

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

Mar 2025 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

“Maryland Fly Fishing Trail” Guest Speaker: Rich Batiuk

March 19th, 2025

For our March meeting, we are happy to host the Maryland Fly Fishing Trail Team Leader and PPTU member Rich Batiuk to tell us all about the nation’s first statewide fly fishing trail, which launched in 2022.

Rich has been fly fishing for over close to 50 years, enjoying all aspects including tying flies, building fly rods, owning many fly rods from 3 weight to 10 weight (including multiples of the same weight rods!), fly fishing from kayaks and canoes and accumulating enough fly fishing gear and fly tying materials to last several life times. He has been a member of Free State Fly Fishers for coming up on 40 years, holding an array of positions within the club including two separate terms as President, outings coordinator, conservation programs coordinator, Swap Meet coordinator, and newsletter editor. Seven years ago he retired from a 34 year career with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency working for the Chesapeake Bay Program, a unique partnership of state, federal, local agencies along, the scientific, farming, business and environmental advocacy communities charged with restoring Chesapeake Bay and its surrounding 64,000 square mile watershed.



– *Scott Cernich*

March 19th Chapter Meeting

Laurel Volunteer Fire Department

7588 Van Dusen Road, Laurel, MD 20707

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

[Online Chapter Meeting Link](#)

Visit our website: PPTU.org

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Contact Us:

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Presidents' Column - Craig VanderKolk



In last month's column, I went over things to do in the winter to prepare for spring fishing. Unfortunately, I haven't had a chance to get out with any of my updated fishing gear. As I write this column it's been unusually cold and we still have snow on the ground. But, it's time to start planning where and to a lesser extent, when to fish. I've been the fortunate recipient of some great advice and directions to fish. I'm thankful to those in PPTU that helped by locate some great fishing. I really don't have any secret holes or spots, so this column is just about where I go when I fish for those that are looking to get out this spring - trying to pay it forward.

The Gunpowder or GP as it is sometimes referred to in the list serve, has been a favorite for many years. I caught my first trout just above the Falls Rd bridge when my fly line was splayed out behind me as I watched trout feeding on the surface all around me. For a few years, I fished the stretch just above York Rd because I caught several fish in that section and it was easy to park. As time has gone on, I've started hiking the trail to get a little further away from what I think is areas that get heavily fished. But, perhaps that's just dreaming, since I often run into other anglers. I think the bottom line is that it's a great stream that we're fortunate to have in our backyard. When you're headed that way, think about fishing above the dam or below the catch and release sections. There's lots of great spots to explore.

Thinking of specific time to plan to fish, I always save some time in the spring to make a run up to the tributaries of the Susquehanna to fish for shad. It usually occurs when the dogwoods are in bloom, but I often make a call to [Tochtermans](#) for some updated intel. In the past, my favorite spot was just upstream of the Stafford Rd bridge over Deer Creek in the state park. It's a sweeping curve that can hold about 5 anglers fishing the slot along the far bank and down to the bridge rapids. Recently, it seems that more fish, or at least a more consistent run is on the Octoraro on the other side of the Susquehanna. Usually, I fish downstream of the Dr. Jack Rd bridge. I love to take new anglers there because you can make a reasonably short cast, 45 degrees downstream, and you know when the fish hit your unweighted shad dart. Great fishing and you can do

it early in the morning or after work in the evening since the shad like to move in low light.

While I've fished the Codorus a few times and enjoyed it, my go to stream in Pennsylvania is the Yellow Breeches. It's well worth the money to buy a PA license and make the additional 60+ minute drive past the Gunpowder. Currently my favorite spot is downstream of the Williams Grove Rd bridge. A few riffles and runs along with some nice deeper pools. Once I've fished that area I usually head up through Boiling Springs (and a quick stop at TCO for a few flies and advice) and then up to Zion Rd and fish upstream of the bridge. Its a little less water and more of a challenge to keep from spooking fish, but a beautiful stretch. Sometimes as I head home down through Frederick, I hit the Conawago fly fishing section in Biglerville. For those of you who are looking for Brook trout, Toms creek is up on the mountain above Mountain Creek Campground just off of Rt 32. And of course there's the Catoclin Mountain creeks (try some exploring some of the other ones besides Big Hunting Creek).

walking or biking down the trail below the blue hole. Its about 4 miles to the confluence and no other way to get to it.



Tiger Trout

Last but not least as I think about my spring fishing, is the Savage. What more can you say about a tailwater fishery that has natural reproducing Brown trout and great hatches. My favorite spot is popular but it's the first place I check. It's along the far bank, just below the upper suspension bridge. Unfortunately, you can't fish it too long, because you have to cast gradually farther up the run and your line will stop the feeding of the closer in fish.



Brown Trout Underwater



Sulphur Hatch

Finally, there's the western Maryland streams. My first trip to the North Branch, I was fortunate to get advice from Joe Kunsman and Bob Kaiser on how to find Barnum. Now with GPS you can plug that location in and it will take you right there. Joe never told me his exact favorite spot to fish, but I got a pretty good idea looking at his photos after I took his advice to go down to the Cemetery to fish. I can still remember the tiger trout I caught in what is now one of my favorite spots. During the cicada hatch we had great fishing upstream of Barnum not too far from the closed section below the dam. If you want to get even further away from where people fish, try

Spring is coming and I hope you get lots of chances to get out and fish.

Craig VanderKolk
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



Last Reminder for the Fly Fishing Shows! - Bob O'Donnell

[The Fly Fishing Show](#) is here!

Mark your calendar and gather up your friends. Spending time checking out new products, talking with the vendors, or watching one of the legends demonstrating on the casting pond is a great way to beat the winter blues.

March

15-16 Lancaster, PA

22 Townson, MD (Maryland Fly Fishing Show)



Volunteer Opportunities - PPTU Conservation Committee

Welcome! The chapter's Conservation Committee is introducing this new, regular column for the Conservationist. Here, we will be posting information on volunteer opportunities involving projects to conserve and enhance aquatic resources in the areas that chapter members often fish and sometimes further afield.

If you see an announcement somewhere for a project that chapter members may be interested in, please let us know! Email Pete Yarrington at pyarrington@verizon.net with items to include here no later than the first week of the month that the Conservationist is published - all months except June, July, August and December. Thanks!

Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock - PPTU

In case you missed the February meeting, several members of the Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock stopped by our meeting and gave a short presentation about their organization.



The name of the Organization comes from the waxed neck feather of the Indian Jungle Fowl which was worn as a symbol of the group. This chicken-like bird is on the endangered species list. A brief history goes like this.... In the late 30's a group of men had formed a tradition of a Spring outing to fish Maryland's Hunting Creek. They would stay in a small cabin on the upper portion of the stream. In 1939 the meeting was set for mid-April, but on Friday the 21st a snowstorm hit keeping the men indoors. Now these men were fly fishermen. They shared common feelings about their sport. They wanted to protect it and ensure that future generations of anglers would be able to enjoy fishing as they had. They determined to pass on the knowledge, skill and ideals of conservation to the youth of their generation. How best to do so was the topic of conversation on that Friday night. Finally they determined to compose a CREED to define the goals and guide their organization into the future. Clarke Venable wrote the CREED on Saturday

morning, it was accepted and remains unchanged today.

Now 75 years later the tradition continues. The Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock still meets near Hunting Creek in the Catoctin Mountains of Central Maryland the weekend after Mothers Day to hold their annual Campfire. A three day weekend designed to pass on to the youth of today the knowledge, skills and love of our sport. To learn more, check out their website.

[Watch the video.](#)



"If you are lucky enough to live by a river when you are young, you carry the smell of it with you wherever you go for the rest of your life."

~ Ernest Hemingway

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!



Everything You Need to Build a Fly Rod - Bob O'Donnell

I saw this ad come into my email box and thought I would share with the group. It looked interesting and somewhat reasonable for a full kit from Epic.



There's something special about landing a fish on a rod you built with your own hands. Epic's DIY Fly Rod Building Kits make that happen—without the headaches.

Everything You Need – Precision-matched components, premium blanks, and the right tools.

Step-by-Step Guide – A 50-page illustrated manual that makes the process smooth, even for first-timers.

Results That Impress – Anglers are blown away by the performance of the rods they've built.

Building your own fly rod isn't just a project—it's an experience. And the payoff? A rod that's uniquely yours, ready to make memories on the water.

[Get your kit now and start building.](#)

Climate Corner - Jim Irons

PBS has broadcast an excellent series on climate change called "[Weathered](#)." The series has run for six seasons and is available for streaming if you belong to PBS Passport (the PBS streaming service) and on [YouTube](#).

The passing of a pioneering climate change scientist, Dr. Warren M. Washington is noteworthy. Dr. Washington helped develop one of the first computer models that forecast climate change scenarios. He also co-authored in 1986 a seminal text on climate change, "An Introduction to Three-Dimensional Climate Modeling," along with Claire Parkinson of NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. His obituary appeared in the November 12, 2024 addition of the Washington Post.

Jim Irons, the PPTU and MAC Climate Change Coordinator is on the agenda for the TU 2025 Eastern Regional Rendezvous, April 25 - 27 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, WV. Jim will provide a presentation on the TU Climate Change Working Group and the role of Climate Change Coordinators. If you are interested in attending check out the [Rendezvous](#) information.

How to Make an Overhand Mend - Red's Fly Shop

Joe Rotter from Red's Fly Shop introduces a technique that he says "might be the best tip ever for nymph fishing," which he calls the "overhand mend." It's designed to address a fundamental challenge that all indicator-anglers face: because surface currents are faster than those on the bottom, the strike indicator moves downstream faster than the flies, causing them to drag unnaturally.

The traditional solution has been to either add more weight or increase the distance between the indicator and fly, but each comes with significant drawbacks. More weight is harder to cast, drifts less naturally, and may lead to more snags. A longer leader below the indicator reduces your ability to detect subtle strikes.

The Overhand Mend Solution

Rotter's technique—also known as a "drop mend," "pivot mend," or "anchor mend"—offers an elegant solution to this common challenge. The technique is fairly simply, once you get the hang of it:

1. Cast upstream of your target to allow the nymph time to sink
2. Hold your rod tip high, to keep most of the fly line off the water
3. Make mini roll casts directed above the indicator
4. Try to reposition the indicator above the flies

By actively managing the indicator's drift speed—keeping it from racing downstream of the flies—you can achieve a more natural presentation, in which the speed of the flies matches the actual speed of the subsurface currents where the trout are. Next time you're out on the water with an indicator rig, take a few minutes to practice overhand mends to learn just how much power you need to use to reposition the indicator without pulling the whole rig out of the water. [Watch the Demonstration](#)

March Chapter Outing - Ron Kerrick

The PPTU chapter outing for March will be held at Conewago Creek near Gettysburg, PA. This is a one-day outing scheduled for Saturday March 22nd. To register for this Outing, go to the PPTU website or just use this [Link](#) and select Conewago Creek.

This is a freestone stream just north of Gettysburg. The stream is a short walk from either parking lot and there is an excellent trail that runs the entire length of the fly fishing only section between the two parking lots. This stream has easy wading and bank fishing. The Adams County Trout Unlimited Chapter will float stock this stream on March 1st, from the Russell Tavern Road bridge to State Route 34 (Biglerville Road). Conewago Creek is catch and release, fly fishing only in this section, so there should still be plenty of trout in the stream for us to play with.

Meeting Area: We will meet at 10:00 AM in the upper parking area which is a PFBC Angler Access lot at 420 Zeigler Mill Road, Gettysburg near Rose Lane ([GPS 39.90561 N, 77.26123 W](#)).

If you have any questions, please contact me for more information.

dron224@outlook.com

(240) 423-8375

Hope to see you there!

Project Healing Waters Fly-tying Marathon - Mark Sofman

On March 15th, the National Capital Region of Project Healing Waters (PHW) in partnership with the National Museum of the Marine Corps, is hosting their 10th annual fly-tying marathon from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm in the museum's main gallery.

Flies created at the event will be donated to programs across the country. Come whip up some flies and learn about the Corps!

Tiers must preregister:

Email: jim.bensinger@projecthealingwaters.org -
Phone 540-623-9225 or

Email:
travis.vanderberg@projecthealingwaters.org -
Phone 507-676-2030

Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Seems lots of folks are either busy or staying indoors. Some nice weather rolled in, perhaps folks will get out fishing. Speaking of... check out the pictures of our volunteer members stocking trout!



Contributions & Questions Welcome!

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

Editor: Bob O'Donnell

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CDC & Elk

Here's a great video from Tim Flagler of Tightline Productions in which he teaches you to tie a cool, buggy variation on the classic Elk-Hair Caddis. It's quite an easy pattern to tie, but as usual, Tim offers some very specific tips to make things even easier. I especially love the way he locks down both the CDC feather and the deer hair to make the fly more durable.

[CDC & Elk](#)



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