

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

March 2022 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

“A Brief History of Fly Fishing” with PPTU’s Bob Dietz

Mar 16th, 2022 at 7:00PM

Sometimes, looking back helps us to look forward. Having an understanding of techniques and materials used in the past can sometimes shed a little light on how and why we do what we do today in order to catch a fish. Looking back should also give us some comfort in knowing that people have been addicted to fly fishing for centuries. This month we welcome fellow PPTU member, Bob Dietz who will give us a brief history of the sport that is for most, a true passion.

As many know, Bob is an excellent tier and instructor, but he is also a history buff. Bob will discuss with us the development of the sport since the early 1800’s. He’ll discuss the development of rods and leaders over the years. He’ll cover how the dry fly and the nymph were developed and how the changing technology in fly rods helped to spur their growth.

Bob will also touch on the colorful cast of characters that helped shape and grow the sport of fly fishing to its present state.

– *Karan Singh*



Monthly Chapter Meetings – Virtual Until Further Notice

Time and Day: 7:00 PM unless a new time is stated, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December

Virtual Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84114586524?pwd=UFBMVFNNT1BkRElvUFdWY2tJVC9BQT09>

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Presidents' Column - Joe Taylor



The sun is shining and soon you won't need eight layers of clothes anymore. Although, you do have to admit that there may have been a few days when you felt like you just might lose it while patiently waiting and getting ready for fishing season, excitement is in the air. But not so fast. Have you cleaned and inspected your equipment? Purchased the latest fishing gadgets? Have you studied up on your entomology? Identified a couple new streams to try this year? Incorporated a fishing adventure into your upcoming family vacation? I could go on, but you get the point.

It's that time of year, for sure. I know many of you fish throughout the winter, but there is nothing like waiting and preparing for the upcoming fishing season. Every time I think about opening day of trout season in Pennsylvania, where I grew up as a kid, I have to laugh. Just like in Joe Humphry's movie, opening day was as much about socializing, starting the day off with friends at the local diner or figuring out where everyone wanted to meet for lunch as actually fishing. The planning, smack talking and overall excitement will always be part of my fond memories growing up waiting for opening day. Many PPTU members have similar "opening day" plans this season. I would encourage you to get involved in the list of great outings and social events we have planned for 2022. It's a wonderful way to meet new people and learn a thing or two about fishing. I hope your opening day is as memorable as mine have been so many years ago. Who knows, maybe we can start our own opening day tradition here at PPTU? Just a thought. Whatever your plans, finalize those last minute preparations and enjoy the start of a new fishing season.

Joe Taylor
President, PPTU



PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

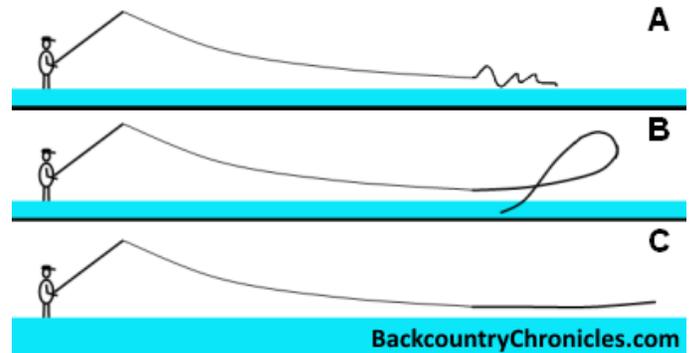
PPTU provides one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hip boots, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, etc. all on nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact us by e-mail: mentor@pptu.org

Take me to your Leader - Jay Sheppard

A recent discussion on the PPCTU forum was about leaders. I want to explore this topic in a little greater depth. After all, leaders connect us to our flies and, hopefully, to the trout that take them. In this discussion I am discussing floating lines and typical trout leaders and flies--streamers to itsy bitsy flies. The general system I employ is a tapered leader to which I loop a segment of tippet suitable for the fly and presentation I am using. Many many years ago a very experience guide and trout fisher stated there are only five factors important to catching trout. In descending order of importance they are presentation, presentation, presentation, presentation and fly selection!

The general purposes of the leader are to separate the fly from the fly line's hitting the water and to allow the fly more freedom of movement. Think how our flies would be presented if they were attached to the fly line by a 10" piece of 25 lb mono. No movement on its own and right next to the splat from the fly line hitting the water. We have a variety of fly line sizes that we might use in pursuit of trout, from a #2 line up to maybe a #7 line. The latter is going to make more noise as it hits the water than the first. So one of our first considerations is length of our leader and tippet. We can use shorter ones for a #2 or #3 line than for a #6 or #7 line. Casting say a #16 Adams I might use a leader/tippet combo of only 7 or 8 feet for a #2 line but maybe 12 or 14 feet for a #7 line.



Example A: Leader too Short or too Light, B: Leader too Long or too Heavy and C: Leader Just Right.

There are half a zillion leader formulas out there for all sorts of technical fly fishing needs. Streamers, nymphs suspended just under the surface film, Euro nymphing, large bushy dries, and so on. Other formulas are for fast turbulent waters and others might be for placid spring creeks. I have previously described my simple system for about 95% of all my trout fishing before: 7.5' 3X or 4X tapered leader to which I loop my tippets from 4X to 6X of varying lengths. I swap tippets all day long as I switch from a streamer or woolly buggie to a small nymph or dry and back. This system keeps the base leader constant while only changing the tippet to match the fly and presentation I am using.

I use a 9' for 4 wt rod for most of my trout fishing. If I was using my #6 wt rod I might shift to a 9' base leader instead of my usual 7.5' base. And conversely, if I was using a 2 wt rod, I would likely use



only a 6' base leader. My usual 4 wt rod can barely cast a really large streamer unless I shorten the leader to just the 7.5' base and no tippet. I often fish a Patuxent Special using a 7.5' 3X base leader with about 18-20" of 4X tippet. If I decide to go to a #16 dry fly, I can swap out the 4X tippet for maybe 35" of 6X. If these are the fussy Gunpowder trout in water with many micro currents, I might make the tippet a little longer. If the water was mostly pocket water where the fly could only dead drift for 3-5 seconds, I might shorten the tippet to maybe 25-30" to get better control of its landing spot.

An important consideration of the tippet size and length is its stretch. A 15" tippet has half the stretch of a 30" piece of the same material. As I have

mentioned many times in the past in the Conservationist, I try to prepare in case the biggest fish in the stream decides it wants my fly instead of all the smaller trout I usually contend with. How many times have we heard stories of fishers hooking a trout of a lifetime only to lose it on a wind knot or other flaw in their connection to the fish? Prepare and practice for the biggest and contend with the little fellows in the meantime! The amount of stretch in the tippet is important as one fights a large trout—the movement of the rod tip back another few inches may strain the tippet to the breaking point unless the tippet can stretch that extra inch. The shock of a strike is a similar consideration in tippets size and length.

In some presentations we want the leader, tippet and fly to turnover straight and tight. In other presentations we want the fly to land with as much slack between it and the fly line tip as possible to allow for hundreds of little currents to tug and pull on the line, leader and tippet before the fly starts to drag. On rare occasions I have used a tippet of about 60” to allow as many S-curves to form in the leader and tippet as possible. I often am casting across a wide stream into a still back eddy on the far side. I use a stall or parachute cast to try to pile as much of the leader and tippet into the slow water before the fly gets ripped out by the main currents taking my line downstream, even after a few mends. That extra 5 seconds of dead drift in that back eddy might be enough to entice a trout to take it. If I had a shorter tippet, it might not be worth my effort to cast across the currents into that slow water.

In sum, I want a very versatile leader and tippet system that allows for a wide variety of presentations. Waters change in character as one moves along a stream...flats, riffles, runs, pocket water, back eddies, etc. We rarely can stand in one place and fish to dozens of trout for a couple of hours. Move or change flies! Use a leader and tippet system that allows flexibility unless one is dedicated to one presentation for the day.

One last caveat for novice fly fishers: use the same brand of base leader as your tippet spools. Different brands have different strengths for the same size material and different flexibility. The latter is how stiff or supple the material is, while the former means attaching a stronger tippet to a weaker leader. Good luck and good fishing.

If you spot poaching please call or text:

Maryland Wildlife Crime Stoppers
At
443-433-4112



Add this number to your cell phone contact list!



Fly Fishing Film Tour **- Luis Santiago, Free State Fly Fishers**

Mark your calendars!! The Fly Fishing film Tour will be hosted locally this year at 1623 Brewing Company in Eldersburg, MD on March 14th from 05:00 – 09:00pm EDT.

The film tour is always a great time with great door prices. Come out and show your support for MD small business, our local fly fishing related events and our fellow anglers.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/2022-fly-fishing-film-festival-tickets-266252286757?fbclid=IwAR0AnGUImqdmPm-QJzcUXZP9lJmJnZBBcVJ-etUKqc4I49Mdmjx00a8IC8>

Lost and FOUND! **- Ray Miller**

I received a small package in the mail with no return address on it. I recently ordered some flies online and I thought it was them. To my surprise what I received was a small box of flies, wooly buggers, SJ worms and the like. Turns out it was one of my fly boxes that I had lost several years ago and I had forgotten all about it. I had a label with my address attached on the fly box. A tip I was given years ago by Jay Sheppard for this very reason. There was a small note inside the box “apologizing for the delay in returning them” but no name was included. I can’t say enough how appreciative I am of this act of kindness. Thank you to the unknown sportsman. You are a class act!!



Protecting and Labeling Your Gear - Bob O'Donnell

As a follow up to Ray's great story, I thought I would revisit some of the great tips about safeguarding gear passed down from many members of PPTU. BTW – Ray's box of flies shown above.

Label Your Boxes! It only takes a few minutes to add labels to your boxes. Set aside some time each week and do several at a time until you label them all. Avery makes waterproof labels you can use with a laser printer. You can also do it the old fashion way and write your information on the box somewhere with a sharpie or paint marker and then seal it with clear nail polish.

John Doe
123 Lost Box
Phone: 123-456-7890

Use Zingers! Pick up some cheap zingers and attach them inside the pockets in your vest or bag and then attach some or all of your fly boxes to them. You'll never again need to worry about dropping a box of flies in the water. Some boxes come with attachment points, others you can add an attachment loop to them. Whether you tied them or bought them, losing a box of flies is painful to your heart and wallet. I lost one several years ago. The box held about 200 flies, you do the math.

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

Stocking has already started for our special regulation streams. If you are interested in helping stock our local streams and have not been on my email list in the past, please send me an email: jaymsheppard95@gmail.com.

The only requirements for helping us float stock are having chest waders and ability to wade down or

up a stream for a mile or more. All stockings take place Tuesdays through Fridays, usually between 10 AM and 3 PM. We float stock the upper Patuxent above Triadelphia, the Brighton Dam tailwater, and the Middle Patuxent delayed harvest section in south Columbia. Once you are on my list, I send out info on the stocking dates DNR has told us. If you can help that day, then you reply, and we will get back to you as to where and when to meet the DNR truck with the trout.

Tie-a-Thon! - Pete Yarrington

Did you see the article in the last Trout magazine about the Tie-a-Thon? I had never heard of the Tie-a-Thon till a little more than a year ago. That time was, for me, the darkest part of the Covid pandemic. I was looking around for somewhere to donate flies to, since I was tying a lot and flies were starting to come out my ears. The Tie-a-Thon sounded like it could fit the bill.

Like the article in Trout explains, the Tie-a-Thon is run by two guys in Indiana, Tim Scott and Terry Wittrop. They collect flies each year from tiers throughout the country, and then ship them off to groups that use flyfishing to help people in therapeutic and recreational settings. They started it in fall 2006. In 2007, they and volunteer tiers collected 2,500 flies, which were donated to a local TU youth camp. Things gathered steam in each following year. Fast forward to last year, 2021, when 34,400 Tie-a-Thon flies were sent to TU youth programs nationwide. This year, all flies will go to Casting for Recovery programs in Indiana and Michigan.



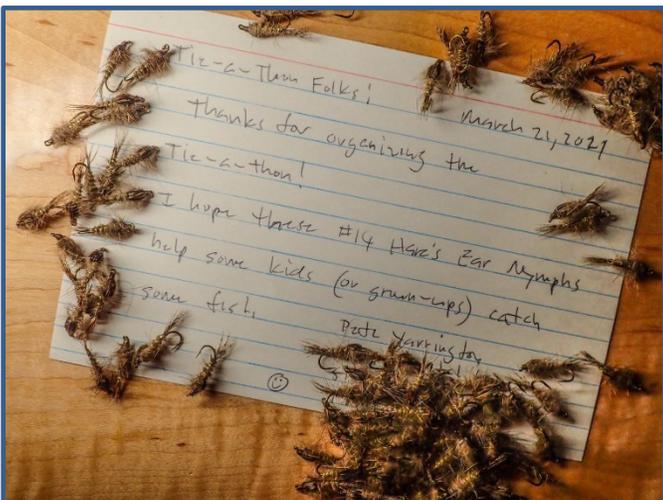
Participating in the Tie-a-thon is fairly simple. Check them out on Facebook. There you can look at the list of the flies they want for the current year, pick one or more patterns and sizes, tie 100, donate them, then feel good because you contributed your time and arcane skill to a good cause. And you get a T-shirt that's designed each year to commemorate the effort.

Last year, I decided to do 100 Hare's Ear Nymphs. This year, I just finished 100 Mickey Finns, 100 Beadhead Woolly Buggers, and 100 #14 Elk Hair Caddis. Many moons ago, I did a lot of tying for local shops, so "production" tying is pretty familiar to me.



But doing 100 flies of a given pattern is probably well within the scope of most tyers who have been at it for a few years. You just do a few each evening for a couple weeks, and you are suddenly there. It's not expensive if you already have most or all of the materials. And when you figure the value of your contribution, it feels like a real accomplishment. This year, flies are due to Tie-a-Thon in Indiana by April 23, so there is some time left to participate. Or you can plan on starting next year. From what I have seen, they post the list of needed flies each year in the fall, and flies need to be to them in April or May. If you decide to participate, I recommend identifying the patterns and sizes you want to tie as early as possible, inventorying your materials, and ordering more material if necessary to provide yourself a generous buffer. Figure on finishing your flies at least several weeks before the due date, in case other activities impinge on your tying time.

A note to my Tie-a-Thon flies: Realistically, about three quarters of you will make it into the



water. Of that group, many of you will be lost in streamside trees and bushes. If you're a streamer or a nymph, you may end up stuck on the bottom, or a sunken branch or root. A few of you will draw a strike from a fish, which hopefully someone will see - someone who needs exactly that distraction from whatever they have going on in their lives. And maybe they'll be captured by fly fishing like I was, when something unseen grabbed my fly and pulled the line from my hands. That's your mission. Whether you make it into the water or not, every one of you will make a difference.



Fly Fishing 101 Clinic! - Bob O'Donnell

Chesapeake Women Anglers (CWA) and the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited (PPTU) will co-host a fly fishing clinic.

Saturday, March 26, 10am to 4pm

National Wildlife Visitor Center/Patuxent Research Refuge

10901 Scarlet Tanager Loop, Laurel, MD 20708

https://chesapeakewomenanglers.org/event/cwa-fly-fishing-clinic/?instance_id=93

What we will cover in the clinic:

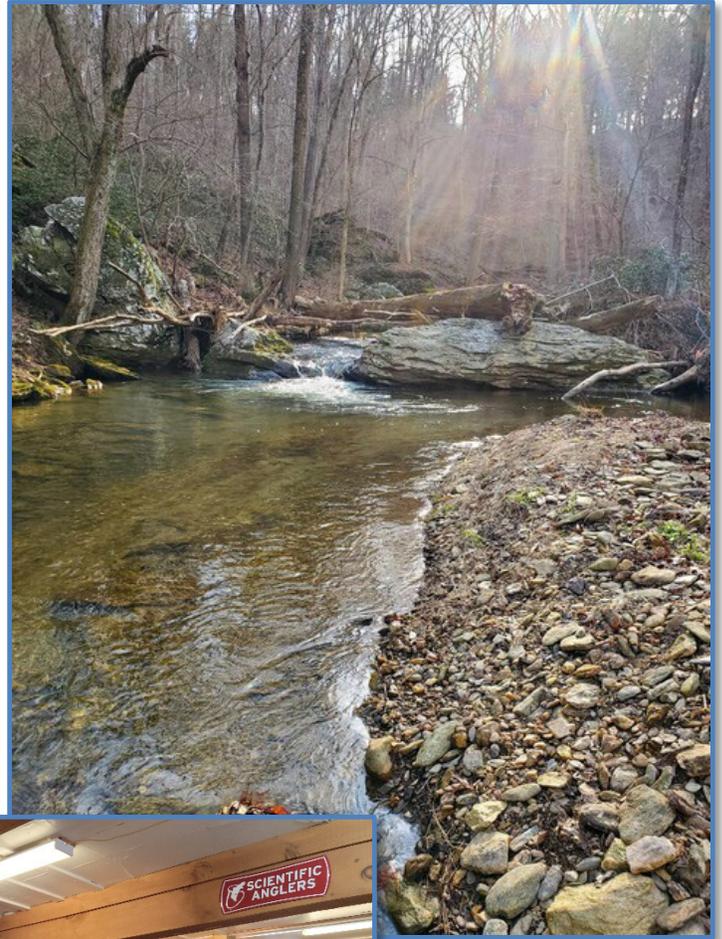
- overview of fly fishing
- fly fishing equipment
- basic casting techniques
- knot tying
- entomology and fly selection
- introduction to the art of fly tying.

Note: Workshop sessions will involve both classroom and outdoor instruction, dependent on the weather. Loaner rods, reels, lines and flies will be available for the day to participants who need them. Water, sodas, and light snacks will be provided. Bring your own bag lunch.

Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Folks are starting to get out and about with some success and additionally, viewing some beautiful scenery while fishing.

Looking forward to seeing more!



Hot dogs and brats were a warm welcome on Saturday's outing. Many thanks to the Beaver Creek Fly Shop!

Contributions Welcome!

Send your contributions or article suggestions to the Editor in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

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Shad Jig

Its not too early to start thinking about shad. Matter of fact, NCCTU is having their annual "Shad Night" meeting this month. Hopefully they record it so you can go back and watch.

This pattern looks durable and fairly easy to tie.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBVuUbTTmY>



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