

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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

“Sweetgrass Rods” Guest Speakers: Glenn Brackett

Nov 19th, 2025

Our November speaker will be Glenn Brackett, Founder and Master Craftsman at [Sweetgrass Rods](https://www.sweetgrassrods.com).

Glenn learned the craft of bamboo rod building working at the Winston Rod Company. In the mid-1970s, Glenn and Tom Morgan moved the Winston Rod company from San Francisco to Twin Bridges, Montana. They believed that this location, a junction of great trout streams, would inspire the intangible perfection they sought in a rod truly built for fly anglers. Eventually, Glenn moved on from Winston and started Sweetgrass Rods – first in Twin Bridges and then in Butte, Montana.

With 45 years of triumph and tears at the rod bench, Glenn Brackett has been defined by his love of building bamboo fly rods. An inspiration in the shop as well as throughout the local community, Glenn will often say that his most sacred duty is to preserve the legacy of fly fishing by teaching others the many lessons of building cane rods.

The meeting will be hybrid with Glenn presenting via Zoom from Montana.

– *Scott Cernich*



Nov 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](https://www.pptu.org)

OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2024 – 2025

President: Craig VanderKolk: president@pptu.org

Past-President: Joe Taylor

Vice-President: ***“Open Position”***

Treasurer: Alan Williams

Secretary: Pete Anderson

Directors: Sean Beck

Bob Bokulic

Ron Briggs

Tom Brosnan

Doug Johncox

Ethan Miller

Ray Miller

Jim Senker

Committee Chairs:

Fundraising: *Vacant*

Forum Moderators: Sean Beck, Motti Tadmor

Librarian: Lou Reichel

Mentor Program: Ray Miller

Membership Secretary: Jay Sheppard

Conservationist Editor: Bob O'Donnell

Outings: Ron Kerrik & Lou Reichel

Outings@pptu.org

Speakers Program: Scott Cernich

Conservation Advocacy: *Vacant*

Project Healing Waters: Ray Collette

Publicity: Bob O'Donnell

Raffles: Joe Taylor

Trout in the Classroom: Alan Burrows

Water Quality: Pete Yarrington. Peter Schuler

Climate Change Coord: James Irons

Webmaster: Ken Bowyer

Motti Tadmor

Youth Program: *Vacant*

Stream Committees:

Paint Branch: Joe Robinson

Northwest Branch: Joe Robinson

Middle Patuxent: Bryan Sirotkin

Patuxent: Jay Sheppard

Mid Atlantic Council Delegates:

Ron Briggs

Bob Bokulic

Tom Bronson

Bob Dietz

Randy Dwyer: Council Chair

Bob O'Donnell

Craig Vanderkolk

Nick Weber

Contact Us:

mail@pptu.org

Presidents' Column - Craig VanderKolk



I'm continuing on from last month with introductions of new PPTU members and Board Members by letting you know a little about Ethan Miller and Sean Beck, both new Board Members. Ethan grew up in Rockville. His grandfather taught him to fish at a house on a beautiful spot in Maine, Lake Kezar. He went from bait fishing on the lake to fly fishing 6 years ago which he leaned into during the pandemic. He reports being obsessed with it now and tying his own flies after attending the fly tying course led by Bob Dietz. He has his own financial investment firm which allows him time to fish.

Sean Beck loves the challenge of a local stream that no one thinks to fish. He started fishing at an early age growing up in Michigan. His first fly fishing experience was on the Green River in Utah at age 11. After a long hiatus, he picked up a fly rod when asked to be an Instructor for a local Boy Scout Chapter's, Fishing Merit Badge. Sean ties amazing flies for a variety of species including some special ones for pike that I used in Canada with success.

Recently, I heard that Backwater Angler was for sale and as we all know the Beaver Creek Fly Shop ceased to exist in the past and Precision has now closed it. It always sad and disappointing when this happens because we lose a wealth of local information and advice for our trips to local streams. When we go to a new stream and stop into the local fly shop, most of us probably buy a few things or flies to support them. This is great, but if we really want to support them, buying gear from them is what keeps them afloat and continuing a long tradition. So, when you need your leaky waders replaced, new boots with soles that stay on, rain gear or a new fly rod, reel, or line, consider making a drive to buy your gear. Local shops that we can all get to are: Backwater Angler (assuming it gets a new owner), Great Feathers, Tochtermans, District Angling and just a bit further, TCO and Precision. I find that they give good service, can order almost anything and match any deal online.

I wanted to highlight our upcoming trip to Erie PA to fish the Elk or other nearby streams November 14-17. Except for last year when we were snowed out, we've managed to get almost everyone a steelhead. I was worried about this year, but I recently heard from our usual guide, Paul Krott, that

they just had a bunch of rain and the forecast for the next two weeks is promising. It's a really great trip. We usually have fifteen to twenty participants and guide slots for everyone. There's plenty of opportunities to fish with small groups and with anglers with experience.

Finally, mark your calendars for the Annual PPTU President's Recognition Luncheon. This year it will take place December 6th at 12 Noon. We've changed the venue to another local Laurel restaurant, Chido's Tex-Mex Grill, 14600 Laurel Place, Laurel MD 20707. I hope to see you all there. Enjoy the fall and tight lines!

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



Fly-Tying Get-Togethers - PPTU

Our PPTU fly-tying get-togethers will resume on **November 4th (6:30 pm) at the Greene Turtle** in Burtonsville. They'll be held the first Tuesday of alternating months after that. These events are a great opportunity to share your tying knowledge, improve your skills, or simply watch others tie flies and talk about fishing!! See you there!

Greene Turtle

15660 Old Columbia Pike
Burtonsville, MD 20866

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

This has been a busy summer for a dedicated group of our chapter members. In early June, We installed a Dissolved Oxygen (DO) and temperature recording sensor in the Patuxent River downstream of Haviland Mill bridge and Brighton Dam. We were plagued with fine silt covering the sensor itself until we installed a tiny wiper module that swept the silt off several times each day. Our goal was to monitor the DO and temperature through the summer until late October.

Triadelphia Reservoir is roughly 55' deep (this is less than half the depth of Prettyboy Reservoir feeding the Gunpowder). In the summer, the bottom has cold water, which has almost no oxygen. The dam releases the water through big needle valves, which are like the nozzle on a garden hose. The water emanating from the Brighton Dam valves is aerated, but we needed to know how efficient that was working at the various high and low discharges from the dam over the summer and how long the cold water would last.

We are still analyzing our data. The equipment will be pulled from the river by the time you read this summary. In sum, the water temperature slowly rose over the summer and was in the low 70s by the end of June and remained there through early October. Trout waters are not to exceed 75° F, which it did briefly on some afternoons in September. The DO got down to ~5.2 mg/L on a couple mornings, which is near the minimum required by trout of 5.0 mg/L. Most of the summer the DO was at or above 6.0 mg/L. In sum, trout might have survived this summer in the tailwater, but they would have not

enjoyed the experience. We must recognize that we have been in a serious drought for the past year.

I want to acknowledge our valiant crew who installed and maintained the equipment and then downloaded the data each week. Bob Bokulic was the project leader in organizing the whole operation and massaging the data each week to be shared with WSSC and DNR, as well as several other state and federal agencies. We also need to thank the rest of the crew (in alphabetical order): Ron Briggs, Jim Irons, Ron Kerrick, and Alan Williams. Great job well done. We have learned a lot about this tailwater fishery's water quality.

A couple of hundred rainbows were float-stocked in the flies-only reach below Brighton Dam on October 23. They should provide some sporting opportunities through the winter. The normal pre-season stocking usually begins in the latter half of February.

Climate Corner - Jim Irons

On September 17 the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine posted a [press release](#) that states: "A new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine says the evidence for current and future harm to human health and welfare created by human-caused greenhouse gases is beyond scientific dispute.

The report focuses on evidence gathered by the scientific community since 2009, when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency found that greenhouse gas emissions threaten public health and welfare. The EPA recently gave notice of proposed rulemaking indicating its intention to rescind this finding.

The report says EPA's 2009 finding was accurate, has stood the test of time, and is now reinforced by even stronger evidence."

The report concludes that:

Emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from human activities are increasing the concentration of these gases in the atmosphere.

Improved observations confirm unequivocally that greenhouse gas emissions are warming Earth's surface and changing Earth's climate.

Human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases and resulting climate change harm the health of people in the United States.

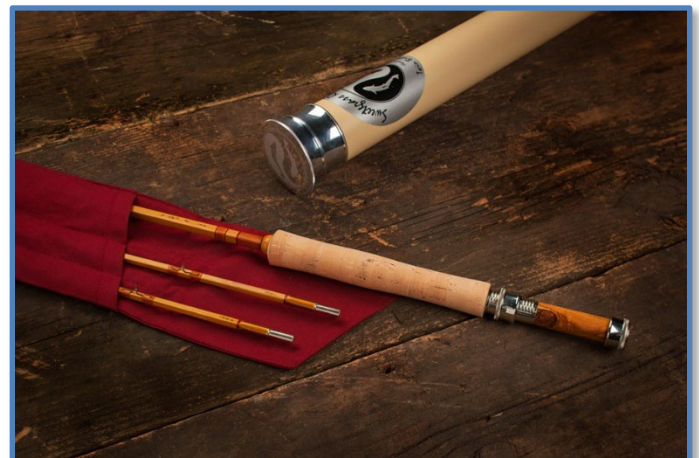
Changes in climate resulting from human-caused emissions of greenhouse gases harm the welfare of people in the United States.

Continued emissions of greenhouse gases from human activities will lead to more climate changes in the United States, with the severity of expected change increasing with every ton of greenhouse gases emitted.

Additionally, the Washington Post published an article on October 10 entitled "Why you should go fishing, even if you think you'd be terrible at it" by Dana Milbank. Milbank wrote "When I asked Deeter (Kirk Deeter, the vice president for angling at Trout Unlimited) if climate change is controversial among anglers, he replied: "It's accepted science. Anybody who's been out on the water knows it." They see it, he said, in shrinking fish populations and drought-depleted water, and in the overheated rivers now sometimes closed to fishing during the summer. The key to forging a national consensus to fight climate change, then, is simple: "More boots in the water," he says." [Read the full article here.](#)

Sweetgrass Rods Highlight - Bob O'Donnell

Quote from Genn Brackett - "We look at [Sweetgrass Rods](#) as our opportunity to contribute to the fine tradition of bamboo fly rod building as well as to share our beliefs in what can be accomplished if we all work together for a common good."



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!



Charlie Gelso - Requiescat in Pace - Jay Sheppard

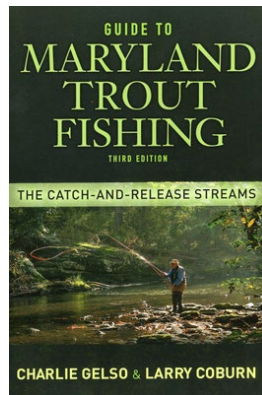
Charlie passed away early in October at his home in Laurel. He had been in hospice care for the past month or so. The cancer was quick.

He was a great friend of mine--a true BFF. We did a lot of fishing trips over the decades.

His ashes will be spread in the upper Patuxent at some point to be determined. A celebration of life will be held at a time TBD. Charlie was a long time chapter member and of course, one of the authors of the Guide to Maryland Trout Fishing: The Catch-And-Release Streams.

Charles J. Gelso was a professor emeritus and senior lecturer in psychology at University of Maryland. He had written widely about the therapeutic relationship over the years, theorizing about and studying key elements of the relationship. Dr. Gelso had been editor of major journals in psychotherapy and had received many top awards in the field.

Charlie had a major impact on the field of counseling psychology and psychotherapy more broadly with his work on the therapeutic relationship...he is so well known for developing theory and conducting research on the real relationship, transference and countertransference. He was the ultimate scientist-practitioner, doing practice that guided his research.



*When I come to the end of the horizon
And enter the other shore
Remember me with fondness.
Cry for me no more.*

*I have found my final resting place
That special spot to fish
Remember the times that we shared
You too, I will miss.*

*This is the journey I must take,
And I must go alone.
Know that my heart is with you,
As I take this journey home.*

*To that final fishing hole
For fishermen like me
To tell the biggest fishing tales
About the one that got away.*

*Remember me with fondness
This is not goodbye
It is "Till we meet again".
At the fishing hole in the sky.*

~ Esther Swanborough

Gear Trade-In Program - Precision Fly and Tackle

Your next favorite rod/reel starts with the one you're not using.

Stop storing gear you don't use. Trade in your old gear through our Gear Trade-In Program and receive store credit to put towards new gear!

[Get A Quote for Your Used Gear](#)

Fill out the short online form to receive an instant quote for your rod/reel, and receive store credit to put towards new gear!

Western MD Campout Report - Ron Kerrick/Lou Reichel

We had a great weekend for the outing. Most of us arrived at various times on Friday. It was a beautiful, crisp, partially sunny, fall day, with the

leaves developing their traditional seasonal colors. Unfortunately, western Maryland hasn't had much rain this fall, and the water levels were low on the upper Savage and all of the feeder streams. In fact, the feeder streams were reduced to just a trickle of water, so no small stream brook trout fishing this year. On the lower Savage River, the water level was a little low but fine, courtesy of the reservoir. About half of the group arrived early Friday afternoon, set up camp and then went fishing on the Lower Savage River. I caught a 13" Brown Trout at the tail of the PHD pool on an October Caddis nymph that I tied the day before the outing. That night we all got together at the pavilion for dinner and conversation around the campfire. Later Friday night it got a little cold and overnight the temperature dropped to 34 degrees.



Saturday morning after hot coffee and breakfast, Pete Anderson and Peter Banwell fished the lower Savage at the metal bridge and caught one Rainbow. Lou Reichel, Dennis Covert, Joe Taylor and I drove over to the North Branch of the Potomac at Barnum to fish for the day, but we didn't have any luck. The afternoon temperature was in the low 60's and the sky was sunny. At the end of the day, as usual, we got together again for dinner at the pavilion. Later that night, we got some rain, but having set up our tents under the Monroe Pavilion shelter, we all remained dry. The temperature that night was warmer, in the low 50's. Thankfully the rain stopped Sunday morning, right after breakfast.

On Sunday, Pete Anderson and Pete Banwell fished for the morning and then left for home. Lou Reichel drove over to the Casselman River to check it out, because it had been recently stocked. Randy Dwyer arrived on Sunday and caught a fish upstream of the metal bridge. The rest of us fished at various spots on the Savage River but fishing was tough and most of us came up empty handed. That night at dinner, Lou reported that the water level at the Casselman was very low, but he did see a group of about 40 to 50 good sized fish at Farmer's Lane. So

based on Lou's report, Randy, Lou, and I decided to hit the Casselman before leaving for home on Monday.

On Monday morning the three of us went over to the Casselman. Lou's report turned out to be great! The three of us took turns and shared the pool at Farmer's Lane. After about 1 ½ hours, I left for home and at that time, we each had caught 10 rainbows using mostly dry flies. The fish were chunky and averaged between 12 to 14 inches. I want to thank Randy for generously giving me several dry flies to use at Farmer's Lane. Randy and Lou fished longer, with Randy reporting 16+ fish caught.

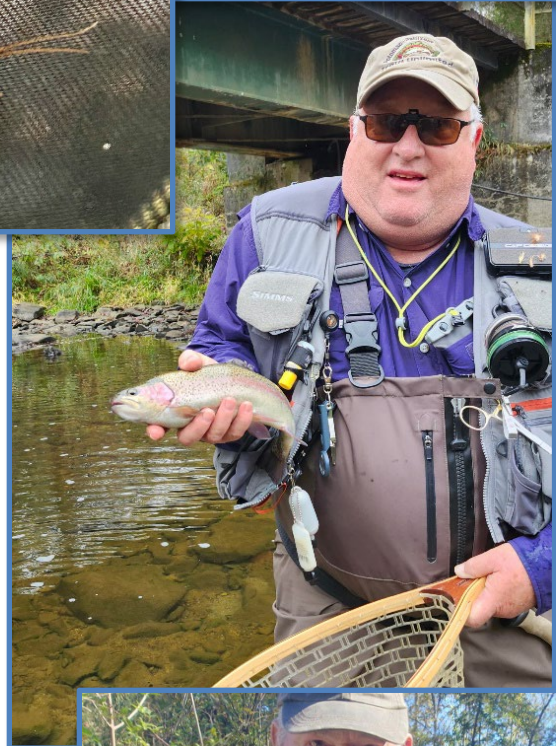
All in all, it was a great Outing. The fishing was a little tough at times, but I think that everyone had some action.

Many Thanks to our ASC Donors!!! - PPTU

Alan Williams, Robert Kaiser, Bob Bokulic, Mark Sofman, Andy Grosko, William Meyer, Richard Woods, James Thompson, Brian Horick, Jerry McPhee, David Keene, Allan Rutzen, Jim Irons, Richard Wormsbecher, Alexander Bond, Randy Dwyer, David Engle, Craig Vanderkolk, David Astin, Doug Johncox, Brian Stafford, Thomas Brosnan, Richard Batiuk, David Heinrichs, Brian Cohen, Jonathan Halpern, Gary Slyman, Hanlon Strategic Consulting LLC, Maria Bovich, Nancy Canby, Mark Schiffrin, Alan Burrows, Todd Parks, Mark Schiffrin, John Cabala, Charles MacNealy, Peter Banwell, Mark Silverman, Peter Banwell, Louis J. Boezi, Joseph Taylor, Alexander Bond, Phillip Ash, Jeffrey Irtenkauf, Martin Rabenhorst, Robert Dietz, John Mackedon, Benjamin Nichols, Gregg Hartley, Jason St Clair, Michael Abramowitz, John Lee, Timothy Begley, Jack McCauley, Michael Frey, Franklin Draper, Chris Scribner, Christopher Young, Ethan Miller, Jewel Barlow, Joseph Robinson, Charles Yang, Angel Otero, Alan Schmetzer, Robyn Pochettino, Marc Hutzell, Walter Sheppard, Elijah Underwood, Rodger Johnson, Carol Shatrowsky, George Opryszko, Christopher Newkumet, Lenford Carey, James Shively, Robert Boise, Theodore Lutterman, Sean Beck, Louis Reichel, Scott Stewart, Janene Miller, Arthur Friedlander, Jouky Chang, Kenneth Bowyer, Greg Sholly, Timothy Davis, Joseph Bleiberg, Stephen Shaw, Corporate Rentals, LLC, Motti Tadmor, Simon Plunkett, Minji Yang, Arnie Strand.

Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Don't forget to post notes and photos on the list server while we're on break. I expect to see some Steelhead shots from the group heading to Erie and many local shots since our streams were stocked.



**Are you only receiving this hard copy?
We NEED Your Email Address!**

If you only receive the Conservationist via the mail, we would like you to send us a good email address. We do NOT share emails with anyone. Printing copies and mailing them out costs the chapter money. If you provide an email address, you can receive the newsletter directly to your Inbox OR you may download it directly from the PPTU web page. Please send me an email address at your convenience. Of course if for some reason you are not using email, enjoy this printed copy of the Conservationist.

Editor: Bob O'Donnell
Email: TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com



FREE TU Membership When You Join PPTU!

New members can join TU for FREE by completing the Special [Introductory Membership Application Form](#) available on our web page – PPTU.org. Email the completed form to membership at: membership.pptu@gmail.com. Our chapter will send the completed form along with a check for \$17.50 to Trout Unlimited to complete your membership sign up.

If you use the QR code you should send receipt to membership.pptu@gmail.com for reimbursement.

Any questions regarding signing up can be addressed to membership via email: membership.pptu@gmail.com.



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