



February 2006

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, February 15

The State of Maryland Cold Water Fisheries

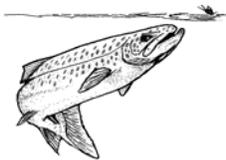
We're getting close to when the President presents his annual State of the Union Address. For the politically-afflicted, it is something to look forward to. For us fishing fools, there is a different State of the Union coming up that is far more interesting.

Charlie Gougeon, the State DNR official responsible for managing the fisheries in our region periodically makes a pilgrimage to PPTU to tell us how our trout waters are faring. He typically gets bombarded with questions about fish counts, water quality and flow, and last but not least when and where the stocking truck is going to show up.

On this visit, his presentation is going to focus more specifically on the status of the Gunpowder and he'll be unveiling the results of DNR's most recent surveys. He's also going to talk about a new initiative -- one that our chapter has been actively involved with -- that is, an effort to establish a catch and release, sustainable trout fishery in the stretch of the Patuxent just below Triadelphia Reservoir.

So come on down and hear the most recent information about these two waters from a man who really is in the know! ■

— Sebastian O'Kelly



PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

Reinforced by the Mid-Atlantic Show and our Tying Meeting, we turn to thoughts of Spring, and the many opportunities to ply our favorite water and hatches with the coming season. No doubt many of you have turned to your tying bench to take the opportunity of cold nights and bad weather to refill the holes in your fly box with favorite patterns and probably a few new ones that you want to try. I am also thinking of a rod or two that might fit a niche in my rod corner. Surely I can't fish another year without a Dickerson 7613 (L) to begin to enjoy dry fly fishing just a little more. Realizing that the best dry fly fishing I had last year was with a foam beetle which did not require the most delicate presentation, this could be a hard sell to a working spouse, if the entire situation were known.

Beyond a conservation goal that we met last Fall with the Hawlings River tree planting, we are ►
(Cont'd. on Next page)

**** Inclement Weather Notice****

The next Chapter meeting is **Wednesday, February 15, 2006**. In cases of inclement weather there is a possibility that meetings will be cancelled. Please contact any member of the Board (see p.2) a few hours prior to the start of the meeting OR watch the PPCTU list serve.

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

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Patuxent:	Jay Sheppard	301-725-5559

Contributions in the form of clip art, articles, conservation activities, trip reports, letters, fishing and conservation news, tying tips, book reviews, and essays about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain text in the email body or Microsoft Word attachments. Authors should also include their phone number and a brief descriptions of the attachments. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication

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President's Column—Cont'd

looking forward to supporting efforts to increase the water quality for the North Branch of the Potomac, and to look for opportunities to work with other Trout friendly groups like those associated with Beaver Creek improvements and restoration.

We also look to the Maryland DNR for continued support of our recreation enjoyment, and to help us develop nearby local fisheries. I look forward to our program speaker Charlie Gougeon from DNR to share his thoughts on our prospects from his vantage point.

I also look forward to a fishing season that has already begun as one in which we individually enjoy our sport, and hopefully share it with others as well. In this light, I look forward to the efforts of our chapter to bring the joy of fishing to children as well as fly fishing to our fellow citizens. As part of this goal, we ask for your help to identify a boy or girl to participate in a six day summer program that will focus on stream conservation and fly fishing skills in the age range of 14 to 17. Please contact me or someone on our Chapter board and we will share the information needed for selection. (See contact information on left side of page). I hope to see you soon on the stream, and may the rises be many. ■

— Nick Weber



Attention Members

This past fall we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. First, make sure we have your correct address, including 9-digit ZIP, and that your subscription is paid up.

If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy. For future reference, we try to mail the newsletters about 14-15 days before the next meeting.

Tackle and Tactic Tips

As this is supposed to be an exchange of ideas, I ask you to send me your questions, suggestions, and other comments (jmsheppar@aol.com or 301-725-5559).

Being observant when you arrive at your stream for a day's fun is very important to your eventual success. This is very critical if you have not been to this section of that stream in recent days. Hatches and flows peak and later wane. Weather affects the hatches and the trout every day. During the course of the day the trout may move from one feeding position to another to change their attention to a different food item. A hatch that was going hot and heavy in the morning is likely to be done by the middle of the afternoon, and vice versa. Trout are not unlike the police who watch the hourly and daily ebb and flow of traffic along the same section of highway each day; they know what to expect.

When you go to the stream, take a few minutes and sit and watch what is happening on the water and with the trout. Take a break every hour or two and do some serious observations, even if you are catching trout. If you can stand on a bridge and look down so you can see actual trout doing their thing, great. If there is no regular surface activity, then are the trout feeding on something below the surface? Are they moving right or left several inches to take something? How often are they feeding? Can you determine what they are taking? How frequently are they feeding: every 20–40 seconds, once every few minutes, or once every 5–10 minutes?

I have a small pair of waterproof binoculars that come in handy on a stream. I can look across the water at bugs floating in a back eddy or even watch a particular trout select his next meal. The landing net I use is a fine mesh, catch-and-release net. As long as I do not try to 'scoop' a really small insect out of the air or off the water surface, I can usually collect a specimen or two for close examination. I let the floating insects drift into the stationary net. NO one has to be a PhD in entomology to learn a lot from this exercise. What size is each insect? What are its colors? Does it have wings and, if so, how are they held while at rest? Was it actively fluttering across the surface or floating pretty much with the current? ►



Try to match the insect as much as possible with your fly selection. Some trout may not be taking this particular insect, but others might be. Most trout will be taking the most common insect where they are feeding and that is not always the largest present.

While fishing, constantly monitor the air over the stream and water surface. Are any birds fluttering across the water attempting to capture an insect? Can you see any insects flying over the river? Hatches may start almost by magic. One minute there are no insects visible and a few minutes later there may be dozens on the water or over the stream. Be flexible. Be prepared to change your fly regularly as the day progresses. You may have to switch among several patterns with each catching a trout but also being refused by others. Look before you fish. ■

—Jay Sheppard

Tying Bench & Angler's Corner

Tying Bench

This month's tying bench will feature the Beetle Bug that was originally tied by Audrey Joy, modified by Dave Hughes's father, and finally by Dave Hughes. **Dave Wittman** will lend his tying skills to bring this famous searching pattern to life. Hughes claimed that this pattern was just as effective as the Royal Wulff while being easier to tie. Come check it out and consider it for your box this year.

Angler's Corner

This month finds **Jay Sheppard** in the Angler's Corner. Jay is a Chapter legend, PPTU past president, author of untold number of articles in our newsletter, and developer of the Patuxent Special fly. Stop by and chat with Jay, and bring some of your questions on tactics, gear, flies, or whatever about which you may want to hear his thoughts or comments. He'll have answers.

Note: These segments run concurrently the night of the Chapter meeting from 7 to 7:30 pm. See bottom of page 1 for meeting information.

Patuxent Report

We will be float stocking trout in the next several weeks in the upper Patuxent Special Area (and Middle Patuxent Delayed harvest section). If you have chest waders and can help on a week day, please get in touch with me ASAP. If you have had an email from me by the time you have read this, no need to contact me regarding stocking or signs. There will be a sign up sheet at the monthly meeting on February 15. This is a great way to see a large section of either stream, since we walk 1½ to 3 miles of several sections.

Float stocking spreads out the trout at the start, and from there they will move up or down the river over the next several months. Scattering the trout reduces competition and means that there should be a few trout every few yards to start the season. The past 3 years have been wet, and we therefore expect great flows again this summer. Many rainbows were stocked last October, and more will be planted in the next month or so, too. There are holdover browns and even a couple of rainbows from last spring's stockings, as well as a small number of wild browns scattered throughout the river.

Don't forget to carry your cell phone and the PPTU card with the 800-phone numbers for the DNR Police and the Park dispatchers. If you see anything that appears illegal or other emergencies, please call them immediately with as much information as possible (location, license plate, description of individuals and vehicle, etc.).

If you have lost the card, please get one or more ASAP at the next chapter meeting. The 24-hour numbers are as follows: MD Parks & Forests=1-800-825-PARK (-7275) for reporting problems on State lands and for DNR Catch-a-Poacher Program=1-800-635-6124 for issues off State park or forest lands. If you have a cell phone, please carry it in a Zip-lock bag while on the stream—you never know when it may be useful. ■

— Jay Sheppard



Bass Pro Spring Fishing Weekend February 25 and 26, 10 AM to 4 PM

The third annual fly fishing weekend at OUTDOOR WORLD at Arundel Mills, Hanover, MD, will be held February 25 & 26. This mammoth store is found just off RT 100 and the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (RT 295). There will be a number of local fly fishing gurus on hand to answer your questions on fish or saltwater fly fishing. World master fly fishing guru, **Lefty Kreh**, will be at the store on Saturday afternoon to sign any of his books you may have. Talks on "Getting Started in Fly Fishing," "Maryland Trout Fishing," and "Fly Fishing the Bay" will be offered several times on Saturday and on Sunday. Casting demos will be held on the pond out front of the store almost continuously, weather permitting. Our chapter, with the help from other local TU chapters, will be manning an information and membership table, as well as giving fly tying demonstrations each day. Bring a friend and come visit the Bass Pro OUTDOOR WORLD that weekend. For directions call 410-689-2500.

Trout in the Classroom—Update

Our TIC program is something for the chapter to be proud of. Now up and running in a total of eight elementary and middle schools in four counties, TIC provides fertilized Kamloops rainbow trout eggs which kids raise through the fingerling stage and release in local streams at the end of the school year. The program channels children's interest in rearing trout into a wider appreciation of the importance of cold-water conservation. Because the trout tanks usually are placed in a central location, the trout-raising program generates school-wide interest and excitement. Children themselves monitor trout growth and water quality and feed and care for the hatchlings.

Each school received around 300 eggs on January 19 and hatching began a few days later. Troutlodge, an important Washington state hatchery which supplies eggs to Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), again donated the eggs to PPCTU and shipped them on ice via overnight Fedex to Jim Greene, the chapter's TIC coordinator. Jim, Dave Wittman, Nick Weber and chapter member Doug ►

Pearson then rushed the eggs to the schools and helped temper them slowly to the proper temperature for transfer to the tanks.

Continuing from last year are Poolesville and Westbrook Bethesda elementary schools in Montgomery County, and Forest Ridge, Swansfield and Thunder Hill elementary schools in or near Columbia in Howard County. New additions to the program this year are Hammond elementary in Howard County, New Market middle school in Frederick County and Gerstell Academy in Carroll County.

As agreed with DNR, which has been extremely helpful in arranging permits and otherwise supporting the program, fingerlings will be stocked again this year in the Middle Patuxent and Little Seneca Creek. Gerstell Academy will release its trout into Morgan Run. A release site for the New Market fingerlings is still to be determined.

PPCTU continues to lend and maintain equipment bought four years ago to three of the schools, while the other five meet most of their own program costs, including procurement and maintenance of tanks, chillers, pumps and sterilizers. PPCTU gets trout food free from the New York state TIC program for all eight Maryland schools. Potential to expand the program is limited only by the chapter's ability to offer technical support to the schools. What we seek is a roster of chapter members who can help out at a school in case of an emergency power failure or other crisis requiring possibly a quick water change, temporary transfer of hatchlings from one school to another or some similar action. Schools also would welcome guest speakers on trout-related subjects including fly-tying and casting demonstrations. If you can spare even a couple of hours now and then for such purposes, please get in touch with Dave Wittman (301 725-6791) or Jim Greene (see p.2 or: jgreene@waterwisp.com). ■

— Jim Greene

Memories of Summer

(One in an Occasional Series Submitted by Chapter Members about memorable fishing trips)

Rapid River by Jed Feffer

My wife, Joan, and I went up to Maine's Lakewood Camps on Lower Richardson Lake this past July. Our goal was to fish the Rapid River which connects Lower Richardson Lake to Lake Umbagog. Guests arrive at the Camps by being boated in from the small town of South Arm 5 miles away. The fishing ►

was exciting because the Landlocked Salmon that live in the Rapid River were rising intermittently to big hatches of stoneflies, caddis, and alderflies. The alderfly hatches were the most magnificent. Shake a bush on the bank and they were all over you! Even when they weren't rising to these hatches, they were willing to take dries floated along their feeding lanes, or hit tandem combinations of wets and dries. The most productive flies were alderfly dries, alder wets, deerhair caddis, small grasshopper imitations that resembled alderflies, and small green caddis larvae. Fish also seemed to enjoy any of the large Wulf imitations. The larger salmon I heard of being caught were 18-20 inches. The largest I caught was 16 inches. My wife lost one closer to 18. These are strong, leaping fish, and in the tumbling waters of the Rapid River they appear even stronger. Unfortunately the large Brook Trout the Rapid is known for were not hitting the way the Salmon were. I was told that they had gone down to an area of the Rapid known as Pond in the River to lay low in the deep holes of the pond. Brook Trout in the 5 pound range have been caught in the river. This large, spread out part of the river lies about a mile downstream from the Middle Dam located near Lakewood Camps.

Founded in 1854, Lakewood Camps is the oldest Fishing/Hunting Camp in Maine. Guests are put up in large wooden cabins, complete with twin beds, showers, Franklin stoves and some local memorabilia. The Camp is open for business from May through October. The large porches attached to the cabins have rockers and pegs to lay your fishing rods on. These porches look out to the very pristine Lower Richardson Lake.

Though room and board is a bit pricey, it includes use of the kayaks and canoes on the lake, 3 hearty meals a day, and complete access to the river or the lake for fishing. Guides can be hired. I explored the lake a bit in one of the kayaks and both my wife and I took a canoe out for a couple of hours. The lake is truly beautiful, with only 1 other house to be seen around the area of the Lakewood Camp. At night, you are treated to the call of the Loons. While eating our lunch at the Pond in the River we were treated to a doe drinking at the shore, a flock of Mergansers, a momma and her 15 ducklings scooting after her, and the emergence of an adult Dragonfly from its nymphal shuck.

I recommend the Rapid River for its wild beauty, and good fishing and the Lakewood Camps for its hospitality. ■

— Jed Feffer

**ADDRESS CHANGED?
MISSING AN ISSUE?**

If you have moved or see any error in your label on this newsletter, please advise both the National TU office and this chapter with separate notices. Our mailing list is maintained 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.

Membership

THE POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER of Trout Unlimited has two membership categories: **Regular or Family** (\$15/year subscription) or **Student** (free). The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. The subscription is totally separate from Trout Unlimited dues. Send correspondence, change of address, or subscriptions to POTOMAC-PATUXENT TROUT UNLIMITED, PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915.

Expiration of your subscription for the CONSERVATION-IST is indicated on the label as PP-0906 or PP-0907.

PPTU February Outing

Don't miss out on the first PPTU outing of the year to Big Hunting creek. We will meet at the Camp Peniel parking lot at 9:00 am Feb. 25th. Temps could vary widely so dress for the weather.

Directions:

Go West on I70 toward Frederick. At Frederick exit onto Rt15 north towards Gettysburg, approximately 14 miles you will reach Thurmont MD. Exit onto Rt 77, right turn off ramp. proceed into Catoctin Mountain park. The parking lot is on the left at the first bridge crossing the stream. Sign up at the February meeting or contact me at 410-740-8337 or denniscovert@hotmail.com Hope to see ya there!



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