are dozens of ways to do most things in fly tying. These are some of the ones that I have found useful and hopefully you will, too.

Chenille and other material often come wrapped around small cards. Instead of cutting off a foot or so and using that piece in your tying, take the end of the material and pass 5–10 inches through the hole at one end of the card. If there is no hole, just poke your scissors through to allow the chenille to feed through this hole. One never loses the various pieces of material until the very end of the card's stock.

I have a work bench dedicated to tying in my basement. I have painted it a powder blue. Since I hardly ever use any materials that are that color, everything contrasts easily when on the bench or while tying. The color reflects very well the large fluorescent work lights I have just above me. Across the near edge of the bench, near my vise, is a foot long strip of ½" neoprene weather stripping left over from doing my doors many winters ago. This strip is where I park my flies immediately after tying to let them dry out or await some final step.

A small work bench organizer normally used for holding screws, bolts, etc. with over 40 small drawers holds my hooks, threads, wire, and similar materials. I keep my chenille, yarns and other non-animal tying products in large zip-lock bags. It would be nice to have them organized more, but this suffices when I need dubbing, rubber legs, etc. I do store my feathers and fur in an air tight case. I fumigate the case once a year with para-dichloro-benzene, available in most drug stores and labeled as moth ice crystals or para-moth balls. Do not place this material near any plastic boxes; it works very well in zip-lock bags. Naphthalene moth balls do not kill any pests that like to chew fur and feathers and are to be avoided.

When tying a body with multiple wrapped components, the rule is simple: last tied onto

hook, first wound. Example, a woolly bugger with chenille, hackle and wire: the chenille is tied onto the hook last and the wire first onto the hook. The chenille is wrapped and tied off first, then the hackle, and then the wire.

When using lead wire for an underbody, be sure to counter wrap it with thread to keep it from moving during casting. I wrap and tie down the wire first, then add the tail. Before wrapping the chenille or dubbing over the wire, I coat it with a little clear nylon nail polish to further help hold it all together. Do not cut the lead wire—it leaves a sharp edge to wreck your other materials later. Instead, simply pull the lead wire off the hook while using the other thumb to hold the wire on the hook. When using a conehead, shove the wrapped wire up into the rear of the conehead before tying it down with thread. Speaking of coneheads and beadheads, one never passes over these devices with the thread. All final wraps of the thread are done behind the metal.

One of my favorite dry flies is a mayfly spinner pattern. It is a very simple and very effective pattern. Choose a quality hackle with extra large fibers (at least equal the length of the hook shank) and tie it in by the base about half way back from the eye. Move thread to rear and tie in tail, then dub a thin body up to eye. Palmer the hackle up to eye and tie off. Trim all fibers at or below the level of the fly's body. Cut a very broad "V" in the hackles above the body. A fly needs only about 15–17 fibers on each side of the hook shank to be effective. Cut all unwanted hackle fibers as close to the hackle stem as possible. It may not be easy to see in low light, but it is deadly when trout are sipping spinners.

If you find your flies are unwinding, you need to have a little more tension on the thread and also need to get the thread down to the wire of the shank every so often. Maybe two wraps on the material and then one just on the wire before returning to the hackle or chenille (etc.). This extra wrap can be behind or in front of the material. I much prefer durable flies! A good fly will survive 20 or more trout; "excellent" flies more than 30! A poor fly only last several. The extra time it takes to create a durable fly will more than repay you in added fishing time with the fly still in the water and not being changed in the middle of a hatch. 🐟

2011 Maryland Water Monitoring Council

- Carl M. Smolka



On December 1st, the Maryland Water Monitoring Council held their seventeenth annual conference with the theme, “Think Baywide, Act Streamside: Implementing the Chesapeake Bay TDML” at the Maritime Institute in North Linthicum. Bruce Eberle and I attended this conference with the intent to learn what the current water quality issues in Maryland are and where we, as a chapter, might be able to make a contribution in the future.

Mark Southerland, Chairman, MWMC Board called the session to order. Jeff Corban, EPA Chesapeake Bay Senior Advisor, and Carl Hershiner, Director for Coastal Resources Management were the plenary speakers. Both stressed the need for better and wider communications, and for the need to validate assumptions that similar actions in different places have similar results.

The conference had a number of concurrent technical sessions including topics on monitoring, community involvement, urban storm water management, the Federal Urban Waters Initiative, science and activism in creeks, reservoirs and rivers, nutrients loads, ecological flows, defining the Bay model, discussion of TMDL (total maximum daily load) and WIPs (watershed implementation plans), stream macroinvertebrates and their use in assessing stream health, challenges to urban fish communities, justifying the Bay cleanup in these economic times, environmental justice (a repeat of a common theme of last year), and a very creative approach to environmental education.

Because of the time allocation, Bruce and I could only attend three each of the eighteen possible breakout sessions and our comments follow.

I was surprised to hear very little on the Marcellus Shale issue in either the breakout or the poster sessions as it again was prominent in last year’s session. The closest discussion was in the ecological flows session which was ironically focused on the impact of water withdrawals to the hydroecological integrity of streams in the fractured rock region of Maryland. This is the area of the state roughly north and west of I-95 and from which 75% of the fresh water in Maryland is obtained. According to the three speakers, Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is responsible for managing the State’s water resources. I asked about the relationship between MDE and WSSC, specifically with regard to the water releases from Brighton dam and encountered an interesting political football lateral effort as the question was bounced around the room and never really answered.

After the session, one of MDE managers sought me out and we had a discussion about the tail water flows below the dam.

The creative educational tool I mentioned earlier is the creation of W. Neils Gillies of the Cacapon Institute. He and his team have created a virtual stream sampler, part of a suite of watershed lessons to serve the watershed education community. The activity is accessible at: http://www.cacaponinstitute.org/e_classroom.htm is based upon real data collected on two streams: a limestone spring fed stream and a restored AMD (acid mine drainage) stream and provides insight into water quality measurements, habitat assessment, and benthic macroinvertebrates collection. This might be of interest to our TIC community teachers as an extension of what they can do in the classroom or of any volunteers interested in learning more about habitat issues, and use in the TU Camp program.

Work discussed in Hartford and Howard Counties have raised questions about whether two years of pre-project monitoring are adequate to evaluate typical variability of streams. The basic question of ‘are urban streams restoration efforts effective’ are still unanswered at this time.

Rockville has developed a volunteer driven monitoring program. Materials are available on line. While the public is getting more aware of water quality issues, the scientific value of the data warrants more work. A citizens group

[www.ced.org] has developed a process for working with contractors to correct 'problems' rather than receive bad press which appears to have merit.

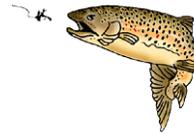
On-going work using data from the lower reaches of Jones Fall and Gwynns Falls have demonstrated that significant differences between fish assemblages in urbanized and reference streams can provide insights into local problems and a guide for stream restoration.

For those interested in more detail, you can access abstracts of the presentations and posters can be accessed and viewed at: <http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/MWMC/MWMC2010/pdfs/conferences/2011/MWMCProgram2011WEB.pdf> 

LEADERS ????? - Jim Greene

There's a significant performance difference between braided and furred leaders and sometimes folks mistakenly use the terms interchangeably. Braided leaders do tend to absorb water and, in my experience, don't perform well with dries after a relatively short time. However, they're fine for nymphing, particularly if using very small indicators (or none), because of their sensitivity.

Furred tapered leaders are a different matter. They date back to Izaak Walton's time, when they were made of horsehair, but are now fashioned in some cases out of around 30 yards of material for a 6-7-foot product. They're great at transferring energy from the rod to the fly and can handle amazingly long tippets with both delicacy and precision. If a furred tapered leader ever begins to absorb water and sink, unless being dragged down by a weighted fly, it's very poorly made. 



Trout in the Classroom Update - Jim Greene

With the addition of 15 new schools this year, Maryland's Trout in the Classroom program is enjoying its biggest expansion ever. The almost 50% increase brings the total TIC program to 46 Maryland schools in eight counties and Baltimore city plus one in the District of Columbia. More than an estimated 3,000 elementary, middle school and high school children are likely to be involved with the Maryland TIC program this year.

Started and until now supported almost entirely by PPTU, TIC has developed in partnership with the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR). This year DNR will donate all the Kamloops rainbow trout embryos and trout food for the program. It will also issue permits for TIC schools to raise fingerlings in their classrooms and release them in designated streams. Additionally, DNR's Aquatic Resources Education program provides extensive logistical assistance.

This year the National Capital and Maryland TU chapters have stepped up to provide volunteer support: MDTU to six TIC schools in Baltimore County, eight in Baltimore City and one each in Anne Arundel and Harford counties and NCCTU to both the District of Columbia school and one in Montgomery County. However, more than a dozen PPTU members have stepped forward over time to help with a wide range of TIC activities. These include delivery of fertilized eggs to schools, spring programs to release trout into local streams and technical support to school emergencies like chiller failures or sudden fingerling die-offs.

This expansion and support helps Maryland TIC to fulfill its mission to develop among Maryland school children the future promoters of and advocates for ensuring healthy conditions in local trout streams.

TIC is essentially a *cold-water conservation* and not a *hatchery* program. Linking students to their watersheds, TIC activities reinforce existing multidisciplinary curriculum requirements in grades three through high school. Students learn

to value our natural resources through the lifecycle of the trout. Besides creating a durable understanding and appreciation of the importance of clean water, TIC also exposes children to broader themes. These include the concepts of ecosystems and watersheds, preservation and enhancement of natural resources, protection of the environment and the value of maintaining healthy populations of sport fisheries as an indicator of environmental quality. A collateral purpose is to encourage young people to enjoy sport fishing as a way to connect with nature as part of a healthy life-style.

The new TIC program year got under way on November 12 with the annual TIC training and orientation workshop. More than 60 teachers and TIC volunteers took part, including at least one teacher from each of the 15 new schools.

Even more gratifying, a recent email call for volunteers to provide technical support to TIC schools resulted in positive responses from over 60 TU members throughout Maryland. Volunteer tasks include : assisting teachers with tank set-up, delivering trout eggs to TIC schools in early January, visiting schools to check on the status of their trout tanks, helping teachers to resolve emergency problems, possibly speaking with students about some aspect of cold water conservation or trout life, taking part in fingerling release programs in late April and May and helping teachers and students dismantle, clean and store their TIC equipment for future use at the end of the school year.

The 2011-12 TIC schools are: Montgomery County – Westbrook, Forest Knolls, North Chevy Chase, Ritchie Park and Greenwood elementary schools; Westland, Robert Frost, Herbert Hoover and Rocky Hill middle schools and The Barnesville School; Howard County – Hammond and Swansfield elementary schools; Burleigh Manor, Murray Hill and Oakland Mills middle schools; Carroll County – Gerstell Academy; Northwest Middle School; Frederick County – Ballenger Creek, Monocacy, New Market, Thomas Johnson, Thurmont, Urbana and Windsor Knolls middle schools; Lewistown and Orchard Grove elementary schools; Middletown, Tuscarora and Walkersville high schools, and St. John's Regional Catholic School; Garrett County- Crellin Elementary School; Baltimore County –

Boys' Latin, Gilman, McDonogh and Odyssey schools, Lutherville Laboratory school and Hampden Elementary/Middle School; Baltimore City – Armistead Gardens, Walter P. Carter, Guilford, Hamilton, and Roland Park Elementary/Middle schools; Booker T. Washington and Woodlawn Middle Schools; Harford County – Bel Air High School; Anne Arundel County – Broadneck High School; District of Columbia – E.L. Haynes Public Charter School. The Smith Environmental Education Center in Montgomery County, Maryland, also takes part in TIC. 🌿

Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text in an email or as a Microsoft Word attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

Editor: George Vincent
Phone: 301-249-6399
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Spring Outing Schedule 2012

- January 21st Yellow Breeches Pa
- February 25th Big Hunting Creek MD
- March 21, 22, 23, 24 Steelhead Outing to Lake Erie Tribs
- April 25, 26, 27 28 Gypsy Fishing Pa Trout Waters, wherever the hatch is on, wherever the fishing is best!
- May TBA





Help To Stop Poachers

Reminder - If you spot poaching please place
a call to

Catch a Poacher Hotline at 1-800-635-6124



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