



October 2009

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

Fly Fishing for Stripers at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel in December

October 21, 2009

OK, in December your thoughts should be on the holidays and plum pudding. NO! As a fisher, you should have plans for a great day or two on the water at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel according to our guest speaker Captain Michael Critzer. Capt. Mike has been fly fishing in both fresh and salt water since 1964 and has been a licensed professional fishing guide since 1996. His guide business, Coastal Fly Fishing Charters, www.coastalflyfisher.com offers custom fly and light tackle guided trips on the Chesapeake Bay and mid-Atlantic coast. He held an IGFA world record for Bluefin Tuna on a fly rod, served for seven years on Maryland's Sport Fish Advisory Commission, is a founding member of the Chesapeake Guides Association, and a life long member of TU.

Mike points out that historically, the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay in late fall and early winter, has been the pre-spawn gathering spot for east coast Striped Bass. Coastal migrant striper's from as far away as Maine gather at the mouth of the bay during the month of December. These fish are feeding at every opportunity, preparing themselves for their spawning run up the Chesapeake Bay in March and April. He further points out that the seventeen and a half mile long Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel (CBBT) that spans the mouth of the bay provides the largest man-made fish and bait attracting structure on the east coast. The combination of this structure and the historical habits of striped bass has created a world class fishery in December and that 50 to 100 fish days on flies are not uncommon. Come see, and then plan a great nearby winter trip. Mike will also include an overview of other seasonal fly rodding opportunities in the Chesapeake Bay, and the best rods, reels, and flies for the bay.

Nick Weber

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Dave Wittman on September 18, 2009.

Dave was a very active member of our chapter, particularly the Trout in the Classroom program. He will be greatly missed. We will be dedicating the next issue of *The Conservationist* to Dave.

If you have any stories you would like to share please send them to jmsheppar@aol.com

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

One of the most visible and widespread threats to fish, particularly freshwater species, is pollution of the water in which they live. Pollution takes a variety of forms, including the discharge of inadequately treated sewage into rivers, lakes, and seas. Our waters are poisoned by industrial waste products, agricultural chemicals, oil spills, and acidified by acid rain and mines. Ground water that feeds the springs can become contaminated and run off from our roads and highways warms and erodes our streams.

Another form of pollution is discarded trash left on stream banks by picnickers and careless individuals. These items can also find their way into waters. Some weeks ago members of PPCTU, National Capital Chapter, and Trout Unlimited National worked to clean the banks of the Middle and Little Patuxent Rivers at Savage Mill. I had only been to this area once before, but find this one of the most scenic and picturesque places I have ever been. I was appalled to see what we found along the river banks. We found beer cans and bottles, grills, plastic utensils, and assorted trash. In one area we picked up a folding chair and a shovel, but left behind a standard transmission. Overall this group picked up 50 bags of recyclable items and 40 bags of trash. Doesn't anyone remember the TV ad years ago "Give A Hoot Don't Pollute ". Something needs to be done about the problem along this jeweled beauty in Savage Maryland.

As advocates of Clean Water Conservation, I feel that we must do something to help the Howard County Parks Department. I recently had a conversation with Park Rangers about this issue. They stated they are very aware of the problems along this part of the river. The Howard County Parks Department sends inmates from the correctional institution weekly to help clean up the river. The Parks Department and Rangers are both extremely understaffed and under financed and cannot adequately address the problem. So how is this problem to be corrected, or should we just ignore it with hopes it goes away. Your ideas are welcome.

Larry Vawter

Early Meeting Segments begin at 7 pm

by Nick Weber

Tying Bench

This month will find a familiar face at the Tying Bench. For catching fish on top this autumn, right up there with midges, beetles and ants remain all time favorites. During the Tying Bench segment of our chapter meeting, Jim Greco will demonstrate tying some of these simple terrestrial patterns which work very well right to the end of our fall season. Come and join Jim and others at the "Bench" and take the opportunity to chat with one of our Chapter's best tiers.

Angler's Corner

Come by the Anglers Corner and get the latest on the planned outing for Steelhead to Erie PA (11/8 - 11). You can also hear the tales from the recent outing to Western Maryland. Dennis Covert, our Outings Chair, and undoubtedly some of his cohorts will be telling all about the Steelhead trip and why you really should consider this fishing experience with some of our fellow fishers. Have an idea for an outing, share it with Dennis.

ADDRESS CHANGE?

If you moved or if the information on the mailing label on *The Conservationist* is wrong, please email Jay Sheppard at JMSheppard@aol.com. You may also drop us a post card with the correction. PPTU maintains a mailing list separate from the national TU list.

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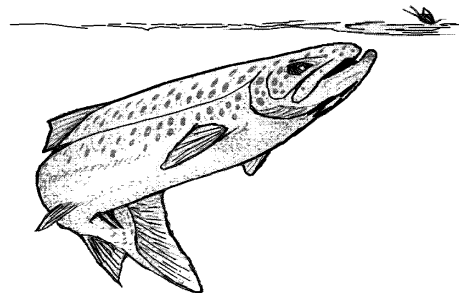
MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

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.



Remember to return your videos and books on time. Many fellow members would like the opportunity to rent the books, tapes and DVDs that you rented. Late fees will be applied if they are not returned by the next chapter meeting.

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@att.net.

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 at 301-627-7154
or e-mail kenbowyer@verizon.net.

Contact Tim at 410-203-0369
or e-mail tpawlowi@msn.com.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Fall fishing is now in full swing. Here are a few flies and tricks I love to use at this time of the year. Beetles can vary in size from microscopic to over an inch in length. I would suggest #12 and #16 patterns in the usual black color, but other colors and sizes can work, too. Crickets should be sized to the #10 adults from September into October. For caterpillars or inchworms, the chartreuse San Juan Worm on a #12 hook and about 1.5" in total length is hard to beat, but the Green Weenie and other similar patterns work very well, too. Also try the San Juan worms in grey, brown, red, and pink. Consider them also in the micro sizes of less than 5/8" length. As another 'terrestrial pattern' try a very large rusty spinner in the #8-10 size. There are a lot of flying insects, such as dragon flies, that occasionally drop on the water that will match a general buggy looking pattern such as this.

Fishing in the rain is usually very rewarding. With the falling rain the insects can become quite active, especially in warm fall weather. The effect of a falling rain seems to spur the insects to become very active and the trout respond to the increase in insects on the water. I watch the weather forecasts very

closely at all times of the year, and one is often rewarded if he or she can plan a fishing trip on a damp day that has cloudy skies and intermittent bouts of rain. The little *Baetis* mayflies, aka blue winged olives, seem especially active during such weather at almost any time of the year. In September and early October, the *Isonychia* mayflies, aka slate winged drakes, willingly hatch all afternoon in such weather versus hatching at dusk on clear days. The darker skies also make the trout feel less wary and exposed than they would in bright sun.

Fall brings out a lot of larger trout in many of our waters. At the same time, we can still see the smaller trout grabbing the last of the hatches, most of which are small mayflies and the early winter stoneflies. One minute a fisher can be tossing #20 flies at 7-12" trout and a few minutes later try for a much larger monster lurking in the stream. Usually, the monster is not going to be interested in some tiny fly—it wants a large 'protein packet.'

Fishing the rest of this fall will often be with small caddis, blue-winged olives, and terrestrials for the most part. Fishing terrestrials is about the only time trout fishers with fly rods are allowed to make any real noise in their presentations. Beetles, crickets, inchworms and even larger ants can make some noise when they fall into the stream. So a little "plunk" of a #12 beetle plopping down right up tight to a deep and undercut bank might produce a nice trout. Although I do see a small number of trout react favorably to hopper patterns in this immediate area, it is not a really common prey item for our trout, unless you get to a spring creek with banks in weeds and grasses. Field crickets, on the other hand, are very common. Try them in the #10 size, if you have a choice, on most of our local trout waters. Crickets can sometimes be actively fished with tiny twitches of an inch or three followed by a pause. Happy fishing!

Jay Sheppard

Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) now Payable

The \$20 we ask to help support our administrative and printing costs is now payable. We operate on a September to September basis for the chapter's publication, *The Conservationist*. Very simply, it costs a lot of money to operate the chapter for meeting room rentals, postage, printing, web site, and other costs. We want to use all the contributions we receive and raise through our fund raisers to support our work for the resource.

If your mailing label reads "PP-0909" then you need to renew your ASC; some members previously paid their ASC for next year. You can pay the ASC at the next meeting or just mail it to our chapter mail box. Make checks payable to PPTU. You can choose to have the *Conservationist* delivered in hard copy or via the Internet; please advise which method you wish and include your email address. You do not have to be a TU member assigned to PPTU to subscribe to the *Conservationist* by paying the ASC.

This is also a good time to see if your mailing label (hard copy deliveries only) is still valid. Please let us know if there are any corrections to your label.

New Membership Secretary Needed

Arnie Strand has stepped down as our invaluable membership secretary. We are looking for another volunteer to help maintain the chapter's mailing list. Access to the Internet and some knowledge of Microsoft Access is required. This work is what really helps our chapter to keep in touch with everyone and is crucial to our past success as one of the top 10 chapters in Trout Unlimited for membership services and recruitment.

If you are interested in helping the chapter behind the scenes, please contact Jay Sheppard (jmsheppar@aol.com). Your help will be appreciated.



Outings Schedule*

Big Run State Park Camp Out,
Western Maryland

October 9-10 , 2009

Steelhead Outing Western Pennsylvania+

November 8-11 , 2009

*All dates subject to change and dates may be added or deleted due to weather

+Requires Non-resident PA License and Lake Erie Permit or Combo Trout-Salmon/Lake Erie Permit

Announcing the 2009 PPTU Rod Building Class

The PPTU Board of Directors will sponsor a fly rod building class to be held on Tuesday nights from 7:00 PM until 9:00 PM on the following dates: October 27, November 3, 10, 17, 24, and December 1. Classes will be held at the Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland.

Jim Greco and Carl Smolka will share their rod building experience with 10 students who wish to learn about the craft. Tuition for the class will be \$115.00 for those who have already made an Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) to the Chapter or \$135.00 for those who have not made an ASC to the chapter.

We will be using Forecast fly rod blanks and rod building kits from the Hook and Hackle Company. Kits run from \$57.00 to \$96.00 when ordered through PPCTU, these kits are heavily discounted to class participants and range from 6'6" 2 wt. to 9' 0" 10 wt. in two pc., four pc., or five pc. blanks. Contact Jim to get a listing of prices and to order for the class. **The cost of these kits is in addition to the class tuition**, they will produce a rod with an approximate, estimated retail value of about \$250 to \$300. These kits contain moderately fast, matte charcoal graphite blanks, cork grips, titanium finished aluminum reel seats with rosewood inserts, ceramic stripping guides, chrome plated, SS snake guides, rod tips, and hook keeper, vinyl winding check, thread, epoxy glue, and epoxy rod finish. The blanks have limited lifetime warranties. In short, they are an excellent kit for the first time rod builder.

Students will be given the use of simple rod winding stations made by Carl Smolka, Jim Greco, and Dave Wittman. At the end of the class, we will offer these stations to the students for the cost of the materials we use to make them (should be approximately \$15, and they would be a \$40 to \$60 retail value). Students will have to provide their own tools such as scissors, single edged razor blades, marking pencils, tape measure, lettering pen and ink, burnishing tool, sandpaper (1 sheet of 100 grit should suffice), and masking tape. (If you have questions ask Jim or Carl) Tools will be discussed on the first class night.

We need to know if there are enough students to make the class economically feasible. If you are interested, please contact Jim Greco at Jimg6128@verizon.net, 410-997-2787 no later than September 29th. We need to order rod kits by October 1.



Return Address:
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FIRST CLASS MAIL