

# *The* Conservationist



## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

September 2012 Published monthly except June, July, August and December



### ***Mollie Simpkins, Casting for Recovery – September 19<sup>th</sup> –***

We are very pleased this month to be hosting Mollie Simpkins from Casting for Recovery. Casting for Recovery was founded in 1996 in Manchester, Vermont, the unique brainchild of a breast cancer reconstructive surgeon, Dr. Benita Walton and a professional fly fisher Gwenn Perkins. CFR began as a local grassroots group with a big heart and an original national vision, and quickly received endorsements from medical and psycho-social experts for its innovative healing program model while at the same time provoking intense interest by national media.

Casting for Recovery was founded on the principles that the natural world is a healing force and that cancer survivors deserve one weekend — free of charge and free of the stresses from medical treatment, home, or workplace — to experience something new and challenging while enjoying beautiful surroundings within an intimate, safe, and nurturing structure.

As most of you may know PPTU has made a contribution this year to CFR's 2fly fundraiser held at Rose River Farm at the end of October. Because of the very generous donations by PPTU members we are hosting a team and a boat for this event. During the September meeting Mollie will discuss how events like this through CFR make a lasting impact for breast cancer survivors.

*– Marc Hutzell*

#### 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](http://www.pptu.org)**

# OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2011 - 2012



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Northwest Branch: Jim Keil 301-588-8375  
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Patuxent: Jay Sheppard 301-725-5559

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## President's Column - Dennis Covert

**September! Finally!** Some folks like hot weather, I'm just not one of them, and the hot breathless days of late summer can make staying indoors with the A/C on pretty darn inviting. Even so, there are some really great fly-fishing opportunities happening in Maryland right now. Terrestrial activity whether for bass or trout should be peaking on area streams and caddis will be present right into the fall. If you're into technical fishing then the morning swarms of Trico's means game on! It's a couple of weeks into the hatch, but some white flies should still be coming off the Yellow Breeches at dusk/dark, and fishing the mornings and evenings to beat the heat is a good strategy, all the while reveling in the knowledge that some cool crisp autumn weather is just ahead.

The chapter needed to fill some positions a little unexpectedly and asked for volunteers this summer. I want to take the time to recognize those who responded to the call. Rodger Johnson is stepping into the role of bringing refreshments to the meetings, Lou Reichel is the board's new secretary, Ken Bowyer is the new treasurer, and Mark Hutzell has taken over as speaker program chair. And, we have two new MAC delegates, Bob O'Donnell and Pati Nicholson. On behalf of the chapter I want to thank these folks for stepping forward and volunteering. Its people like them that make our chapter one of the most if not the most successful in the Mid-Atlantic. We are still looking for someone to take over the barrel raffle at the chapter meetings, so there is still an opportunity to volunteer.

In June a small cadre of PPTU Officers and board members attended the Howard County Parks and Recreation board meeting for public comment to support the proposed parking lot on Haviland Mill Road. After all comments were heard the board voted to approve the construction of a new parking lot on the Howard County side near Haviland Mill Road Bridge. The parking area will accommodate 3 to 4 vehicles, one a

handicapped space. A concern raised during the meeting is whether the proposed lot will be large enough to accommodate the need. Board agreed to entertain a future proposal to enlarge the parking area if the lot size proves to be insufficient.

Also the PPTU board voted in July to become a sustaining supporter of Casting for Recovery. For the past three years we have been a sustaining supporter of the Healing Water's Wounded Warrior Program at Fort Meade. To fund these two projects our chapter has decided to use the funds generated by the hot dog stand at Bass Pro. We held our first hotdog stand at Bass Pro in March, and intend to have another stand this December 1<sup>st</sup>, or the 8<sup>th</sup> as a rain date. It's our hope that these bi-annual fund raisers will cover the chapter's outlays of these two programs. In the near future we will be soliciting for volunteers to man the stand, we need at least 15, if you cannot work but will be in the area, stop by and buy a dog or brat to show your support. 🍌



## PPTU Mentor Program Beginner's & Beyond

**K**en 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](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net) 🍌

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard



The flows on the main Patuxent above Triadelphia Reservoir have not been terrible so far this summer. Usually by early September we see flows of about 10 cfs and in drought years we have had flows of only 1–3 cfs! So there should be more than a few trout lurking in the nicer pools and runs as we move into the fall fishing period. The cooler nights will certainly perk up the fish! Try crickets and hoppers, as well as ants and beetles.

We have been focusing a lot of our attention in recent months on Brighton Dam and how we can obtain cold water releases regardless of the actual flows. Nick Weber and I have met with the WSSC operators of the dam and are still trying to solve the riddle of how the water seems to be warm as it comes through the dam despite the fact that the temperatures at the depth they are supposedly drawing from is about 60° F or less. The water coming out of the dam has been about 69–71° on August afternoons. It gains about a degree or so in the large stilling basin under the dam, but after that it stays a constant temperature in the afternoons all the way down to the rt. 108 bridge. The river is in full shade for nearly its entire length and there are a number of small springs and one large tributary feeding into it. The Hawlings adds its waters just below the Haviland Mill Bridge. In the past we have found wild browns in very small numbers upstream from the Patuxent so the water there stays just cool enough for them most summers. In sum, there should be a small number of trout remaining from our spring stockings. As soon as possible this October, we hope to add a few more to the river. 🍌





## Tackle and Tactics

- Jay Sheppard

"WHAT'S THAT [censored] TROUT EATING?"

For trout fishers, that is the first question we ask ourselves (or anyone within earshot!) as we start the day's fishing. The profanity usually is more prone to being uttered after an hour of fruitless casting over rising fish (some of us sooner than others). Several decades ago, I was able to find out how to easily determine what the trout are taking. I ran into two fisheries biologists on the Savage that summer day. They showed me their technique, which I was quickly able to put into actual practice.

I had tried those stomach pumps that looked like basting tools for chefs with very limited success: bits and pieces of "things," if anything, would appear, and they never came with any directions—do you flush or suck??? This "new" technique is absurdly simple: hold the trout in one hand with a container under its head; in the other hand, a plastic bottle forces water through a tube into the stomach of the fish. The fish reacts to the sudden increase in water by coughing up most of its stomach's contents. Most of all, the fish is not subjected to any hazard, such as sucking stomach linings into a tube, perhaps? The specimens of food are in near perfect condition, depending upon temperature and how long they've been inside the trout. (You won't deprive the trout of all its food, unless you do repeated flushings.)

Now for the details. Find a laboratory supply company (e.g., [www.usplastic.com/catalog](http://www.usplastic.com/catalog), phone 1-800-809-4217) and order "250ml Translucent Nalgene® Economy Wash Bottles." The bottle has a small spout that is bent at more than 90° and a taper on the 2–3" tip of the tube. I saw a price of less than \$4 for one of these bottles, but the shipping was almost twice that amount. You might consider ordering more than one or with a buddy or two to split the shipping cost.

Before using, trim a bit off the tip of the bent

tube to increase the flow to maybe 1–2 mm width. Sand the cut tip to make it smooth for later use. When taking a stomach sample from a trout, completely fill the plastic bottle with fresh stream water. Hold the trout in the palm of your hand, belly up. (This relaxes most animals, fish included.) With the hand holding the fish also hold a small plastic bag (sandwich size is fine) under the head of the fish. Insert the tip of the tube into the throat and as far down as possible into the stomach, avoiding the gills. Now, simply squeeze the bottle as fast as possible. This size bottle only works on trout up to about 13–14" in length, as the tube will not slide far enough down the throat of a larger fish to work reliably. However, the bottle is small enough to easily fit in a vest.

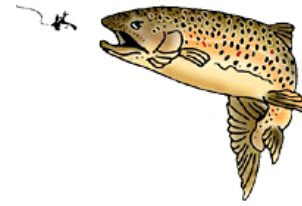
Within a second, items should appear, along with much of the water. Flush the mouth to get those last food items that did not drop into the bag. Release the fish (it should not have been out of the water more than 30 seconds for this whole procedure!) and examine your "catch" in the bag. You may find 'flip-focals' really help you see what these bugs are. In the water inside the bag, the items are easily observed in great condition—in fact, many insects are often still quite alive. Empty the bottle after each fish (less weight to carry and use fresh water each time).

You may want to sample several different fish, particularly over the course of the day, to insure the first is not selecting differently than others. We all have our food preferences! On March 17, several years ago, a brown stocked in the Patuxent on February 23 had over 30 adult stoneflies of two sizes and colors. That same day, a 12" wild brown at the head of one pool had almost exclusively tiny (#26–28) larvae of the black fly, no stoneflies. The stocky was clearly feeding only on the surface out in the flat and not selecting for a single size or color, while the stream bred brown was only taking the small nymphs as they drifted past him.

Actual identification to broad groups of insects is all that is then needed. Examples: gray mayfly, small brown caddis adults, black beetle size #18, ants, green caterpillar, scuds, small brown mayfly nymphs; green caddis larvae, etc. The idea is to see if there are many of the same insect or just a variety of prey. Check sizes and colors of the

most abundant items and make your fly selection accordingly. Often there are many different kinds of prey, but they will usually have one thing in common: small and black or dark gray, for example.

Oh yes, there is one other tiny detail I failed to mention above: you have to catch that **FIRST** trout! Otherwise, this technique will really help you. Good luck! (LAST COMMENT: keep notes or even take close-up pictures on what you find, it will help later to see patterns on feeding selectivity.) 🌸



## Handling Trout — Don't Kill Them with Bad Manners! - Jay Sheppard

Handling trout can be a bit tricky, if you are going to return them to the stream. I suggest you take a landing net along, even though they are always hanging up on some snag, to first land the trout. The net then allows you to grip the trout around its middle with only its head sticking out of the netting to work the lure/fly loose. At this point, you will see the advantage to having pinched barbs on your hook (lost fish are not due to lack of a barb, but that's another story). A pair of forceps (available in most fly fishing catalogs) is an excellent tool to reach hooks. Never allow a trout to touch ANYTHING DRY...hands, ground, net, etc. Never stick your fingers inside the gill covers. Never grasp a trout like most bass are handled (i.e., gripping the lower jaw and flexing the jaw itself). If the water is above 60° or so, try to keep the trout in the water while working the hook out. Hold the trout in moving water until it can swim out of your hand and net on its own power (NEVER DROP a trout into shallow water—any more than you like to dive into shallow water either!!). Trout may die if placed on a stringer or played too long. They build up too much lactic acid in their system and that eventually can kill them. If a trout cannot look downward when removed from the water, its survival is clearly in jeopardy, and a large amount of oxygen is needed quickly to possibly save it. This reflex is the first sign that a trout may be in trouble. The sole reason bait fishing is prohibited in many special trout streams is a higher mortality rate: 20–40% of all released trout caught by bait fishermen may die within 24–48 hours. Lures and flies produce less than 5% mortality rates. Cut off the fly on any deeply hooked fish, especially if ANY blood is seen. Trout are too valuable a resource to destroy, even by well-meaning fishermen. 🌸



## Help To Stop Poachers

Reminder - If you spot poaching please place a call to

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



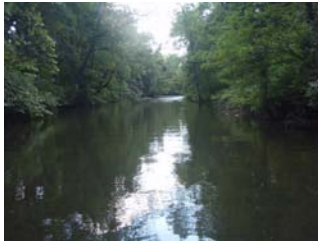
## LEADERS ????? - Jim Greene

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. 🌸

## NOTES FROM MY LOG – Yellow Breeches

Strange day on the Breeches. Arrived at noon, PC, wind, and 79 degrees. Water was 67 and sl cloudy.



And it just went on and on and on

Began with wet flies and netted one on a Part green. That was it for over an hour. Dries same thing. Even tried nymphs and finally netted one on a Prince. Decided if I wasn't going to catch fish I would explore. Waded upstream for well over 3 hours. Kept waiting to see some landmark or road so I would know where I was. But never saw a road, building, or human. Amazing, a half hour from the capitol of one of the most populous states and nobody in sight.



In all this travel I netted 3 on an Adams.

One was a very pretty 7 incher that I suppose to be a native but will leave

7 incher that to me looked native

that to others to determine. Took me almost a full hour to wade downstream without stopping to fish. Arrived in the vicinity of my car at 7pm very leg weary. What happened next anyone with trout fishing experience can relate to. In 20 minutes I netted 6 trout in one riffle almost next to my car. Seven hours many miles, 6 trout. Twenty minutes next to my car, 6 trout. That's the way it goes. Last 6 were on Part green and March Brown Spider. I'm tired. 🍄

- J. Kunsman



Partridge and Green

## How Has Fly Fishing Changed

By John Berry (Originally Published in the Federation of Fly Fishers ClubWire Newsletter)

**H**ow has fly fishing changed since you started?

The most obvious change to me is that there are a lot more of us. There are more people fly fishing now than when I first started. Back then there were precious few fly fishers. Most of the anglers that you saw were bait fishing. Now it seems like there is parity in the numbers of fly fishers versus bait or lure anglers. A lot of the increase is due to technological advances in fly fishing gear. The advances in fly fishing gear have had a profound effect on the sport by making it easier to do and to make the anglers more comfortable. Another cause is the popularity of the movie, *A River Runs Through It*.

Fly rods have under gone significant change. When I first started fly fishing, my first fly rod was made of fiber glass. It was heavy and had a very soft action. I remember casting a graphite rod for the first time. It was lighter and had a much stiffer action than my fiberglass. The rods then were mostly eight footers. The rods now are much longer. Most are nine feet and several are ten feet. The actions are stiffer and they weigh less.

Fly lines have under gone some fundamental change. Years ago they were either level (no taper) or they were double taper with a distinct taper on each end. The level lines were inexpensive but cast poorly. The double tapers were popular because you could use one end until you wore it out and then turn it around and use the other side. Now the most popular lines are weight forward which have a distinct taper and are heavier on the tapered end. The other end is smaller and lighter. This allows the line to be cast further.

The fly reels used when I first started were basically unchanged since the nineteenth century. They used a simple spring and pawl drag. The big change since then is that most fly reels sold today feature a disc drag system. The current trend is toward larger arbors which allow you to reel in line more quickly. Larger arbors weigh more than smaller arbors.

So, while rods are getting lighter, reels are getting heavier.

One change that we don't think about often has been the improvement in leaders and tippets. Back in the day we made our own leaders. We would take several sections of different sized tippet material and carefully join them with blood knots to produce a tapered shape. The knots had a tendency to grab algae or any trash in the water. We now buy knotless tapered leaders that perform flawlessly. Tippets have gotten much stronger over the years. Then there is fluorocarbon. This stuff is stronger, more abrasion resistant and has a specific gravity greater than water (it is heavier than water and it sinks).

The change in waders has possibly been the greatest change of all. When I began, I used a borrowed pair of rubberized cotton boot foot waders. They were clumsy, bulky and clammy. The first pair that I bought were neoprene. They were stocking foots with separate boots that were much more comfortable and provided significant ankle support. However when the summer came, they were stifling. The new style breathable waders are lighter in weight and breathe making them much cooler in summer.

The last major change that I have seen has been in fishing ethics. Thirty years ago we kept everything we caught. A stringer was a regular part of our fishing gear. As I grew with the sport, I came to realize that the fish were too valuable to kill. I would rather release them so that I can return and catch them again. As our rivers get more crowded and fishing pressure increases, this is the only viable strategy to provide a quality fishing experience. Years ago, I also fished over spawning trout. I caught some great fish but I came to realize that it was more important for the trout to naturally procreate than to provide me with a little recreation.

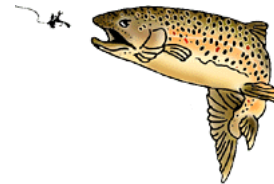
Others have come to agree and the major spawning grounds are now closed during the spawn.

I have seen a lot of change in the last few years and it has been for the better. I have better gear that is much easier to cast, it keeps me more comfortable and I regularly catch quality fish that are the equal of good trout anywhere. Sometimes change is good! 🌸

## Early Meeting Segments Begin at 7 PM - Marc Hutzell

### Tying Bench

Steve Fletcher will tie a crane fly larvae pattern - Utah Killer Bug - A variation of Frank Sawyers Killer Bug and is believed to imitate a larval crane fly. The original killer bug was tied with a fawn (greyish brown) wool with red fibers that gave the nymph a pinkish hue when wet. The Utah Killer Bug is tied with a tan yarn that has pink and red fibers and when wet allows the underbody color to tint the fly. Super easy to tie and quite effective! 🌸



### Angler's Corner

## One Fly Contest on the Gunpowder September 29<sup>th</sup> 2012

Participants will meet at 7am at the Masemore parking lot to declare our selected fly then disperse to our favorite haunts in the catch and release section.

Same rules as before, you can only use one fly, not multiples of the same pattern, lose it and you're done, but of course keep fishing, it's all just for fun anyway. The only prize is the right to brag for the next calendar year.

For more outing information see <http://www.pptu.org/outings/outings.shtml>

In addition, Dennis Covert has made reservations at Big Run State Park for October 5, 6, & 7. The following is from Dennis:

"I have booked the Monroe shelter from Friday noon till Sunday noon for a group tent camping reservation that allows us up to 25 people. All this for just \$180 split however many ways we have participants. The shelter has a fire place (bring our own wood), picnic tables, and a place to gather after the days fishing to cook, make coffee,

swap stories, and if it rains we have something to get in under. Dry camp site, has no running water. **New for this year, no fresh water pic at Big Run SP.** You must bring your own water.” For more outing information see <http://www.pptu.org/outings/outings.shtml> 🍄

## Upcoming Events:



September 8<sup>th</sup> -Maryland Seafood Festival at Sandy Point Park; MAC booth from 8am to Noon.

September 22<sup>nd</sup>- National Hunting & Fishing Day at the Marriottsville Shooting range. 10am - 4pm Trout Unlimited will have both a PPTU &

MAC booth. Directions from Baltimore beltway; West on I70 towards Frederick. Make right on Marriottsville RD. continue for approximately 7 or 8 miles, the range is on the left side of the road just after the Patapsco State Park entrance.

September 29<sup>th</sup> PPTU outing -One Fly Contest on the gunpowder.

October Outing 5<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> PPTU outing Big Run Campout.

MAC Banquet October 13<sup>th</sup> - BWI Ramada 6pm - 10:00pm Prizes Raffles auction and awards program.

October 21<sup>st</sup>- Breaking Clays to Save the Bay at Izaak Walton League; Wildlife Achievement Chapter Damascus Maryland. \$25 fee, shoot two rounds of trap or skeet, bring your own gun and ammo. Free T shirt, proceeds to go to PPTU.

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 (12<sup>th</sup>) day of the month prior to the month of publication. 🍄

**Editor: George Vincent**

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## *Mid-Atlantic Council Award and Conservation Banquet*

Join us at the banquet for the Mid-Atlantic Council Trout Unlimited at the Ramada BWI on Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup> with open bar. Great live and silent auction prizes as well as bucket raffle items to enjoy. These will include unbelievable trips, art, and gear for an exciting beginning of your fall season. Tickets for the banquet as well as prizes will be available at our September 19<sup>th</sup> Chapter meeting or contact any of our board members if you cannot attend to get in on the fun. <http://www.mac-tu.org/>