



September 2003

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, September 17

Angling Skills for Smallmouths

We kick off the new Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited season with a varied agenda of fishing topics for our monthly Chapter meetings. Our September fishing topic is *Angling Skills for Smallmouths*. The fall season is a wonderful time to get after Smallies on the Potomac River—one of the best fisheries on the East Coast.

We are fortunate to have as our guest speaker Mark Frondorf who loves Smallmouth fishing. As past president of the Potomac River Smallmouth Club, Mark stays up on the leading edge of new techniques, flies, and lures. He has stalked Smallies as far away as Maine and the Great Lakes, but his greatest enjoyment is sharing the secrets of the beautiful Potomac River Bronzedbacks. Mark has guided on the River for more than 10 years and is expert in all of the angling forms, though fly fishing is his favorite.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM with a short business meeting followed by a chance for you to tell about the fantastic fishing you have enjoyed during the summer. We'll believe your stories of fish caught—really. There will be the usual raffle of fishing related items.

Saturday, September 27

Fly Fishing Festival

Do you want to learn more about fly fishing, to tie flies, or to learn to be a FFF Certified Fly Casting Instructor? On Saturday, September 27, the Federation of Fly Fishers' Mid-Atlantic Council is holding its Second Annual Fly Fishing Festival at the Clarion Hotel and Conference Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, that will cover all that and more.

A unique feature at this year's Festival is an opportunity to learn what is required to gain FFF certifi-

cation as a fly casting instructor. This is *not* a casting class to teach you to cast, and you will not become a certified casting instructor by taking the class, but it will help you to take the certification test at a later date.

For more information, visit the MAC-FFF web site: www.macfff.org.

John Colburn



Dave's Fly Box

Outgoing PPTU President Dave Piske finished his term of office at the May meeting. To mark the occasion, he was presented with an inscribed fly box and over 10 dozen flies as a token of appreciation for the fine job he did over the past two years.

Our thanks, too, to the various chapter members who tied and donated flies to the cause. It was quite an assortment, from the tiniest #32s to some hefty crayfish patterns, with lots in between. We tried to do it as a surprise, and relied on email addresses from the listserver to spread the word.

If you didn't get a chance and would like to contribute further to the contents of Dave's new fly box, please feel free to give them to Dave directly.

And thanks again, Dave, for a job well done.

Robert Simpson

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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2003-2004 Officers and Directors

President:	Lou Boezi	301-593-5889
Past-President:	Dave Piske	703-751-0208
Vice-President:	Jim Greco	410-997-2787
Treasurer:	Jim Greene	301-652-3848
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	David Dunmire	301-565-2970
	Bruce Eberle	301-854-3142
	Jim Greco	410-997-2787
	Jim Keil	301-588-8375
	Jay Sheppard	301-725-5559
	Robert Simpson	410-461-8180
	Val Walters	301-949-7882
	Dave Piske	703-751-0208
Editor:	John Colburn	202-545-8776
Program:	Vacant	
Publicity:	Jim Greene	301-652-3848
Membership Secy:	Jack Dawson	301-253-4092
Fundraising:	Bob Serrano	301-552-6784
Raffles:	Willy Oldes	301-868-3508
Refreshments:	Cathy Nutter	301-384-2431
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Outings:	Joshua Forster	410-290-8010
Conservation Advocacy:	Jim Keil	301-588-8375
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Youth Program:	Vacant	
Trout in the Classroom:	Jim Greene	301-652-3848
Mid. Patuxent:	Larry Coburn	301-490-7170
NW Branch:	Jim Keil	301-588-8375
Paint Branch:	David Dunmire	301-989-0331
Patuxent:	Jay Sheppard	301-725-5559

Contributions in the form of articles, letters, fishing news, tying tips, book reviews, and even poetry about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain MS-DOS (ASCII) text or Microsoft Word attachments to e-mail messages containing brief descriptions of the attachments. Attachments received without a description will be deleted without opening.

The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

EDITOR: John Colburn
(Phone: 202-545-8776)
(johnwcolburn@juno.com)

President's Column

A new Chapter year has begun. Our calendar year is typically filled with a number of annual events as well as periodic opportunities for member involvement in fishing ventures, conservation projects, youth educational programs, workshops and so on.

We're a busy Chapter, but there is plenty of room for new activities and additional member involvement. Volunteers make the Chapter a viable entity. Volunteers make the most of the Chapter opportunities. Volunteers make it easier for all of us to stay involved without carrying too much of the burden. A little help by a lot of people make life much more comfortable.

Openings exist for members to volunteer a little of their time and skills and make their contribution to the Chapter. Ask any of the "old timers" at our Chapter meeting how go about volunteering, who to see or what opportunities are available to help- I'm sure they'll direct you to me very quickly! I'd be happy to talk to you about how you can help.

This past year saw a number of new, exciting and successful activities started by our Past President, Dave Piske. Expanded youth programs like Trout in the Classroom (TIC), vigilant attention and quick responses to rising conservation issues, and an exciting new fund raising program are but a few of the credits Dave accrued. We all owe him a debt of gratitude for his tireless efforts and wonderful success and leadership. Please take a moment to personally thank Dave for his personal sacrifice for the benefit of the Chapter.

The Board of Directors meets monthly to discuss existing programs, plan upcoming events, examine pending issues, respond to National TU requests, and otherwise keep the Chapter running smoothly.

This year we're going to systematically examine a lot of what we do and how we do it. From time to time at the monthly membership meeting I'll ask for your thoughts on specific items that the Board is considering. As you become more aware of the activities of the Board please share your thought and ideas with the Board members. We need to hear from you.

Lastly, I want to call attention to our new web pages. Please take the opportunity to check them frequently and see what's happening in the chapter. We intend to make increasing use of the

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President's Column

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web pages and our list service as vehicles for improved internal and external Chapter communications and as a means to offset ever increasing publishing and mailing costs of our newsletter. A large part of the Chapter membership is familiar with web surfing and the use of emails. If there is any who would like to begin but needs someone to talk to about how to get started, just ask. It's easy, fun, educational beyond your wildest dreams and at the same time challenging.

We are looking forward to an exciting year of speakers at our monthly membership meetings. If you think of topics and or speakers we should consider please share your thoughts with me or any of the Board members. The speakers program is a great way to learn new techniques and otherwise question experts about our favorite pastime.

And oh, incidentally, we need someone to volunteer to help manage this year's program. We can offer a lot of assistance if you would like to volunteer a little of your time and make a lot of members very happy!

Lou Boezi

Conservation Issues

Locally our biggest focus this year will be on the attempt to build the InterCounty Connector. As most of you know, this is a highway that has been proposed and re-proposed for decades, and each time the federal agencies responsible for environmental oversight of the proposed project have refused to allow it to go forward.

A few years back, Governor Glendening and the Montgomery County Council teamed up to put a stop to the project. But this time around we have a County Council with a majority in support of the ICC and a Governor who has promised to build it. (The Prince George's County Council already has expressed strong disinterest in building the highway.)

In addition, the White House has come up with a fast-track designed to rush through certain highway projects, and the Governor has asked the White House to make the ICC one of these projects. This means that the ICC may undergo less scrupulous analysis by the environmental agencies and there may be less room for public input.

Frankly, it was public opposition to the project that

stalled the ICC a few years back, but I think that the hoped-for failure of the project is less likely to turn on political considerations this time since most of the politicians were elected to office in part because they either supported the ICC (County Council, Governor) or were highway friendly (White House). This time around we will have to target support for those Council members in both counties and the state legislators who have expressed opposition to this project.

The target will have to come in the form of letters, of course, but also in terms of money for their campaigns. If you want to stop this highway, you'll probably also have to put some money (and perhaps some time) into those groups and coalitions that oppose the road. More on how to do this and more details in the next issue of *The Conservationist*.

Nationally, there are a number of areas of concern for TU members. There is a strong push from the White House and within federal agencies to handicap, refuse to enforce, or simply ignore the Endangered Species, Clean Air, and Clean Water Acts—traditional tools by which TU and other environmental groups have worked to protect salmonids and their habitats.

There is also afoot an effort to change the ways that federal lands are managed and used to serve the people. Most of us are aware of the efforts afoot to encourage permission to log wilderness and other areas in order to stem wildfires. Also of concern is the way watersheds can be managed under the new regime.

The Senate just recently agreed to an Energy Bill that was written in the last Congress and is much more friendly to the environment than the proposals that had been before the Senate. However, Congressional leaders in both houses have promised that the environmentally friendly Senate bill will lose much of its friendliness when it goes to committee where the differences between the Senate and much more industry-friendly House Energy Bill will have to be sorted out.

Of particular concern to TU is the way the law is written to give hydropower operators greater freedom to choose ways of mitigating the effects on watersheds that dams in and of themselves create. For instance, rather than building or maintaining fish ladders to allow the migration of species, power companies might choose to simply stock the watershed with fish. It promises to be a very busy year on the conservation front. In the next issue, I will bring you more specifics on the struggle to protect our watersheds both locally and nationally.

Jim Keil

Patuxent Report

We survived a very interesting summer. Flows have been truly great the entire summer (at least through August). From both my own experiences and those of others, there are a number of trout located throughout the river system. This includes a number of rainbows, which rarely hold over 8 summers out of 10. The annual fall DNR surveys of the stream should help us shed light on this.

If you are interested helping in the annual trout population surveys of this stream (or the Middle Patuxent and the Gunpowder), please contact me by the September meeting. This is always a good opportunity to help and to also see where the trout are (or are not). This is a weekday pursuit, with chest waders required to help on the shocking crew. Hip boots will still allow you to assist in carrying equipment and trout. Dates and times have not been determined.

Fishing should be excellent for the rest of the summer and fall. Naturally, you still have to avoid the overhanging trees and the thick brush along the banks to keep you casts from getting hung up! Terrestrials should work well for the remainder of the summer and well into October.

Jay Sheppard

Officers, Directors, and Committee Chairs E-mail Addresses

Gus Bernard	gnelnard@comcast.net
Jason Beckstrom	jkbeckstrom@hotmail.com
Lou Boezi.....	lboezi@comcast.net
Ken Bowyer ...	kenbowyer@comcast.net
Larry Coburn	ldcburn@AOL.com
John Colburn	johnwcolburn@juno.com
Jack Dawson..	dawsonj@comcast.net
David Dunmire	ddunmire@tscwo.com
Bruce Eberle .	bruce_eberle@msn.com
Joshua V.S. Forster	jforster@smart.net
Jim Greco	jimg6128@aol.com
Jim Greene	jgreene@waterwisp.com
Judy Hendrickson	jhhh@erols.com
Cathy Nutter..	cxn@cdrh.fda.gov
John Parchen .	twotrouts@aol.com
Dave Piske	dpsk@aol.com
Paul Prevost ..	pprevost@hotmail.com
Bob Serrano ..	bserrano@prodigy.net
Robert Simpson	rgsonwbc@mindspring.com
Val Walters ...	VCWalters@starpower.net
David Wong .	estuaries101@hotmail.com

Global Position Systems

The Global Positioning System (GPS) is a satellite-based navigation system made up of a network of 24 satellites placed into orbit by the U.S. Department of Defense. GPS was originally intended for military applications, but in the 1980s, the government made the system available for civilian use.

GPS works in any weather conditions, anywhere in the world, 24 hours a day. There are no subscription fees or setup charges to use GPS. In 2000, the Government eliminated its artificially introduced error which now permits accuracies of 15 meters to be readily achieved, virtually any place on the earth's surface.

GPS satellites circle the earth twice a day in precise orbits and transmit certain information to earth based GPS receivers that take this information and use triangulation to calculate the user's exact location.

The GPS receiver essentially compares the time a signal was transmitted by a satellite with the time it was received. The time difference tells the GPS receiver how far away the satellite is. With distance measurements from a few more satellites, the receiver can determine the user's position and display it on the unit's electronic map.

A GPS receiver must be locked on to the signals of at least three satellites to calculate a 2D position (latitude and longitude) and track movement. With four or more satellites in view, the receiver can determine the user's 3D position (latitude, longitude and altitude). Once the user's position has been determined, the GPS unit can calculate other information, such as speed, bearing, track, trip distance, distance to destination, sunrise and sunset time and more.

Today's GPS receivers are extremely accurate, and the popular 12 channel receivers are quick to lock onto satellites when first turned on, and they maintain strong locks, even in dense foliage or urban settings with tall buildings. Certain atmospheric factors and other sources of error can affect the accuracy of GPS receivers.

The 24 satellites that make up the GPS space segment are orbiting the earth about 12,000 miles above us. They are constantly moving, making two complete orbits in less than 24 hours. These satellites are traveling at speeds of roughly 7,000 miles an hour. Each satellite is built to last about 10

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Global Position Systems

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years. Replacements are constantly being built and launched into orbit. A GPS satellite weighs approximately 2,000 pounds and is about 17 feet across with the solar panels extended.

GPS satellites transmit two low power radio signals, designated L1 and L2. Civilian GPS uses the L1 frequency of 1575.42 MHz in the UHF band. The signals travel by line of sight, meaning they will pass through clouds, glass and plastic but will not go through most solid objects such as buildings and mountains. Transmitter power is only 50 watts or less.

Currently the most common applications for GPS technology, in addition to the now familiar military applications, include aviation, boating, surface transportation and hand held units for cross country navigation. A basic unit can be purchased for as little as \$100 and up to several thousands of dollars for more sophisticated models with optional accuracy enhancing features.

A future article will discuss more advanced applications currently under development as well as some international games that can be played by anyone.

Lou Boezi

Is 15 Meters Close Enough?

The one time I was completely lost I was within 15 meters (approx. 50 feet) of my tent all the time.

I got up to answer Nature's call in the middle of the night. When the call was completed, I suddenly had no idea of where my tent was, and if I had continued in the direction I was headed, I could have wandered for miles before coming to a road.

Fortunately, one of my buddies started coughing, and I knew exactly where I was. Would GPS have helped? It was some 40 years in the future. *John Colburn*

Address Changed? Missing an Issue?

If you have moved or see any error in your label on this newsletter, please advise both the TU national office and this chapter with separate notices. We maintain our mailing list 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 year we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. Make sure we have your correct address, including 9-digit ZIP, and that you have paid your dues. If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy

Starting Fly Casting?

Here are some tips for those having troubles learning how to cast a fly line well. I have been teaching a number of folks over the past two decades how to get into this sport and have found many that have some difficulty in adjusting to all that fly line "whipping around" in the air. And that is the crux of many of their problems **whipping** the rod at a relatively constant speed from 3 o'clock to 9 or 10 o'clock. That yields a very poor cast, if any.

First, I strongly suggest that anyone wanting to learn how to cast a fly rod would also have some serious experience with a light spinning rod, ultralight, in particular. The latter is also important in learning how to set a hook and play a scrappy trout or bass on a light line of 2- or 4-lb. test.

The trick to learning to cast a fly rod is that the rod must be suddenly and smoothly accelerated in a very short arc and then the rod is "stopped" to let the tip flip in that direction. The line is released just as the pressure to the rod ceases or the fly line starts to form the loop.

Spinning rods work in the same way. The line has to be released just as the maximum pressure on the rod is stopped, and the direction the lure travels is determined by the direction of the tip stops. For example, if the tip unleashes its energy downward, the lure goes downward.

To learn how this translates to a fly rod, take a light spinning rod and first start it at the 2 o'clock position before casting the lure as far as you can. One quickly realizes that the rod must be sharply snapped forward and the tip stopped just as the "noon" position is passed, otherwise the lure does not cover any distance. Starting the rod at or below the 3 o'clock position will work on the spinning rod but not work on a fly rod.

Progressively start the spinning rod closer to the 1 o'clock position before starting the cast. This cast is also the forward cast of a fly rod, including the microsecond when the line is released to shoot through the guides. Note also the follow-thru on the spinning rod. It aims right down the outgoing line to minimize friction and further extend the casting distance.

The spinning rod and fly rod **follow the line to the water** after being cast [after the stop], and neither cast is aimed directly at the water. Congress, thankfully, has been unable to repeal the Law of Gravity!

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Starting Fly Casting?

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I think this simple training exercise will help a lot of neophyte fly fishers make the transition from spinning rods to fly rods. They will better understand that the fly rod must be sharply moved in a very short arc to achieve a good cast and extend the line.

Let me know if this exercise does or does not work for you.

Jay Sheppard

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Unless one has a few rising trout with which to work, the fly fisher is faced with trying to discover where the trout are holding for food to drift past. There are any number of ways to "cover the water" when searching for trout that are not actively rising. Some methodical method is needed to covering all the water with a dead-drifted dry fly or nymph with little wasted time and effort.

I see about 60–75% of my strikes on the first cast, maybe 20% on the second and very few on the third or later presentations over a non-rising trout. So I make no more than two good passes or floats over the same spot where a trout might be lurking. Any more than that, and I am wasting time that could be better spent on casting to new holding water.

First, I pick a future path up the stream where I will likely walk. For example, I tend to hug the insides of bends where the water is typically the slowest and transports the least amount of food; this side normally has the fewest holding trout. On larger rivers (e.g., Gunpowder, Yough), you have to get out in the middle to just cover some of the water.

My **first cast is directly upstream** from my initial position standing in the stream. This covers the water I will eventually walk through. This very first cast may be only 15–20 feet long, including the leader.

Using the same amount of fly line, I make my next cast about 2 feet to the right or left of the previous one. This first series is to cover all the water with the same amount of line, and all presentations are allowed to drift until they run out of line, start dragging, or otherwise are not over likely holding water. Each successive cast in this first series is made 2 feet to the right or left of the previous cast.

Special attention is made to get the fly to drift with the foam bubbles or other clearly demarcated lines of drift.

Essentially I have divided the typical stream into 2-foot wide feeding lanes and tried to make one good presentation into each before moving to the one to the left or right of that. Once I start casting to the right or left of that first cast, I keep going to that side. The final casting direction is at right angles to the current and aimed at the shore line.

After completing the series to one side, I return and cast 2 feet to the opposite side, if there is holding water to that side of that very first cast. This separation of each cast by 2 feet is only a starting point; if the water is fast or other conditions indicate, I may shorten this spacing to a little more than a foot. If the water is slow and deep, I may even widen the spacing to 2½ feet.

I have not yet started to move from this first spot. My next step is to then extend the amount of fly line I am casting by about 1 to 2 times the length of the leader. I return to the first cast direction, straight up the stream from me. Using the new length of line, I keep casting to successive 2-foot wide feeding lanes to the right (or left) until I have covered all the water to the right and left of my first cast.

On this second series of casts the fly is allowed to drift only about twice the length of the leader. If this length of fly line is still not the choice for that stream, fly and other conditions, then extend additional line and repeat another series. For most of my trout fishing I am casting perhaps 20–25 feet of line and maybe 10 feet of leader, although the actual cast is made to land much closer to provide more S-curves for drag-free floats.

When I have found the optimum amount of line to cast my fly, then I start walking up the stream. This is done while I am casting to my 2-foot wide feeding lanes. I move at a near **continuous rate** of only a few inches or so for each step. The idea is to slowly move upstream so that when I return to the first cast direction (straight upstream) I will have moved myself upstream about one length of my leader. Some simple math to illustrate what I am doing: the river is 40 feet wide. I expect to make about 20–25 casts at about 2-foot intervals across the stream, and I will want to move up about 8–10 feet while making all those casts. Each step will average about 5 inches long and be made very slowly—about one step with every cast.

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Tackle and Tactic Tips

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When I return to my first cast direction that cast will now land about 8–10 feet further upstream than the previous one in that lane. The same will hold for all the other casts. Each cast will, therefore, be about 8–10 feet upstream of the previous one into that particular feeding lane.

By slowly moving upstream, I do not disturb trout with loud sloshing noises or with large waves. Constant tiny waves and little noise from my movements are far better for stalking trout.

The key is to use the exact same amount of line on *all* casts while slowly moving up the stream, and to make each cast land about 2 feet over from the first. All drifts are *ONLY* about twice the length of the leader, so each trout is effectively exposed to two drifts of that dry fly. I allow nymphs to drift a bit further, as they take time to get down to the feeding level of the trout. There is no need to let the fly drift any further down the stream once you start moving upstream.

Also, using this approach means that trout are not being exposed to the fly line *first*—they see only the fly and the leader on the first cast into their lane. If you were to start your casts at a right angle to the flow and move each cast upstream towards the direction of being straight above you, the line will be landing on top of trout in the closer "lanes" that have not yet seen the fly. This is a fast and effective fishing strategy to "cover the water."

Jay Sheppard



Trout Unlimited Members

Renew Membership Through Chapter

TROUT Unlimited accepts renewals of memberships sent through the chapter. In return, the chapter receives a significant rebate of \$5 for each such renewal.

We hope every member will save their postage and bring their membership renewal notices to the chapter meetings. We will take it from there. We prefer check (payable to TROUT UNLIMITED) or plastic for these renewals, but we will accept cash.

If you forget your renewal notice, we only need to have your membership card so we can obtain your member number.

Help support the chapter and bring your next Trout Unlimited renewal to the monthly meeting.

The Last Word

Volunteers

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There's any old adage in volunteer organizations called "10-90"—ten percent of the members do ninety percent of the work, but in the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of TU that doesn't apply! We have only 4.6% of the membership doing the work of making PPTU a working TU chapter. The chapter has 425 TU members, 305 of whom have paid the member assessment to PPTU, and 54 PPTU members who do not belong to TU. That's some 450 warm bodies who could be helping the 21 officers, directors, and committee chairs who are doing the work of running PPTU.

Yeah, I'm trying to put a guilt trip on you who make up the 95.4% who don't do much more than pay your TU dues and/or the PPTU assessment and buy raffle tickets at the meetings. Most of you could find a few hours a month to help out one of those 21 people listed on page 2. I know you've got families and jobs and other organizations and hobbies and ..., but so have the Jacks, Jims, and Judys whose names are on that list!

So think it over. If you believe in the work of PPTU and TU in preserving our coldwater fisheries—and you must since you are a member, think about the small things you might be able to do to help out that 4.6% who are doing most of the work. Call our new president, Lou Boezi, or any of the others on the list and offer your services. Heck, you might even enjoy doing it and decide to join that select group.

John Colburn



PPTU Mentor Program Beginners and Beyond

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

Beginners should contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or e-mail: kenbowyer@comcast.net

For advanced instruction contact Paul at 202-244-0168 or e-mail: pprevost@hotmail.com

The **Conservationist**

The Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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-0903 or NTU-0903.

First time visitors receive two free issues of this publication.

MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT NOW PAYABLE

The annual assessment (see back) is now payable. Check your label; if the "PP-" date is "0903" (or there is NO "PP-" and date), you can send your \$15 now, and you will not have to worry about paying at the September meeting. Some members paid twice this year, so they already show "PP-0904." Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER—TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations above expenses at raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, maps, etc. **Final mailing** for those having "PP-0903" on their label will be this next November issue. **There will be NO separate mailings to remind members of this obligation. Please take note and action today! You will not want to miss our January issue and later issues and their announcements. Thank you.**

The Last Word

Volunteers

If there is one single word that describes what made this country greater than just about any other in recorded history, it's "volunteers"—the common people who stepped forward when professionals were not available or too expensive to do jobs that needed to be done. These common people—volunteers—have given their time, skills, and energy to make the country a better and safer place to live, and their descendents are volunteering to do that today.

Organizations like Trout Unlimited rely on volunteers to accomplish their missions, and the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of TU is totally comprised of volunteers. Not one of the officers, directors, or committee chairs receive a cent in salary for the many hours they spend doing jobs that keep the Chapter running, and they're lucky to be reimbursed for part of their out-of-pocket expenses.

If you look in the left column on page 2 of this newsletter, you will see the list of forty job titles that need to be filled to do the chapter's work in helping preserve the coldwater fisheries of the Mid-Atlantic region. You'll also see that there is a name for every position, but if you count the individual names, you will find only *twenty-two* names—many of them repeated two or three times! (That includes a guy or gal named "Vacant" who is filling two of the positions.) And some of the people on the list are helping others get their jobs done.

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Return Address:

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
Wheaton, MD 20915

FIRST CLASS MAIL