



September 2008

# *The Conservationist*

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

## **North Branch and Savage - Can a guide help you fish better?**

**September 17, 2008**

With the fall season soon upon us, two of our favorites are beckoning to us for a wonderful fishing experience. Ken Pavol will share a wealth of knowledge about these two fisheries. Ken has retired from the Maryland Department of Natural Resources after 31 years as a biologist including 17 years as Western Regional Manager. Having worked and fished the region most of that time, he is intimately familiar with the streams and their "holdings". Ken began float trips with clients about 5 years ago, but float fished the North Branch more than 20 years. As such he thinks that you will find the guide's eye view very interesting, and will talk about the technical issues that fly anglers need to consider when float fishing from a raft, and also when wade fishing a river like the Savage.

Even some of the finest fly anglers can learn plenty on techniques to fish from a raft, or present a fly to those tricky Savage browns.

Ken's trips on the North Branch include not only fishing for trout but also bass. Likewise, his fly fishing interests include not just trout but also river and lake fishing for bass, as well as a big dose of saltwater fishing, mostly in Florida. He may have the only Maverick HPX-T tunnel hull flats boat in MD. It's made in Florida for fly fishing the shallow flats. In the winter months Ken loves to chase snook, redfish, tarpon, and anything else that will eat a fly on the flats. Treat yourself to a great program to start the fall!

Help wanted: We are in need of person or persons who will step up and take the reins as our chapter Librarian. He or she would need to attend chapter meeting and rent videos and sell wares at the table. Please note the new librarian will not be alone — the current librarian will help out whenever needed and will be at the meetings with his laptop to help keep track of the video library. Yes, it's a big job but it can be a lot of fun. That's where I've met all you wonderful folks!

Larry Vawter

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### Monthly Chapter Meetings

**Time and Day** 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday except December, June, July, and August

**Place** Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

**Directions** From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First right onto Forest Glen Road, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

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## Invasive Species

### or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Snakehead

The term "invasive species" is defined as a *non-indigenous species (e.g. a plant or an animal) that adversely affects the habitats it invades economically, environmentally or ecologically.* We've been hearing a lot in the last year or so about invasive species in our area's rivers and streams. Some of them we need to worry about, others maybe not as much you might think.

Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*, aka "rock snot") was found last spring in the Gunpowder Falls. How badly it's going to affect the fishery remains to be seen. Fortunately it's pretty easy to keep from spreading by washing, disinfecting and drying your wading equipment. Please do so, or if you fish the Gunpowder regularly, do what I've been doing: keep a pair of wading shoes for use only in the Gunpowder.

Whirling disease (*Myxobolus cerebralis*) was introduced via hatchery fish into the North Branch of the Potomac. It has the potential for virtually wiping out the rainbow trout population of a stream and has done so on several Western rivers. Like didymo, it can be spread by wading equipment.

Fish can be invasive species as well. You may have heard that one of our chapter members, Mark Noble, found a Northern Snakehead in the Northwest Branch. The snakehead (*Channa argus*, aka "Frankenfish") was much in the news a few years back. A great deal of effort was taken to remove it from a pond in Crofton, only to have it show up in the Potomac a short time later. It looks like it's here to stay.

When DNR electro-shocked the pool in the Northwest Branch where the snakehead was found, they noticed several things. There were two snakeheads, not just one. The larger was 27 inches long, weighed over 6 pounds and had an eleven inch rainbow trout stuffed down its throat. Also, the pool was full of both rainbows and smallmouth bass.

But wait a minute – both rainbow trout and smallmouth bass are non-indigenous species. The rainbow is native to the west coast, and smallmouth are native to the Mississippi and Ohio drainages. Are they invasive as well? Each has caused considerable ecological damage in some areas. Introduced rainbows have largely driven out the native cutthroat trout over much of the latter's range in the Rocky Mountains. Here, along with brown trout, they've made it difficult for our native brook trout to survive over much of its range. Similarly, smallmouth bass have become a major problem in Hawaii, where they've caused the extinction of a number of native fish.

Still, I don't think many of us think of either rainbow trout or smallmouth bass as problems. We're certainly not calling for taking drastic measures for removing them from our waters.

*As for the snakehead, I'm looking forward to the day when I catch that six pounder on a fly and can eat it with no guilt whatsoever.*

Bob Dietz

## Priorities Committee Needs Members

PPTU solicits members to serve on a special committee to examine and identify the priorities that the PPTU will use in its work to monitor and intervene in the care and preservation of particular streams and watersheds in our region. This committee will report back to the Executive Committee for review and determination of how the PPTU can utilize its resources best to serve the needs and interests of its members.

Issues include:

- the threats to and promises of local streams as meaningful trout habitat and fishing experiences for local fishers and members.
- the possible identification of areas that best serve both neophyte and experienced fishers
- the need to develop opportunities that will support the enthusiasm of less-experienced fishers and support their development as fishers and conservationists

In particular, in consideration of the limited resources available from members and volunteers of the PPTU, where should these resources be invested to provide the best experiences for our members? Which streams hold the greatest interest and promise for the current and future needs of fishers who live in our defined membership area?

For more information about helping the PPTU and serving on this committee, please contact the PPTU secretary, Craig Falk, at [craigfalk@aya.yale.edu](mailto:craigfalk@aya.yale.edu) or 301-762-9034.

## Visit the Tying Bench and Angler's Corner, 7 PM, at the September Chapter Meeting

### Tying Bench

Fall is for Lady Bugs! We are once again going to see a special pattern at this month's Tying Bench served up by Jim Greco. Jim says - "some of the best fishing I have had on the Conewago and BHC as well as Morgan Run and the Gunpowder has been on fall hatches of lady bugs. The fly is fun to tie and every fly fisher ought to carry a couple just in case...." Come to this early segment of our meeting at 7 PM and see Jim work his *tying magic*.

### Angler's Corner

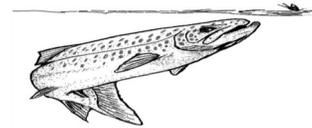
Dennis Covert will meet and greet you in the Angler's Corner in our second early segment also at 7 PM.

Dennis says that he will be sharing the pictures of recent outings trips as well as giving information about our upcoming trips this fall. Take advantage of this special time to learn more about them and the folks who have enjoyed them.

—Nick Weber

## November Fundraiser

This year we're going to be doing something a bit different for our annual fundraiser. We're still going to have usual November meeting with its barrel raffles, silent auctions and flea market, but this year our big raffle will continue on beyond the November meeting. The drawing, at our January meeting, will be for a trip to West Branch of the Delaware, an Orvis 6 weight perfect for smallmouth, and more. You'll be able to buy tickets from any chapter officer between now and then.



## Join us September 20th to mentor college students

On September 20, we're once again taking the Johns Hopkins Outdoors club on a fly fishing expedition. This time we're going to the Potomac for smallmouth instead of the Gunpowder for trout – there's a lot more room. If you've never fly fished for smallmouth before (assuming you already fly fish for trout) this would be an excellent time to experience it, while helping instill a love of the outdoors in some college students. The students will be using chapter provided rods, so you would only need to outfit yourself.

**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 are always welcome and can be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or in a Microsoft Word attachment. Please include your phone number and a brief description of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is normally the three (3) weeks before the chapter meeting. Thanks!

Editor: Joanne Kla

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## Tackle and Tactics Tips

Fall fishing is often using hoppers and other large flies to entice trout into striking a large protein packet before winter starts. At the same time, small flies may be working, too. A tandem rig is often a great choice to try, especially if you do not know what pattern has been working on that stream in recent days or weeks or else two or more patterns are the top choices for the day.

Tandem rigs are two or more flies in use at the same time and placed one after the other. Typically, the first fly is the larger fly. If a dry fly, then it can act as a marker and strike indicator for the smaller fly that follows. It can also be a heavily weighted nymph that is followed by an unweighted fly, such as a small nymph or a San Juan worm. If the first/larger fly is able to hold it up, the next fly can be a small weighted or unweighted nymph, emerger, or similar pattern. If you have a tough time seeing a #24 Trico or similar tiny dry fly floating along, then use a #16 Adams or similar fly as the marker fly so that any take nearby can be assumed to be on the Trico fly. Ideally, the larger fly is also a good candidate for some attention from the trout as well. Almost all of my 75-fish (or more) days have been when using a tandem rig. Both flies were catching fish, so why not use both at the same time!

If there are a lot of variety in the insects floating on the surface, this can allow one to fish two likely flies and see rather quickly which are preferred by the trout. Both flies can be the same general type and size. The trailing fly does not have to be hard to see. All sorts of combinations are reasonable. A #14 beadhead hare's ear nymph followed by a #18 unweighted pheasant tail, a #14 sulphur parachute followed by a #14 rusty spinner, or a #12 olive caddis or stimulator followed by a #22 midge pupae. A large hopper can easily support a #14 weighted nymph.

First, the tippet size for the marker or larger fly needs to be selected; it must be able to withstand any loss of knot strength if the trailing fly is taken by the trout. The trailing fly's tippet needs to be either the same size or smaller than the main tippet; it should only be 15–20" in length. No matter its length, the smaller, trailing fly will land within 10" of the larger fly, unless there is a strong wind blowing. So a small dry following a larger one is effectively "marked" by the presence of the latter. I found a tandem rig this spring on a stream side tree where the trailing #18 Adams dry fly was tied using 3X or 4X

tippet; it should have been tied with 6X to allow for freedom of motion by the small fly.

There are two general ways to set up a tandem rig. After tying on the larger or marker fly, the tippet for the trailing fly can be attached to the eye of the larger fly or to its bend. I prefer the latter style, but either seems to work as well. I would not suggest this double use of the eye in a nymphs-only rig as the first nymph may ride strangely in the water. To tie the mono onto the bend of the larger hook, I tie an Improved Clinch Knot on my finger before moving the "loop" over to the bend of the hook for final tightening. This trick is quite simple: place a loop of the mono around a finger and then rotate the finger around the loop six times before running the tag through the main loop on the finger and then back through the newer loop you just formed. Attach the trailing fly as normal. If the larger fly has a barbless hook, one can slip the tightened clinch knot off the point and move it to another fly.

Tandem: a neat way to fly fish! It doubles your chances of hooking a fish. As one side note, I learned this summer that this rig is illegal in Arkansas (i.e., more than one hook point) and possibly other states or provinces. Check local regulations. There are no problems for MD, VA, WV, PA, or NY fishers.

*Jay Sheppard*

### PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM

#### BEGINNERS AND BEYOND

One-on-one stream side fly fishing instruction is available to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hipsters, a fly 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. Members who have not made an Annual Supporting Contribution will be asked to contribute \$15.

Contact Ken Bowyer at 301-627-7154 or send e-mail to [kenbowyer@verizon.net](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net).

### MAC Fundraiser – October 4<sup>th</sup>

A fundraiser banquet will be held on October 4<sup>th</sup> at the BWI Marriott. This Trout Unlimited Conservation Banquet is being held to help fund the Mid Atlantic Council. PPCTU is one of six member chapters. There will be a lot of activities at the banquet including Elliott Donnelley Awards for two MAC members, and five Person and Group Recognition Awards. Raffle tickets (winners need not be present) for major prizes will be available at our September Meeting. Tickets for the Banquet (\$75 - including open bar) will also be available. Part of the action will include Silent and Live Auctions. Save the date and help our Council continue its good work! Thanks

*– Nick Weber*

## Patuxent Report

I expect a number of wise trout have survived in some of the better tangles of logs and roots over the summer. The flows got very low in late August (5–10 cfs). This is a little below the normal low flow at this time of the year. So look for a deep hole with lots of cover over the next month or three and hold on tight. There are still some large browns in the 15" or larger range to be found in the upper Patuxent. There may be a float stocking of trout this fall in this section of the Patuxent, but I will not know until late September or later. Likewise, there may be a fall stocking of the Patuxent below Brighton Dam (flies only) and in the Delayed Harvest section of the Middle Patuxent in south Columbia.

The upper Patuxent Special Area is in a public hunting area. Dove season starts in September and then squirrel season in early October. Please be aware of these other uses in the fall of the year.

Jay Sheppard

## Online Delivery of *The Conservationist*

Members who have made an ASC for the current year or just joined Trout Unlimited and are assigned to PPTU, have the option to access the complete current issue of *The Conservationist* online. This saves PPTU the printing and mailing costs and allows members to access the issue before it is mailed.

Send your request for access to:

[pptu-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:pptu-owner@yahoogroups.com) and indicate the email address you wish to use and whether you want to continue or suspend mail delivery of the paper copy. A listserver is used to send an announcement with the link for each new issue.

Those who request online access will be sent an email alerting them to be on the lookout for an invitation to join the listserver. You will then get an email from [pptu@yahoogroups.com](mailto:pptu@yahoogroups.com) that contains the official invitation.

You must reply to this second email to accept the invitation and be placed on this list. No reply is interpreted as a declined invitation. Spam filters may intercept either or both of these messages. Please check your junk mail or spam folders if your invitation doesn't arrive normally. If you don't accept the invitation, you won't be included when the announcements go out and you will not have access to the new edition. Report problems to [pptu-owner@yahoogroups.com](mailto:pptu-owner@yahoogroups.com) and we'll do our best to help. But please help us by being diligent in responding to the invitation. We hope you find this new distribution channel useful and effective. And remember, complete past editions as well as the first page of the current edition are available at [www.pptu.org](http://www.pptu.org).

## Annual Supporting Contribution due

Check your mailing label on this issue. If it reads "PP-0908" then you will no longer receive *The Conservationist* after the November issue. Please mail in your \$20 as soon as possible or bring it to the September meeting. Some may not have noticed that we changed the annual rate from \$15 to \$20 after the May meeting. The old rate had been used for at least the past 18 years. Also, those receiving this publication over the Web will be notified if they will be in arrears for the ASC this fall. If you wish to change how you receive *the Conservationist*, please advise (hard copy, email, or both).

The only "membership" fee is to national TU for \$35 (etc.) per year. So if you are a member of national TU, then you are also a member of our chapter, the Potomac – Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited, or any other chapter of your choosing. The Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) is the contribution our chapter asks from each member. Persons who make this contribution get *The Conservationist* (either print form or in a timely manner on the web), and discounts if they attend our fly tying or rod building class, purchase books, etc. For reasons dealing with mandatory clauses in our by-laws, the ASC is not called "dues" or a "membership fee," and the chapter's publication, *The Conservationist*, is not called a newsletter. Members are still members even if they do not make an ASC; members of any other TU chapter can also get *The Conservationist* by paying the ASC. There is no "subscription" to the annual newsletter. We only prepare one newsletter annually. It is posted on our website in April, where it is available at no charge to anyone. Persons who make an ASC will receive *The Conservationist* as a benefit. To some, this might not make sense, but after hundreds of hours of discussion two years ago, this was the best we could do to be in compliance with the national TU by-laws.

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.

### 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](http://www.tu.org). Click on the **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left. You will need your login name and password.

## Fly Rod Building and Tying Flies for Trout

Once again, this fall and winter our Chapter will present a Fly Rod Building class for novice rod builders and a Tying Flies for Trout class for novice and intermediate tyers. Classes will be held Tuesday evenings from 7 to 9 PM at the Schweinhaut Senior Center on the following dates:

**Fly Rod Building** - October 7, 14, 21, 28, and November 18, 25, 2008.

**Tying Flies for Trout** – January 6, 13, 20, 27, and February 3, 10, 2009.

Tuition for each of these classes is \$115.00. Members who have made an annual supporting contribution (ASC) to PPCTU will receive a discount of \$20, reducing the tuition cost to \$95.00. Contact Jim Greco for membership and ASC details.

All materials will be provided for the tying class; however, students are expected to bring their own set of tools and a vise. For the rod building class, we will be using kits from the Hook and Hackle Company ranging from a 6'-6" for a 2 wt. to a 9'-0" for an 8 wt. A list of tools and supplies you will need for building the rod is available, and the kit costs are in addition to the tuition. Kits will cost approximately \$70 to \$90 and when completed produce a rod that is very fishable and in the retail price range of \$160 to \$180. Some, but not all, tools and materials will be provided. A rod winding station will also be provided and available for purchase at the end of the class. Last year the rod building class filled up (max of 10 students) in less than a week. We will register students at our September meeting and by phone or email. Registration will be on a first paid first registered basis. We will have several instructors for each of the classes, and a limit of 20 students for the tying class.

For more information or to register, contact Jim Greco at [Jimg6128@comcast.net](mailto:Jimg6128@comcast.net) or 410-997-2787. Until the registration is full, we will also be registering students at our chapter meetings.



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