

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

**Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited**

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

## “Fishing for Lake Erie Steelhead” with Ben John

*Sep 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022 at 7:00PM*

Welcome back PPTU! Our September topic will be Fishing for Lake Erie Steelhead, presented by Ben John of Precision Fly and Tackle. Ben will join us virtually to cover the basics of steelhead fishing for Lake Erie steelhead, especially gear setup and fly selection and presentation. PPTU is planning a fall steelhead outing, so Ben’s talk is especially timely.

Ben John is Precision Fly and Tackle’s Head Guide, the manager of the PFT Beaver Creek location, and the instructor for PFT’s Fundamentals of Tightline Nymphing Classes. Ben was introduced to fly fishing and fly tying at very young age. The sport quickly became a passion of his as he experienced the rush from bending his fly rod with a Panfish or trout. You could always find him spending time sharpening his skills while chasing after wild rainbows and native brook trout in some of the best streams in south-central Pennsylvania. Shortly after college, Ben was able to volunteer with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing. This is where he found that he enjoyed teaching the art of fly fishing and sharing his passion with others. Since then he has grown as a fly fishing guide and loves to provide trips that will give memories for a lifetime.

Streams that he guides on are various trout streams such as Falling Spring, Big Spring, Yellow Breeches, Little Juanita, Conococheague, Erie tributaries for steelhead, and the Juniata River for smallmouth.



– *Karan Singh*

### Monthly Chapter Meetings – Hybrid Meeting – In Person/Virtual!!!

Time and Day: 7:00 PM unless a new time is stated, Third Wednesday except June, July, August and December  
NEW Meeting Location: Harkins Builders - 10490 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400, Columbia, MD 21044

Virtual Link:

[Click Here to JOIN the Meeting on Sep 21st!](#)

Visit our website: [www.pptu.org](http://www.pptu.org)

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## Presidents' Column - Joe Taylor



I hope everyone had a wonderful, relaxing summer. I fished a lot (until the water got too warm), checked out some new streams and just tried to stay cool. Witnessed some amazing hatches but the fishing, at least for me, was a bit slow. Tough to believe it's already fall but I'm looking forward to those cool temperatures after all of the hot weather we have been having this summer.

Let those fun fall chores begin. Raking leaves, installing storm windows, preparing for the hurricane season, and winterizing engines to name a few. I'm certainly not a hatch expert but the fishing in the fall is wonderful. There might not be the "major" spring hatches we all have come to love but there are still plenty of bug life to go around. So, don't put away your fishing gear this fall or winter or ever!!! And keep a lookout for our Outing schedule, we have some great trips planned over the next few months.

On one of my fishing adventures this summer, I had an experience that I have to share with everyone. This is a do as I say, not as I do story. When I drive to a stream, which is 99% of the time, I have a ritual I go through when I'm putting my gear away after I've been fishing for the day. This includes the golden rule of never putting my fly rod on my roof. I always break the rod down and immediately put it inside of my truck. Well, on a recent trip to the North Branch with some fellow PPTU members, I got lazy. We were staying in a cabin along the river in Barnum for a long weekend and I didn't have any plans to drive anywhere. As a side note, the fishing was tough, but we all had a lot of fun.

Anyway, back to my story. After a morning fishing session, we decided to take a break until later that evening, so we all took off our waders and put our rods away. Except, I got lazy and just put it on top of my truck, so it was out of the way. You know where this is going. Later that day, I unexpectedly drove up to the top of Barnum to make a few calls (no service down by the river) and about an hour later realized my rod was gone. I looked and looked, retraced my drive up the hill, walked back up the hill but nothing...it was gone. The next day another PPTU member joined our group so after sharing my stupidity with them, we decided to retrace my drive again.

Well, to my delight we spotted this sign stapled to the small building in the Barnum parking lot.



You can imagine how quickly I raced back up the hill to give them a call. The gentlemen who found my rod not only was well aware of it's value but actually drove back down to the cabin dropped it off. To say that I am very lucky to get my rod and reel back is an understatement. He was a super nice guy who went out of his way to help a fellow fly fisher.

So, like we all should already know, NEVER put your rod on the roof of your car/truck for any reason. And probably as importantly, look out for your fellow fly fishers (or fishers in general) because you will never know when you might depend on someone you come across on the stream. Enjoy the beautiful fall weather and please do NOT put your rod on the roof of your car/truck. I'm looking forward to seeing everyone either live or virtually at our next chapter meeting. It's an exciting time to be part of PPTU!

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](mailto:mentor@pptu.org)



## NEW Meeting Location!!! - Joe Taylor

Our September kickoff meeting will be done as a "Hybrid", both virtual and if you wish, in person.

One of our chapter members, Ben Nichols, graciously offered the use of his company's conference room for PPTU's upcoming meeting in September. The board did a test run at that location and it seemed to work ok. So, we will attempt the chapter meeting on September 21<sup>st</sup>. Its been several years since our last face-to-face meeting and many people are looking forward to it. Of course you can still log in from the comfort of your home and get the same presentation.

You may park in one of the adjacent parking garages or the Mall parking lot. A separate email will be sent out to members with more information regarding this venue and details on its location.

We look forward to seeing many of you in person!

And if you decide to come, please say thank you to our host, Ben Nichols.

**Location Map: [Harkins Builders](#)**

Harkins Builders  
10490 Little Patuxent Parkway, Suite 400  
Columbia MD 21044



**Tackle and Fishing Tips**  
**- Jay Sheppard**

Over the summer there was a discussion on casting with different hands to avoid the vegetation on the same side of the stream as one is fishing. Some fishers learned how to cast with either hand. Impressive! Being ambidextrous is something I could never master for anything beyond a screwdriver! Other fishers learned how to drop the fly on the back cast; that is, facing downstream to keep the cast out of the trees, while hitting their target on what would be the back cast! Very impressive for sure, too. I still have some difficulty hitting my target on a good forward cast.



We all face the same problems with trees and other vegetation. My solution is learning how to cast in any plane from 9 on the left to 3 on the right and anywhere in between with the same (right) hand. That is, I do casting from either side while I face the target zone. I urge everyone to practice casts from both sides and all angles in between. If you want to

also practice with the other hand or using the back cast to drop your fly, have at it. The main goal is to avoid leaving your fly in a tree.

This brings up an ancillary point to consider when fishing. When we approach a stream and start casting, we usually do like everyone else who has fished from that spot over the past many years. Trout become accustomed to seeing the same fly presented in the same manner. Try to find a slightly different way to present the fly to the same lie. Maybe a downstream dead drift or an upstream wet fly twitched will elicit a take? For example, I have done very well in the dead of winter casting upstream a small black bodied wet with a white calf tail wing and giving a twitch periodically as it comes back towards my rod tip. Other times, I have caught trout with a downstream drift back under an overhanging branch. If that large pool is most often fished from the same side, I try to get to the other side, even if I only get a handful of casts from that side. Guess I am a fan of Robert Frost and take the road least traveled to try to outsmart the wily trout.

**Social Outings!**  
**- Craig Vanderkolk**

We want to continue offering chances for members to socialize and unwind. Below are a few upcoming options to mark on your calendars. Keep an eye on your email for reminders and try to join some of your fellow members for a mental break from the daily grind. Note: If you have any suggestions for a location please pass them my way.

**September 15 - 6-8 pm**

Come join us after fishing the Patuxent or to swap fishing stories at Waredaca Brewing Company.

**October 13 - 6-8:30 pm**

Come join us for fly tying tips and techniques at Jailbreak Brewing Company.

**November 10 - 6-8:30 pm**

Come join us for a viewing of a movie about fishing icon Joe Brooks.

*“Finding Joe Brooks”*

Location and time TBD

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

Flows late this summer have been abysmal on the upper Patuxent River. Am sure there are a small number of both wild and holdover trout lurking under the root wads and log jams. As the weather cools and flows pick back up, exploring some of the remote sections might be rewarded with a few trout. Good luck.

Over the summer, PPTU submitted some comments to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regarding the Brighton Dam hydropower project. The company that owns the turbines wants to do a study next summer to verify the lack of Dissolved Oxygen (DO) we have been reporting for many years. The DO in summer from the dam cold water release passing through the turbines has very minimal DO, about 20% of what trout require as a minimum. We want the study to also test potential solutions, such as some means of air injection. FERC is also going to be doing a relicensing review. That will take a couple of years. We want assurances that the trout will have suitable DO all summer. This whole process has been like watching paint dry or snails race. Very slow!!



*"For the supreme test of a fisherman is not how many fish he has caught, not even how he has caught them, but what he has caught when he has caught no fish."*

~ John H. Bradley

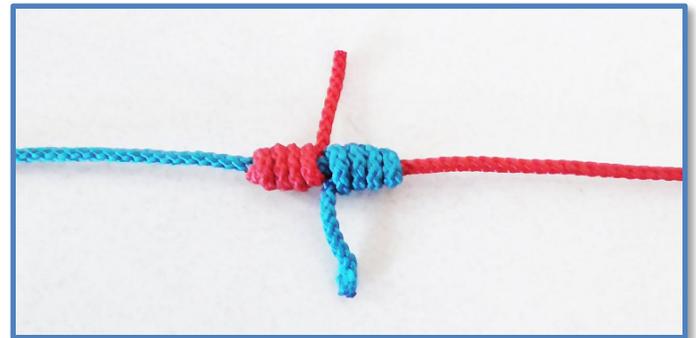


If you spot poaching please call or text:

**Maryland Wildlife Crime Stoppers**  
At  
**443-433-4112**



*Add this number to your cell phone contact list!*



## Blood Knot Tips - Michael Abramowitz

There are a few ways to tie blood knots. I am sure you all have your favorite method. Brian Flechsig at Mad River Outfitters has a good YouTube tutorial for blood knots with tips from the late Lefty Kreh. "Be generous with your tag length." This makes tying the knot a lot easier. Also a blood knot is really two clinch knots tied side to side, and pulled tight.

[Blood Knot Video](#)

## Outings Update - Lou Reichel

### White Fly hatch at Yellow Breeches, PA

I did not schedule a white fly outing in August at the Yellow Breeches. TCO Boiling Springs says the water was too hot and strongly suggested not to fish the creek.

If you plan on trying to fish the white fly hatch, check out the TCO Boiling Springs website for white fly sightings. Generally, the hatch starts the 3rd

week of August. The hatch starts at dusk around 8:00 pm and is fished in the dark. If you are lucky, the large Hex flies will also be hatching at 7:00 pm and sometimes the trout are on them. You generally need to arrive on the creek by 5:00 pm to get a space on the creek, it can get crowded. By the time you read this the white flies may be done for the year.

### **Yellow Creek, PA**

Yellow Creek, PA, is scheduled for Sept 24, 2022. More details will be sent later. It is a new creek to me, so it will be an adventure for all. A few PPTU members have fished it and gave good reports. It is about 2.5 hours away, so we will leave early, at a true fisherman's early morning. Stay tuned.

### **Western Md Campout, Oct 8-10.**

This trip is still planned. Camping at the Monroe Pavilion in Big Run St Park, near the Savage River, for 3 days, 2 nights. There are other places to stay if you are not camping. Again, more details will be forthcoming as October draws near.

### **Steelhead Trip, Erie, PA, Dec 3-5.**

A Steelhead trip is planned to the tributaries of Lake Erie at Erie, PA. We have not done a Steelhead outing in a long time. Some PPTU members have gone separately in the past few years, so we decided to get a PPTU Steelhead outing. Craig Vanderkolk skillfully planned this trip and he has arranged for some guides. We will repost the email from Aug 10<sup>th</sup> and provide more information for sign up.

### **Suggest a November Outing!**

So, there is a time slot in Nov for an outing. If anyone has any suggestions where to fish please let me know and we'll make it official.

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**Potomac Patuxent Chapter  
#236 of Trout Unlimited**

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## **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) - Jay Sheppard**

September starts our annual cycle and now is the time to consider making your Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC). As a Chapter we are not allowed to require chapter dues or fees for membership. Along with other fund raising events, we therefore ask for a \$20 ASC each September, to sustain the chapter's administration costs, educational programs, and community service projects including:

- Trout in the Classroom program that teaches primary & middle schoolers the importance of cold water fisheries to our environment.
- Support to TU fly fishing & conservation camps in Virginia and Pennsylvania, sponsoring attendance by high school students.
- Support of the Project Healing Waters program at Ft. Meade and Walter Reed that provides recreational activities to wounded warriors.
- Support the Mayfly Project for foster kids by being taught to fish and use fly rods.
- Free copies of the Conservationist for local fly shops, State agencies and other conservation organizations.
- Conservation projects that restore trout habitats in rivers & streams across Maryland.

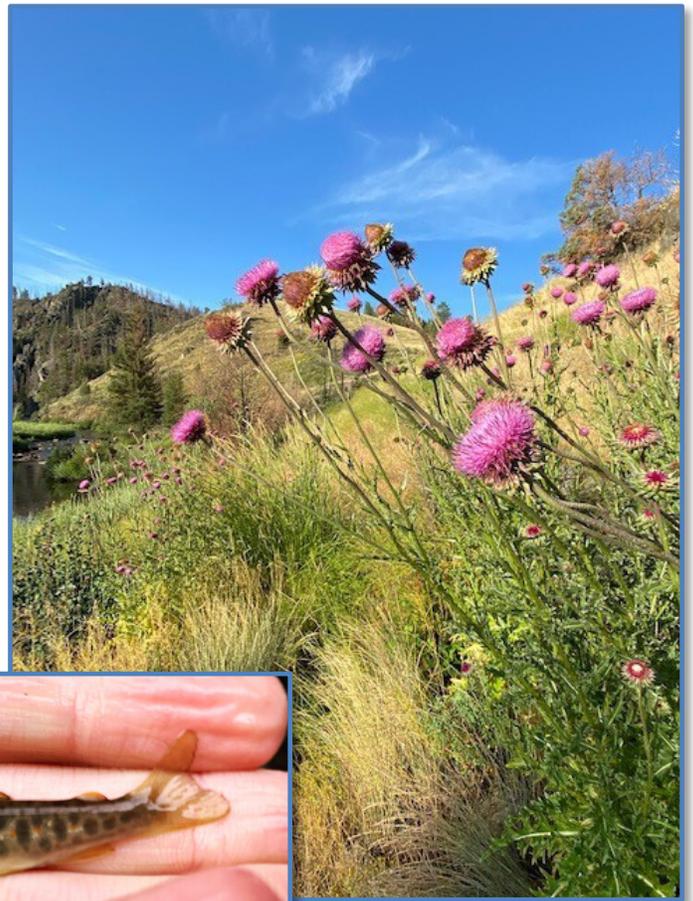
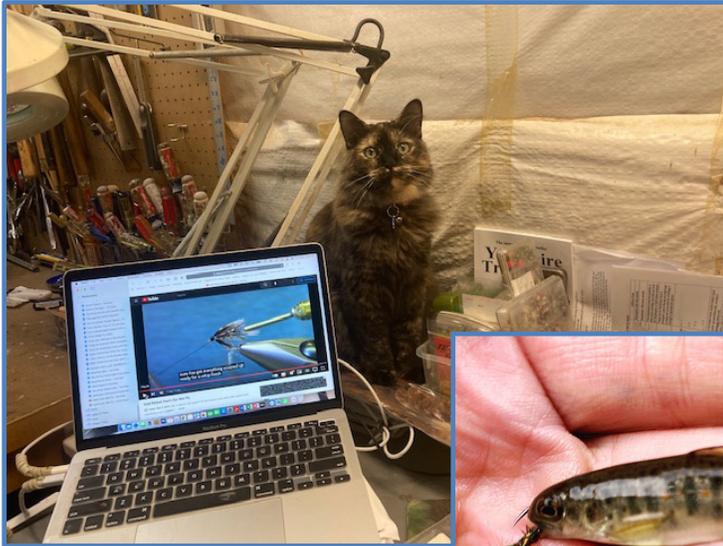


You can make your ASC donation in several ways:

- At the next chapter meeting (whenever that might be) by cash or check.
- Go to [pptu.org](http://pptu.org) and use our PayPal portal: [Donate to PPTU](#)
- Mail a check payable to PPTU and send to our PO Box (see last page).

## Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Outings are being coordinated for the Fall. We hope to see some new faces out on the water. And as a reminder – if you need some one-on-one time just let the Outings coordinator know and someone will be happy to assist you on stream.



## 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.

**Editor: Bob O'Donnell**

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## Letort Hopper

In many places its Hopper time. Our friend Matt O'Neal not only shows you how to tie this pattern, he also presents a good story about its originator and fly fishing icon, Ed Shenk (1927-2020) of Carlisle, PA.

[Flatwing Letort Hopper](#)



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