



October 2005

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, October 19

The Delaware!

A couple of fellows come to my mind when I think of the Delaware. There are the two Georges -- the one every school kid knows, George Washington, and the one many of us aging rockers like, George Thorogood (aka The Delaware Destroyer).

But this month's show is about trout, conservation and the Delaware. And for those in the know, the name Jim comes to mind. Jim Serio, long-time guide and founder of the Delaware River Foundation, is our guest speaker. He comes highly recommended from our very own Jim Greco as someone who understands the mysteries of what many call our Eastern-most Western river.

Big water and big fish. Diverse hatches. Nothing given up easily but when the river is generous, she is very generous indeed. Jim will also discuss the important work the Foundation is doing to protect water flows and quality so the Delaware can maintain its top trout-fishing status in the years ahead.

So come whet your appetite for a river that is just a weekend trip away! ■

—*Sebastian O'Kelly*



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The Fall Chapter meetings have begun and with them comes an interesting line up of speakers, outings, flies to tie, and trout fishing questions to answer. My first "directive" is to fish more, if possible. I know there are always competing activities for our time. Mine is no different, but in getting out a few times with members and friends, I now remembered what joy it is just to focus on something like a foam beetle getting whacked by a nice brown or rainbow. This instead of a traffic jam on a Saturday afternoon – there is no comparison.

I will be adding to my list of activities — and I hope you will do the same — our Fall conservation project on the Hawlings River in Montgomery County. On page four, Jim Keil, the project coordinator, provides the details for an upcoming tree planting along the river. I ask that you consider participating in this endeavor and give Jim your support in any way you can with a shovel or a foreman's ability to get the planned work done.

The November Meeting will feature our Fundraiser to support our education programs like Trout in the Classroom and conservation activities such as the Hawlings project and others. ▶

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Meetings

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

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

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

The Conservationist

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Contributions in the form of clip art, articles, conservation activities, trip reports, letters, fishing and conservation news, tying tips, book reviews, and essays about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or Microsoft Word attachments. Authors should also include their phone number and a brief descriptions of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

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In another article in this issue is an outline of great prizes well worthy of your support, any of which will no doubt add to your trout fishing enjoyment. Consider buying a ticket or three, and even suggest it to a non-member fisher. You will be helping our Chapter with important programs that lie at the center conservation objectives.

Finally, call or e-mail me to volunteer to take a veteran from the Soldier's Home fishing. Their ranks are now doubled because of hurricane-displaced veterans from the Naval Home in Mississippi. I will help coordinate a fishing trip for you. You will give them much happiness and many fond memories for a long time to come. You, too, will undoubtedly get something in return — you will have made a difference for someone. With limited means and access this may be their only opportunity to get out and enjoy what most of us take for granted — a day to fish.

Thanks for your help. ■

— Nick Weber

PPTU Tying Bench & Angler's Corner

These segments run concurrently between 7:00 and 7:30 p.m., the night of the Chapter meeting.

Tying Bench

This month's tying bench will feature a popular western nymph that has come East with **Bob Dietz**. Bob says the Lightning Bug is a year round weapon that we need in our fly box, and he will show us how to tie it. While tying, he may mention the streams on which he has used it successfully.

Angler's Corner

This month finds **Jim Keil** in the Angler's Corner. Jim is a long time Chapter member, PPTU past president, and holder of many secrets and tales of trout water both near and far. Stop by and chat with Jim, and bring some of your questions on tactics, gear, flies, etc. ■

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Leaves will be falling in the western mountains by mid-October and late October locally. That is the signal for the final flurry of surface action as the brown trout start their spawning on most streams. On tailwaters (Gunpowder, Big Hunting, Savage, North Branch and Yough) this is usually delayed from a few weeks to a month until the waters cool to about 45°. This month is a really fine time to watch the fall colors and trout sipping flies. Grab the rod and take a day to enjoy it! ...Maybe a few more days, too! This fall surge in feeding is almost as great as the early spring. Trout are storing fat for both the fall spawning and the colder months to come after that is finished.

Stalking trout is a very important tactic. This is especially true on both the remote brookie streams, as well as those streams where everyone tries their luck. Being truly sneaky is what is required on most of our streams at all times. We have previously discussed wading: keeping a slow and steady pace is usually much better than charging up a stream several steps in rapid succession after a lengthy pause. There is another important factor: the sun. I learned at a very early age that you do not rush up to a stream while facing the sun and the water. If you are fully exposed to the sun and have light clothing, you might as well throw a hand grenade into the stream: Here I am, look at me! Sometimes that is our only choice.

If so, try to find some cover such as a large tree or shrub; then slowly expose only your head to the trout lurking in the water. If there is no such cover, just approach very slowly so that first your head and then perhaps the rest of your body appear to the trout. The less you can expose and the less movement when facing the sun and the water, the better.

The alternative is to have the sun at your back while facing the water and potential trout. This brings its own drawback: your shadow. A moving shadow on the bottom is very easy for the trout to see from a great distance in clear water. I like to find a tree or other shadow-producing structure that I can approach and slowly add my head's shadow to the existing shadow in the pool. ►

If one is wading out in the river, their shadow may cross over the top of a large rock or log below the surface.

If the sun is at a low angle, the shadow may precede the fisher by 15 feet or so. As with wading, slowly moving shadows are more tolerated than those that are rapidly moving across the bottom. Stay as low as possible at all times. Standing high up on a large rock or high bank is more than enough to alert every trout for 50 feet or more.

The actual direction of your movement relative to the trout's line of vision is what is very important. Objects that are directly approaching or receding from the trout may be less threatening, if the motion is slow. Such movement has only one apparent dimension to the trout: the height of the object increases as it gets closer and vice versa. When directly approaching a trout, I reduce my apparent height to reduce that dimension to the fish.

A very small movement at right angles to the trout's line of sight is far more easily detected by them and at far greater distances. I avoid walking any stream bank; I try to walk where I cannot see the water, and the trout cannot, therefore, see me.

One last caution to mention here (there are many more, though) is try to avoid approaching any trout from head on. Walking downstream along a bank is never a really good idea if you or a buddy intend to fish that section in the next hour or so.

Approaching from the rear is both less threatening to most animals and is also less noticed by the trout, so long as you do not cast shadows or create large ripples from your wading. Large trout do not get wary just because they have seen nearly every fly pattern known presented in every possible manner. They have also learned to detect the presence of a trout fisher even when the fisher is not casting anything near the large trout.

So move slowly, watch your shadow or your illuminated person, make few waves, and just be really sneaky on any trout stream. ■

— Jay Sheppard



Patuxent Report

The Patuxent had about average flows through early September, so I would expect a reasonable number of brown trout from the spring stockings to have survived the summer. DNR Fisheries biologists shocked a section in the upper portions of the Special Area in August and found about two dozen adult wild brown trout in one pool and a good number of young of year. There are likely a couple of rainbows lurking in the river, too, but most of the trout are going to be wild or stocked browns. October is a really fine time to get out on this stream: the hungry trout feasting on terrestrials of all descriptions, often when they hit the water. Flows typically increase by the end of September, especially if a remnant hurricane passed us. As always, the casting and approach to the pools are what makes this the most challenging stream in our immediate area.

ANNUAL WARNING: Hunting goes through mid-winter in many sections of Patuxent River State Park, so be careful and stay alert. The firearm season for deer is still a way off, but squirrel hunting starts the first Saturday of October, and dove and archery season for deer will both be continuing as this is mailed. Suggest fishing on weekdays or Sundays; otherwise, wear a bright-colored hat on Saturdays, in particular. Sunday hunting for deer does not apply on public hunting zones, such as the Patuxent River State Park. ■

— Jay Sheppard

PPTU Tree Planting

In the survey I did last year, members expressed an interest in stream restoration projects. Here's our first of what I hope will be biannual conservation efforts. President Nick Weber has secured a Chesapeake Bay Foundation grant to plant 200 trees along a newly restored section of the Hawlings.

Join us on the 29th. Bring work gloves, a shovel, work boots, hipsters, and a utility knife. And a son, daughter, or grandchild who can help with the planting. We'll provide coffee, drinks, and snacks.

Due to the scarcity of parking places streamside, please park at the St. Luke's Episcopal Church at the intersection of Brighton Dam! Road and New Hampshire Avenue. We'll run shuttles down to the stream. Please drop me a line to let me know you're [coming--jkeil@starpower.net](mailto:jkeil@starpower.net) or 301-588-8375--and make reference to the Hawlings project in your message. If you cannot make the 29th but are available the 27th or 28th, please let me know. See you the 29th.

WHEN:

Saturday, October 29th, 9-12 (Rain date: Nov. 5)

WHERE:

Hawlings River, Brighton Dam Road between Georgia and New Hampshire Avenues, Brighton, MD.

— Jim Keil
Conservation Advocacy

November Outing - The Secrets of Beaver Creek

Join Us! Come fish Maryland's newest Catch & Release stream located in Washington county between Frederick and Hagerstown. "Through the hard work of the state's DNR, along with the Beaver Creek Watershed Association these private lands were opened up for fishing" (29), see [Beaver Creek](#) by Charlie Gelso and Larry Coburn in the May issue of the **Mid Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide**. Beginner fly fishers are encouraged to sign up for this outing. Toward that end, we are seeking fishers with experience on this stream to spend a little time with those less experienced to help make the day enjoyable. Contact me at (410) 740-8337, or denniscovert@hotmail.com, or see me at the October 19 Chapter meeting to sign up.

—Dennis Covert

Memories of Summer

Editor's Note: *In the summer I asked chapter members to send me a summary of their best fishing trip taken over the summer. I asked them to share something new they learned from it. My intention was to write about all the reports in a single article. But because of space limitation, it simply wouldn't work. So, I would like to dedicate this space for the next few issues to those Chapter members who were kind enough to provide me that material. Here's the first: Matt Baun, Editor.*

In June I was treated by one of my British colleagues to a pleasant day on the River Axe in Somerset, England. The section of this high-banked and over grown spring creek we fished was on the grounds of Forde Abbey. Interestingly, in contrast to our efforts here to plant trees along the banks, stream improvements conducted by the club members who maintain this beat involved cutting some of them down, thus allowing more light in to stimulate the growth of ranunculus and increase the bug population. I was also introduced to the "F-Fly", which was working well to get the attention of the many browns we saw rising. What a cool place!

— Joe Robinson



Top:
England's River
Axe

Bottom:
The "F-Fly"

Check out the newsletter on-line for color photos.
www.pptu.org



November Fundraiser

This year we will be having our major fundraising activity at our **November Chapter** meeting rather than in April. The Board believes that changing the date better meets the needs of our membership. At our general membership meetings in October and November, we will be selling raffle tickets for 3 major prizes. This will be your opportunity to win that trip of a lifetime or maybe win some high quality fishing equipment.

1st Prize: A gift certificate for spectacular **Stay and Float Package at the West Branch Angler and Sportsman's Resort**, redeemable by the raffle winner or their designated representative for use between 4/10/06 and 4/28/06 or from 6/22/06 - 9/01/06. This offer includes a 3 night stay for two at the West Branch Angler and Sportsman's Resort in a large cabin. This offer includes meals during the season when the River Run Restaurant is open. However, if the River Run Restaurant is closed during the stay, meals will not be available or reimbursable. This offer includes 2 days of guided drift boat fishing or the winner can choose to substitute one day of basic instruction for one of the guided drift boat fishing days at no extra cost. Also included is \$100 for guide tips. This package is a \$1690 value.

2nd Prize: A **Winston WT 3 piece 8 foot 6 inch 5 weight rod with an Orvis Battenkill Bar Stock Reel**, valued at \$725. This rod comes with an unconditional lifetime guarantee.

3rd Prize: A pair of **Simms stocking foot waders**, valued at \$290. These are high quality, professional grade waders.

Buy your tickets at the meeting with cash or check, or purchase them from any board member in the interim. Tickets will be \$15 each or 3 for \$35.

In addition to the main raffle, a **Magellan eXplorist 200 GPS unit**, a \$150 value, will be offered as a door prize for which tickets may be purchased for \$5. Purchase of door prize tickets will be optional. (Prize courtesy of Bass Pro Shops).

ADDRESS CHANGED? Missing an Issue?

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

Membership

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

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

Member Assessment Now Payable

ACT NOW! The annual assessment (see back) is now payable. Check your label—if the "PP-" date is "0905" (or there is NO "PP-" and date), you can send your \$15 now, and you will not have to worry about paying at the October meeting. Some members paid twice this year, so they already show "PP-0906." 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-0905" on their label will be the **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 upcoming issues! Thank you.**

Support our Sponsors

The sponsor for the October Monthly Raffle is *Hunting Creek Outfitters*, a full-line Orvis Dealer, at 29 N. Market St. in Frederick, Md. 301.668.4333.

We also want to thank *Backwater Angler* in Monkton, Md., for their donation of a selection of Gunpowder flies for our September meeting. 410.329.6821



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