



May 2003

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, May 21

Local Spring and Summer Trout Fishing

What do you do after the mayfly hatches of early spring are over? What do you do when the hot, humid summer months bring almost no hatches of any kind? Without heading for far-distant states with cooler weather, what local streams hold the best prospects for catching trout throughout the summer?

The intrepid trout angler is not dismayed by this turn of the season. It just calls for a shift in tactics, techniques and perhaps some changes in the time of day spent on the stream or the locations where the wily trout is sought.

At our May 21 meeting, you will be able to learn what some of our never-say-quit members do when that season is upon us. You will hear what the members of a panel composed of our most ardent trout fishermen have to say on those subjects. And if they don't cover a topic that puzzles you about late spring and summer trout fishing, ask them what they do in the situation you have in mind.

The panelists will be Bob Dietz, Jim Greco, and Jim Keil. The moderator keeping them on subject and stimulating interaction with the audience will be Lou Boezi.

The panelists' discussions will revolve around perhaps two subjects: (1) what flies do you like to use and what tactics do you apply when using them?, and (2) what nearby streams do you like to fish during the late spring and summer?.

So come to the May meeting and get a bunch of ideas that will enhance your trout fishing during the intervening months.

This will be the last meeting until September.

At the May 21 Meeting

Chapter Officers Election

The Nominations Committee has compiled a list of nominees for positions in the chapter leadership for 2003-2004. At the May meeting, we will ask for nominations from the floor. Then we will vote on the nominees.

The nominees that we have thus far are:

President	Lou Boezi
Vice President	Jim Greco
Treasurer	Jim Greene
Secretary	Judy Hendrickson
Directors and terms:	
Dave Wittman	May 03 to May 05
Bob Serrano	May 03 to May 06
Jack Dawson	May 03 to May 06

The chapter has other leadership openings which have no term limits; you can serve for as long or short as you please. Perhaps you've thought about giving back to the chapter and to the community's watersheds.

If you'd like to talk about the open positions, give Dave Piske, Lou Boezi, or Jim Keil a call. Our numbers are on page 2 of this newsletter.

VOTE!

Get your new PPTU cap at the May 21 meeting!

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

is published monthly, except Dec., Jun., Jul., and Aug., by the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

The content of signed articles are the opinions and views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, and policies of Trout Unlimited, the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter, or their respective officers and directors.

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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

This column marks the end of my two years as chapter president. Two topics come to mind as appropriate for my final column. One is my gratitude for all the help provided me by PPTU members and others during these past two years. The other is a comment on future challenges faced by PPTU.

I am deeply grateful to a broad spectrum of people who have helped to sustain this chapter. The spectrum ranges from a few members regularly seen by everyone attending chapter meetings to those whose work is less visible, but equally essential to the functioning of the chapter. In the regularly seen group is Willy Oldes at the raffle table, Jack Dawson at the library table and Jay Sheppard at the membership table.

At the other end of the spectrum is the cadre of chapter officers, directors, chairpersons and Council delegates listed in the column to the left of this one. It's a long list and one with names that vary considerably from the list in the September 2001 newsletter.

Two messages there. First, the length of the list shows it is a substantial team of PPTU leaders that creates initiatives and organizes the means to make things happen. Second, there is a dynamism, reflected by the changes in names, that propels the chapter forward by new people joining that cadre from time to time, bringing with them refreshing energies and new ideas.

The full spectrum of people to whom I am grateful also includes well over a hundred chapter members and others, such as Charlie Gougeon and his crew at DNR. They all volunteered their services, when the call went out, to assist in a multitude of PPTU activities.

I'm unable to name all the folks in the full spectrum deserving my thanks, and naming only a few for illustration is not intended to slight all the others who have helped. So, my hat is off to all, and my heartfelt thanks for your assistance in making these past two years a memorable experience for me.

Now a few words about continuing challenges to trout environment and the mission of PPTU. The most vivid impression I have from the past two years is the realization that there is a never-ending series of battles that must be fought just to maintain our trout fisheries, to say nothing of improving

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President's Column

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them. The threats arise not only from those who would willfully destroy trout habitat, but also from those who would achieve the same effect as a result of their ignorance.

Our counters to those threats must be based on knowledge and actions. First, we need to inform ourselves of the facts relating to the threats. That is a personal responsibility. But PPTU, through its programs and publications, will help you become aware of the facts. However it is up to each of us, individually as well as collectively, to take the actions necessary to protect our trout fisheries.

Second, we need to reach beyond the PPTU membership to overcome public ignorance about the needs to preserve and enhance coldwater resources. PPTU has launched several promising programs to educate youths in that regard, and your time and money is needed to provide continuing and expanding support for those programs.

With my term expiring and our summer meeting recess about to begin, I look forward to spending more time on our streams. I look forward to seeing you there.

As the chapter's new officers and board of directors follow on, I hope you will give them the same support that I received.

Dave Piske

Patuxent Report

A total of 2200 browns and 1750 rainbows were stocked this year, all willing to chase your flies and lures. Some of the browns and rainbows were in the 15-16" size range.

Thanks to all who helped stock this year. Approximately 300-350 man-hours were involved with this year's stockings on the upper Patuxent. I want to thank all the chapter members and our friends who helped in all these activities.

Now let us go forth and FISH!

The stocked trout can be expected to scatter in all directions over the coming months as they compete for space among themselves and with the few wild trout already there. In the past, I have caught rainbows about a mile below the lowest stocking point only 8 days after their stocking. So the trout can move quickly if the conditions suit them; these recent high flows have undoubtedly facilitated a lot of movement.

The overall holdover rate will depend largely

upon two big factors: summer flows and poaching. I have had several reports this spring of poachers in the Annapolis Rock-Hipsley Mill sections of the stream.

Please report these sightings immediately to the Natural Resources Police or the State Park rangers.

Three years ago, one poacher was fined over \$400 for taking a dozen trout from the stream below Annapolis Rock bridge. I hope that word gets out to others that it can be costly to poach trout and a lot cheaper to go to the local market for something to eat.

Jay Sheppard



Free Fishing Days

Once again, most states are offering to waive the requirement for a fishing license for a couple of days this year. The dates vary from state to state, but most are associated with National Fishing and Boating Week, June 1-8, 2003.

This is a great opportunity for a low cost trip to a nearby state to sample the fishing there. The complete list of dates for all the states is available online at:

http://www.nationalfishingandboatingweek.org/resource_materials/freefishing.cfm.

Nearby states of interest and their dates include:

District of Columbia June 2-8
Maryland June 7 & 14, July 4
New York June 28 & 29
Pennsylvania May 24 & June 7
Virginia June 6-June 8
West Virginia June 7 & 8

Also, if you have a neighbor, colleague or spouse who has expressed curiosity about this thing you do with the funny boots, this is a low-cost opportunity to take them to a local stream for a little hands-on show-and-tell.

Just be careful in Virginia. They still require a license on "designated trout stocked waters".

On the other hand, think about all those stories you've heard about smallmouth on the Shenandoah, just ninety minutes west of DC.

Robert Simpson

Gunpowder Flow ONLINE!

The USGS recently placed the Gunpowder gage station at Falls Road on their web site. This is only a mile or so below Prettyboy dam.

Flows are important to the fisher. Too high is not good nor is extreme low flow.

Two web sites you want to check are the Corps of Engineers (COE) (www.nab-wc.usace.army.mil/wc/) and the US Geological Survey (USGS) (<http://md.waterdata.usgs.gov/nwis/current?type=flow>).

These have links to the current conditions on such important trout streams as the Gunpowder, Savage, North Branch, Youghiogheny, Casselman, Morgan Run, Patapsco, Patuxent (Unity), Little Patuxent (Savage) and many others.

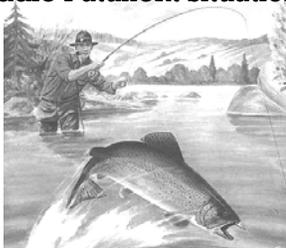
Some of the USGS sites will also give you water temperatures and precipitation. The COE sites for Savage River Dam and Jennings Randolph Dam on the North Branch also give pool level, inflow and release information. If the reservoirs are full and you arrive just as a large rain storm ends, you may find those rivers in flood condition.

The above USGS site is organized by river basin, so you can poke around to find your favorite stream or reservoir levels, if a station exists on that section of that stream. Click on the gage station number to look at the recent flow graphs, which can be displayed up to the past 31 days. Take note of the time of the last reading, as it can be up to 4 or 5 hours old.

Here are some estimates of the minimum and maximum flows for "optimum fishing" on some of these streams. These levels are where it becomes very difficult to wade (max.) or too challenging under very low and clear conditions (min.).

Gunpowder @ Parkton:	30–100 cfs
Gunpowder @ Glencoe:	60–200 cfs
Patuxent @ Unity:	15–90 cfs
Little Patuxent @ Savage, MD:	25–175 cfs
North Branch @ Barnum:	90–350 cfs
Savage River @ Bloomington:	50–150 cfs
Patapsco @ Holofield:	40–175 cfs

Use the Little Patuxent @ Savage, MD as an estimate of the Middle Patuxent situation 5–6 miles upstream.



Jay Sheppard

Tackle and Tactics Tips

This first section will be brief fishing tips that apply in a general way but may not in very specific cases. So use them with a little caution and willingness to alter your tactics to some other choices.

When the waters are high or off color, try using larger and darker flies either on the surface or below; when the water is low and clear, use smaller flies and consider lighter colors. Try dark flies on dark days and light flies on bright days.

Individual mayfly species emerge for only a short period and are often later replaced by related species; these species groups tend to start large and dark and get progressively lighter and smaller as summer arrives. Darker species of mayflies tend to hatch in middle of the day, lighter colored species towards early morning or evening.

Go subsurface if you see no surface activity. Try to capture what is actually hatching and look for more than one kind to be active at the same time; match fly selection to what is most common, not what is the largest in all cases.

Tackle Tips

One of the more frequent concerns of beginning fly fishers is how to select tippets and match them to the fly size to achieve the desired presentation. Tippet selection is most important. A mediocre fly that is presented well can often get fish to strike, but the best pattern presented very poorly will usually not do the job. Many experienced anglers consider presentation to be 70–85% of the problem in catching fish, while fly selection is the remaining issue.

There are a few factors to consider in choosing the size (diameter) of the tippet. We usually start with the "rule of 3" where we divide the size of the fly by 3 and choose the tippet based upon the result (e.g., #18 fly ÷ 3 = 6X). That usually works well. We must remember that the actual connection point to the fly is what will allow it to "act natural" in the currents. A heavy tippet will dictate the motion of the fly more than a lighter (thinner) tippet.

For a given fly, the longer the tippet the less chance it will turn over and land straight out on the water at the end of the cast. This is usually best for dry flies where we want a lot of slack in the form of "S" bends and loops in the tippet section.

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Tackle and Tactics Tips

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Conversely, for that same fly, a short tippet causes the leader and tippet to turn over, and a direct connection to the fly is maintained. This is usually how we fish such attractors as woolly buggers and streamers.

So, if the fly is turning over but you want lots of "S" bends and loops, lengthen the tippet section, and *vice versa*.

Wind resistant flies may take a heavier or shorter tippet than a fly of the same size that is not as wind resistant. For dries, I usually prefer a very long tippet (~40"), while for streamers and similar actively fished flies I like short tippets (~20"); nymph tippets are usually intermediate.

Watch your tippet!

As warmer weather arrives, so do the mosquitoes and sunburn. Virtually all lotions, sprays and similar items have "inert solvents" and other chemicals that can totally ruin a fly line coating.

To avoid premature aging of a fly line from these chemicals, **NEVER** apply any compound to the **palms** of your hands. Instead, apply it to the **back of your hand** and rub it on your face, neck and other places where you cannot spray or squeeze such materials.

Consider the use of stick insect repellents—they do not run or get into the wrong places.

Jay Sheppard

(Editor's Note: Jay's "Rule of 3" may be alright for the generally smaller fish of this region, but for larger fish, I prefer the "Rule of 4" (e.g.: #18 fly ÷ 4 = 4.5, so use a 4X or 5X tippet). This is for dry flies and emergers.

It's been my experience, especially in the West, that it's best to use the heaviest (strongest) tippet possible and go longer to avoid drag

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

New PPTU Cap



Thanks to the efforts of Jim Greco, PPTU members can show their colors with a cap bearing the newly adopted PPTU logo. These caps will be on sale at the May 21 meeting. The price had not been determined at press time, but it should be in the \$15-\$20 range.

Nine dozen caps have been purchase with styles and colors for everyone. They are:

Unisex washed cotton twill in - 12 pink and 12 mint
Washed cotton long bill - 12 in black/khaki and 24 in khaki/moss

Tactel Combo microfiber cap - 12 in grey/olive

Oil cloth - 12 in dark green and 12 in dark oak

Tactel Solid microfiber cap - 12 in forest green

The logo on each cap, based on a design by John Colburn, has lettering in colors contrasting with the cap color.

Get your new cap at the May 21 meeting. Come early because they are sure to sell fast—especially the color you really wanted.

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 Maryland Forecast

(updated and reprinted from the May 1996 *Conservationist*)

Flows in our streams into early summer 2003 should remain well above those of last two years, which were far below average. The problem will be if we do not have consistent and widespread rainfall from now until the end of the summer.

All the hatches should be very close to a normal schedule. However, I would not expect to see great numbers of insects, since many streams nearly dried out last summer, which had to reduce the overall populations of those nymphs. The sulphur hatches of late May on the Gunpowder can be expected to attract not just the trout but also the hordes of fishers (a double hatch, if you will).

Unfortunately, the overall population of the brown trout in the No-Kill section below the dam is near an all time low. They are there, but the numbers are clearly down from the past effects of the drought.

As we go to press (mid-April) the Gunpowder is still running full.

Out west, the Savage and Jennings Randolph Reservoirs are full and releasing high flows, but we are still concerned that if we get a dry summer, we will again be seeing near minimum flows from those dams. I am sure the low flows last year (2002) and into the early fall had to reduce the overall populations of trout in both those rivers.

The lower Savage and North Branch should maintain good flows for the rest of the spring. A couple of good rainstorms in June will help ensure good flows the rest of the summer.

The upper North Branch (near Kitzmiller), Casselman and Youghiogheny Rivers should have excellent flows into mid-June this year; so please keep those three streams in mind, too; the first two get too warm in the summer to hold many trout over.

Hunting Creek, Morgan Run, and the Patuxent system have had excellent flows this spring, but they will need good rains to keep them moving the rest of the summer.

The myriad of spring mayflies is upon us. The quality streams will have their hatches of March browns, Cahills, and many other important hatches over the next 6-8 weeks. A #14 Light Cahill or similar pattern is one of my favorites in this period on these streams.

On Hunting Creek, move slowly and watch for the

wild browns in little pockets that are often hard to cast to.

All Maryland trout waters between Hagerstown and Cumberland get too low and hot most summers to hold any trout after early June.

Closer to town, the Little and Middle Patuxent at Savage, MD, and the Patapsco near Daniels will normally be expected to shut down for trout fishing by about June 1 due to hot water. So visit those and such streams as Sidling Creek now.

Do not forget that the middle section of Owen's Creek becomes a **no-kill** stream on **June 1**—artificial lures & flies only after that date (this is an excellent little stream after the crowds vanish).

As the trees leaf out in late April (mid-May in Garrett Co.), the first major terrestrial hatch started—inch worms. This will make all those small San Juan worms (greens, browns, and grays) really become deadly on our wooded streams. Ants, including flying forms, also become important at this time.

Perhaps others have had luck in May, but my experience is that beetle and small cricket patterns really don't get the attention of the trout until June or later in the summer.

See you in September.



Jay Sheppard

Member's Assessment Now Payable

The annual assessment (see page 8) is now payable, if you wish. 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 in September. Some members paid twice this year, so they already show "PP-0904." We do not mail notices in September.

Make checks payable to "**POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER-TU**" and mail to our chapter mail box.

The assessment covers only the newsletter and related chapter administrative expenses. All donations above expenses at our raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, maps, etc.

The final issue for those having "PP-0903" will be this next November.

Please also advise us of any address changes or errors in our labels.

Book Notes

Home Waters



When I was in Oregon in March for the NW Fly Tyer's Expo, I took time to visit, but not fish, my home waters, the Metolius River, a spring fed river in the eastern Cascade foothills, about forty miles west of Bend. For years my sister had a cabin right on the Metolius, and I *had* to stay there whenever I visited her—a dirty job, but someone had to do it.

At the fly shop in the Camp Sherman store, I picked up a book, *Seasons of the Metolius; The Life of a River Seen Through the Eyes of a Fly Fisherman*, by John Judy, a guide on the Metolius and Deschutes Rivers for more than twenty years. *Seasons of the Metolius* consists of essays about the river arranged by seasons and an appendix containing a listing of accommodations, services, and fly shops in the Metolius area; maps and information about other nearby fly fishing waters.

The information in Judy's essays is often applicable to other streams anywhere in the country. After all, the trout and the insects are much the same as those we find in the mid-Atlantic region. Other essays discuss problems faced in fishery management all over the country: hatchery fish and stocking, dams, endangered species, and more.

Whether you ever go to Oregon or not, *Seasons of the Metolius* is a good read for anyone interested in trout fishing, regardless of where he or she lives and fishes. If you do plan a trip to Oregon and want to fish for wild trout in a beautiful river, *Seasons of the Metolius* will give you a running start on understanding a river and trout that can be as difficult as any you'll ever meet. The book won't tell you *where* and *how* to fish, but it will give you an understanding of the fish and the environment that will help you to catch the Metolius trout—or trout anywhere.

Seasons of the Metolius; The Life of a River Seen Through the Eyes of a Fly Fisherman by John Judy (2002; Sisters, OR; No Nonsense Fly Fishing Guidebooks; PB, 112 pp; \$20.95)

John Colburn

The Last Word It's Up to You

(Continued from page 8)

look at potential candidates for local and state offices, focus on those who might support your interests, talk to them, and if they seem suitable, get commitments from them. What will it cost you? Your time and your promise to support these candidates with money, if possible, and your help in their campaigns. Get your friends to join you. Your support early in the campaign cycle will be much more effective than it will be later.

As the election nears, support your candidates by walking the precinct and helping on phone banks and distributing campaign literature. Talk to people about the importance of voting for your candidates. Write letters to the editor about the campaign and your candidate. Yes, it will take your time, effort, and money, but think what you can gain and what you might lose if you do nothing. The time to start doing it is *now!*

Finally, on election day *vote*. The vote you don't cast is actually a vote for the candidate you don't want.

After your candidate is elected and in office, keep in touch, informing *your* legislator or council member of your side in issues and calling him or her to account for votes against your interests and thanking him or her for good votes. Remember, it was your help and your vote that got him or her elected. *You* made the difference.

Oh yes, the only reason that "politics is dirty" is that we have allowed the dirty people to take over the political system by our inaction.

John Colburn

This Is the Last Issue of ***The Conservationist*** For the Summer

Just a reminder that this May issue of ***The Conservationist*** is the last until next September.

Keep in touch with your buddies and log onto our web site for links to current reports. If you have not signed up for the PPTU reporting system, please check out our web site. You will receive reports from other members on their local fishing results. Have a great summer!

See you September 17, 2003

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.

Renew TU Membership Through Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

National TU will accept renewals of memberships sent through the chapter. In return, the chapter receives a rebate of \$5 for each renewal processed.

We hope every member will bring their membership renewal notices to the chapter meetings. The chapter will take it from there. We will accept cash, check (payable to *Trout Unlimited*), or credit card for these renewals.

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 renewal notice to the monthly meeting.

The Last Word

It's Up to You!

While reading Dave Piske's last "President's Column" (page 2), I saw that he laid out for PPTU and its members a sort of program to counter the threats to the coldwater fisheries in the region. Dave didn't discuss specifics; that's a job for the new officers and directors, but I'd like to give a few specific things that you and I can do—things that any citizen can and *should* do to protect our fisheries and environment.

I'd like to have you think about what has happened to some of your fishing waters and about what *you* didn't do about it. Think, too, about *why* you didn't do anything about it. Was it that "politics is dirty" and you didn't want to get involved? Did you feel that one person couldn't make a difference? Did you think that you didn't have the money to fight the bad guys? *Did you vote?*

While Trout Unlimited, Federation of Fly Fishers, and the other fishing and environmental organizations are limited in what political action they can take without jeopardizing their tax status, there is nothing to prevent *you* and *me* from being politically active. You and I have something that the big money interests don't have—our votes and our support for candidates who support our interests!

What can you do? Early on in the election cycle,

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Return Address:

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

May 16 Meeting
Elections of Chapter Leaders
See story on page 1

FIRST CLASS MAIL