

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

January 2013 Published monthly except June, July, August and December



## Annual Fly Tying Demonstration January 16<sup>th</sup>

Please, join us at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, January 16th, 2013 at the Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, MD when the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited will present our annual fly tying demonstration. Join us at this chapter meeting to see our most talented local tyers show off their skills and favorite patterns. Come learn how to make it easier to succeed at this intriguing sport of fly fishing.

Pati Nicholson will demonstrate her *Woven Polish Nymph* as Carl Smolka ties a new favorite, the *Diawi Bach Nymph*. Dennis Covert will show us how he succeeds on steelhead trips with the *Crystal Meth* pattern, once voted as the most un – PC named fly in existence.

Talented Bob Dietz will show off with a great fish catcher, the *March Brown Flymph*, while Jim Greco will reveal a new favorite from the pages of Fly Tyer Magazine, the *Prince Charming*. Our lineup of tiers will be topped off with Jim Keil, and George Vincent presenting their favorite fish catchers.

We will also have a table reserved for our family of Project Healing Waters wounded warriors from Fort Meade. The warriors are invited to join us in a night of fun and learning while they practice tying skills picked up in the few weeks we have been meeting indoors with them since just before the time change.

Come to this meeting; make our PHW family feel welcome while you join in learning about some of the season's most productive fly patterns and how they are tied. Share with us one of the season's most special and popular presentations.

Hope to see you all there.

– Jim Greco



*Prince Charming - Olive*

### Monthly Chapter Meetings

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

Place: Margaret Schweinhaut Senior Center, 1000 Forest Glen Road, Silver Spring, Maryland

DIRECTIONS TO THE SENIOR CENTER

From Capitol Beltway: North on Georgia Avenue (Rte. 97). First Right on Forest Glen Road, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

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

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## Presidents' Column - Dennis Covert

### *An idea, some cooperation, and a lot of work*

Back in 2003, to get exercise after back surgery, Nick Weber started taking a daily walk from his house down to the Haviland Mill Bridge below Brighton Dam. One afternoon while standing on the bridge watching the water slide by, an idea struck him. Two decades earlier Maryland DNR had managed this section of the Patuxent River as a put and take fishery. Why not develop this section of river as a flies-only catch and release trout stream? Nick had only recently joined PPTU and was a little unsure how to get the ball rolling, so he contacted Jay Sheppard and asked for assistance. Jay, in turn, contacted the DNR and asked for a feasibility study in managing the stream. After a review of the temperatures data, and a fish friendly fly fishing regulation, DNR provided yearly trout stocking that began in 2006 and continues to date.

In the years that followed things really began to hum. Nick used to roll into Board meetings arms full of maps. He would roll them out on the table pointing out the property lines of State, County, and private land. He had a vision to expand the park by acquiring small parcels of land adjoining existing State and County property and was relentless in that effort. He enlisted Jim Robinson and other interested chapter members and together they lobbied State and Local Governments to purchase additional parcels of land. One each on the Howard and Montgomery sides of the River. These public domain acquisitions were successful. On the Howard County parcel a new parking lot with four spaces, one a handicapped space, has just recently been completed at the bridge. The State parcel on the Montgomery side is an important addition to the downstream section below Haviland Mill Bridge

However, the big brass ring in this project is a cold water release from Brighton dam. As is, the river will support some holdover trout in cooler summers, but with a continuous supply of cold water throughout the summer from the reservoir this

tailwater has the potential of becoming a year-round fishery in our own backyard.

Jay spearheaded the effort to contact the owners of the dam, the Washington Suburban Sanitation Commission (WSSC), which has culminated in a PPTU-funded study to assess the functionality of the dam's gates to draw cold water from the mid and lower levels of the reservoir, and identify any repairs or modifications needed that would make that possible. The contract has been signed and the study scheduled for mid December. A dam silt valve with modification may provide additional potential to furnish cold water from the bottom of the reservoir and will be evaluated for this potential in the future.

I'm sure it is obvious to everyone at this point this project is far from over, as Nick told me, "It's been almost ten years since I had the idea and it's still unfolding." So far the project has spanned four Chapter Presidents and their boards, a testament to the continuity and cooperation among chapter members. Once the dam study is complete efforts to form a partnership between PPTU, WSSC and DNR will be initiated. We hope that within a year or two any dam repairs needed to provide a cold water release will be complete and we will be enjoying a year-round trout fishery. 🌸



## **PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond**

**Ken Bowyer** 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. at nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution** will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact Ken 301-627-7154 or E-mail:  
[kenbowyer@verizon.net](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net) 🌸

## **Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard**

In early December, DNR electro-shocked the main Patuxent River at two places below Brighton Dam. The water was clear and 46°. Larry Coburn and I assisted the DNR crew.

Our first station starts about 100 or so yards downstream of the pipeline crossing, which in turn is about 300 yards below the dam. This section receives a lot of bait fishing pressure all spring and summer. The actual flies-only regulation does start just below this pipeline, but the river is not patrolled. We then waded up the river with our electro-shockers tickling all the fish up to the low weir dam that is about 200 yards below the dam. We found hundreds of fish, but not one trout. The electro shocking is not 100% efficient, so there is always a possibility of a trout or two that escaped our efforts. The hundreds of fish that we did see were nearly all bait/forage fish: minnows, gizzard shad, suckers, etc. If a large predator was in the river anywhere in the mile or two below the dam, it had LOTS of food to select from!! We did see a few bass of both species, but none of any size.

The second section we checked was from just below Haviland Mill Bridge upstream through a series of riffles and woody debris that should hold trout—a distance of maybe 150 yards. There were not quite so many bait fish, but we did capture one stocked brown trout!! It was 12" and emaciated—meaning it had a lot of struggles to make it through the summer!!! Again, we are not 100% efficient in finding trout in streams using this equipment, so it is possible there was one or two others present. Certainly not even a dozen or more.

Why do we not get any holdover? Simple: we cannot get really cold enough water during the summer from the dam. We do not know the mechanical reasons, but the water that should be passing through the dam's valves and turbines appears to be mixing with warmer surface water. Most of the summer, the water passing Haviland Mill ranged in the 73–75° range on a daily basis. That is, the river never cooled back well below 70 each night but hung in this barely tolerable temperature range for brown trout. Yet the water in

the reservoir at the depth of the open gates we were trying to use was not above 60° until about Labor Day!

Next month, I hope to report the results of the inspection that will be conducted just after we go to press for this issue and which is also mentioned in Dennis' column. The dam will be inspected by a small remote controlled camera that can dive down and look at the various gates and other control structures on Brighton Dam. We may have answers to our riddle by then.

If you are interested in helping in the stocking of trout on our local waters and are not already on my current email list, please send me an email (jmsheppar@aol.com) by the end of January. Stocking usually starts after the middle of February.



## Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

Detecting takes by a trout on most subsurface offerings is difficult. When I first started about all we had to go on was watching the tip of the fly line, occasionally we could see the leader itself doing something strange. I hate to think how many subtle takes of my nymph went totally undetected by me! Sometime in the early 1980s I learned that there were tiny 'bobbers' or strike indicators available. Most of these were simply adhesive tabs that could be affixed to a spot on the leader. They vastly improved my catch rate when dredging the bottom of a stream with nymphs and the like. Those tabs had at least one short coming: hard to move/remove.

By the late 80s and early 90s small plastic floating indicators became available that used a variety of means to hold them on the line. The ones that required a tooth pick tip became my indicators of choice until I started chasing steelhead in earnest in upstate New York. Steelheaders and salmon fishers had developed a nice round plastic ball with a small tab on its side. When using a lot of weight to get the nymph or egg pattern down to the bottom, this has become my 'bobber' of choice. The leader is simply doubled over and pushed through the grommet on the tab of these larger indicators and

then back over itself and the indicator to hold it in that position. It is very easy to move or remove.

Strike indicators of a variety of other types are certainly available. Poly yarn are also very popular. If there are major advantages to all of these I am not aware of them, other than the need to move the indicator up and down the leader or just remove it from time to time as conditions change. Big heavy fast water needs heavy weights and a large 'bobber.' Slow quite glides and tiny nymphs suspended a foot or so below the surface need very small indicators.



Color is important in heavily fished waters or where the water is very clear and not very deep. I avoid using the same color indicator that the egg pattern or San Juan worm have. Since those and other flies come in a variety of colors, I am left with only one color to use: white. It can be hard to see on the water if there is a lot of foam, but when it suddenly starts moving upstream, it quickly becomes apparent. Another advantage is that on stocked streams, it does not draw the attention of the trout and get hit very often. The coloured indicators often seem like good candidates to use only ON a hook by themselves—they regularly get hits from the stocked trout!

One trick I have learned from Larry Coburn in using indicators is to allow the weighted offering to hang downstream from the indicator as it is slowly dragged across the surface of the moving stream. That is, the split shot will hold the fly down and let the nymph or other offering swim deeply back across the stream. In slow moving flows this can be very effective, especially if the fly is held relatively close to the bottom.

In summary, heavy loads of weights means larger indicators. Faster water usually dictates heavier split shot and longer separations of the indicator from the weights. Indicators can be added in a line, such that the first one will get sunk by the weights but the upper ones will remain visible.

If you do not see the indicator wobbling ever so slightly as it drifts down the stream or you are not hanging up the rig, then you are not touching bottom. This is often the single most requirement to getting a fish to take—being on the bottom. So good drifting and many strikes for you in the coming year. 🌻

## Angler's Corner

### November Steelhead Outing Highlight

Right after the chapter meeting on Wednesday evening November 14, Bob O'Donnell, Carl Smolka, Dennis Covert and Ken Bowyer left for Erie to do some steelhead fishing. After an hour snooze on the PA turnpike and breakfast south of Erie, we arrived at the middle section of 20 Mile Creek around 8 AM on Thursday morning. Hiking down to the stream, we found the flows were up from last year, however there were fewer fish and they were picky. Bob, Carl, and Ken all found fish on the hike downstream and each stopped to fish them for a while as Dennis continued the walk almost to the no trespass wire. Eventually, all of us were fishing the 2-3 pools just above the wire for the rest of the day. We all had hookups but it was slow except for a brief time at midday when Dennis landed 2 with a pearl bead rig that Jon Griffiths demonstrated at the October meeting. He had us all changing to pearl bead rigs, but that didn't help us any. By late afternoon, we were all red eyed and a little hunched over from fatigue but still chucking flies.

*Read the full 3-day fishing adventure on PPTU's "Outings" section on the web site. Pictures too!*

We are looking for a new coordinator for 2013. I've loved doing it for the past few years, but with other chapter duties I get stretched thin and wouldn't want to short change the outings program. This is not a hard job and you always get to go fishing!!! If you have an interest, let me know. 🌻

- **Dennis Covert**  
*Outings Coordinator*

## Reminder

If you spot poaching please place a call to the

**Catch a Poacher Hotline**

**At**

**1-800-635-6124**



### 2011 - 2012 Mentor Program Report

In 2011 and 2012, 16 members listed in the table below were tutored at the Upper & Middle Patuxent, Morgan Run, Big Hunting Creek, or the Gunpowder. First timers received a current issue of the Mid Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide (or a copy of the Maryland section) and a 4 page summary on entomology. This introductory material provided the newcomer with an idea of what flies to use at any given time and general information on identifying insect types.

Knot tying was discussed showing two basic knots; the surgeons knot (and surgeons loop) for tying or connecting tippet to leader and leader to line and the improved clinch knot for tying flies to tippet. Different types of leader (the standard 7.5' 3x nylon tapered leader as described by Jay Sheppard in A Simple Trout Leader System, the Orvis braided leader, the Furled Leader, and the Airflo PolyLeader) were discussed to show them alternative setups. For those with their leader connected to the fly line with a nail knot or to a nylon butt section with a loop, the Cortland braided loop was shown as an alternative for line to leader loop to loop connections.

A brief time was spent on the stream turning over rocks to show some insect life in its early stages. For those with no casting experience, basic casting techniques were shown. On the stream, casting variations including the sidearm cast and the roll cast were demonstrated to avoid overhanging trees and brush behind you. Basic short line nymphing techniques with a strike indicator and/or

dry fly fishing techniques were demonstrated. Line mending was demonstrated to insure drag free fly presentation. A combination rig was also demonstrated and/or discussed using a dry fly such as an elk hair caddis or royal wulff along with a bead head nymph. The bead head nymph is attached as a dropper fly on about an 18” to 24” piece of tippet tied to the bend of the dry fly hook using the improved clinch knot. With this setup, the dry fly acts as a strike indicator to detect when a fish takes the bead head nymph. Two dry flies, two nymphs, and a streamer with a dropper nymph combination were also mentioned along with the advantages and disadvantages of these combination rigs.

Member	Dates	Streams	Fish Landed	Fish On	Insects Observed
Warren Boord	5/22/11	Morgan Run			Ants, a beetle, & a caddis
Warren Boord Jr.	5/22/11	Morgan Run	2	4	Ants, a beetle, & a caddis
Nicole LeBoeuf	6/4/11	Big Hunting Creek	1	1	Yellow Sallies, some caddis, ants, a BWO
Sonny Bell	2/27/12	Morgan Run	3	4	Brown stoneflies & midges
Chuck Dinkel	3/2/12	Upper Pax/Middle Pax	4	4	Few Brown stoneflies & midges
Tim Lawrence	4/14/12	Morgan Run			Few craneflies, caddis, midges
Karli Lawrence	4/14/12	Morgan Run	1	1	Few craneflies, caddis, midges
Kevin Keegan	4/15/12	Morgan Run			Some small caddis, midges, ants
Chris Leonette	4/15/12	Morgan Run	1	3	Some small caddis, midges, ants
Rachel Dagovitz	4/20/12	Morgan Run		2	Some craneflies, brown stoneflies, ants
Rachel Dagovitz	5/5/12	Gunpowder			Some sulphurs, caddis, midges
Sonny Bell	5/10/12	Big Hunting Creek		1	Yellow Sallies, cream midges, some small caddis
Dave Simms	5/25/12	Morgan Run	1	1	Very few insects
Barry Veret	6/5/12	Morgan Run	2	2	Very few insects
Dave Simms	7/3/12	Big Hunting Creek	2	2	Craneflies
Dennis Roundy	10/10/12	Gunpowder		2	Brown stoneflies, caddis
Marc Hutzell	10/16/12	Gunpowder			Few midges, caddis
Chuq Yang	11/28/12	Morgan Run	2	5	None
Kevin Butler	11/30/12	Morgan Run			None

## Bass Pro Fundraising Event

December 1<sup>st</sup>, PPTU set up and operated a hot dog stand just beyond the Bass Pro exit doors at Arundel Mills Mall. We sold approximately 275 dogs and 200 brats in about a 6 hour period netting approximately \$ 800 in sales and cash donations. We also have about \$200 worth of brats, dogs, and sodas in paid for inventory left for the next stand in March. All proceeds from the December sales will be used to fund Project Healing Waters, (Wounded Warrior Program) and Casting for Recovery (Breast Cancer Survivors Program). It was a brisk day, the sun finally broke through mid afternoon and reaching maybe 50, but through the chill we had a good time. Maybe even more important than the money is the public awareness that the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited is out there, active, and serving the community.



I want to thank the following folks for participating; SGM Angel (Tony) Alvarez, MSG Scott Beaudry, Carl Smolka, Patrick Smolka, Bob Culver, Cathy Nutter, Larry Vawter, Pati Nicholson, Ray Miller, Dave Simms, Alan Burrows, Curt Mueller, Ken Bowyer, Bob O'Donnell, Jim Robinson, Jim Crowell, Lou Reichel, and Sheila Covert.

As you can see from the list above we had a good turnout in volunteers. We will need as many or more in March for Bass Pro's Fishing Week event where we will be manning another dog stand and a membership table inside. Our chapter has annual expenses in room rentals at the Senior Center and a number of other programs that we fund annually. As a Trout Unlimited Chapter we

cannot charge dues, so we must raise enough monies to cover our expenditures in other ways. In addition to the two named organizations above we also give support to Trout in the Class Room, Sponsor two children or make a cash donation to the fly fishing camp in Syria Virginia, often make a donation to the Boy Scouts and we are now beginning to spend significant monies for Brighton Dam Project. So, the chapter really does need and appreciate your support. 🌸

- **Dennis Covert**  
*President*



## 2012 Maryland Water Monitoring Council Report

On December 6th, the Maryland Water Monitoring Council held their eighteenth annual conference with the theme, “What Else is in Your Water? From Arsenic to Zinc” at the Maritime Institute in North Linthicum. The intent in attending this conference is to learn what the current water quality issues in Maryland are and where we, as a chapter, might be able to make a contribution in the future.

Mark Southerland, Chairman, MWMC Board of Directors called the session to order. Plenary speaker Dr Cliff Mitchell, Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene stressed the need to keep human health in the discussion of environmental issues as there is often a disconnect between environmental resources and environmental impact on humans. Our ability to measure minute amounts of contaminants in the environment far exceeds our ability to understand the impact on human health and resource constraints in the future will exacerbate this situation. Bob Perciasepe, US Environmental Protection Agency, discussed the now 40 year old Clean Water Act did not consider present day pollutants such as pharmaceuticals and nutrients in runoff. He suggested that technologies such as

crowdsourcing could harness the power of public citizen scientists for data collection to overcome the system noise.

The conference had a number of concurrent technical sessions including topics on bacteria in the bay, caring about headwater streams, controlling and monitoring pollution sources, contaminants in the bay, recognizing stressed streams, citizen units to improve and protect our waters, salt runoff issues, conserving healthy watersheds, fish tumors as environmental indicators, land use and water quality, and mercury TMDLs.



Of particular interest to me was a discussion of Marcellus Shale, Natural Gas, Water Quality, and People – a topic that had no coverage last year at this meeting. In this session, Patrick Hammond, MDE, discussed the correlation between methane in drinking water wells and hydraulic fracturing of the Marcellus Shale. Minh Phung Pham, MGS, detailed a well water study in Maryland’s Appalachian Plateau, and Diane McLaughlin from Penn State presented the social and economic impacts of Marcellus Shale Development in Pennsylvania. One interesting take away from Diane’s talk was the economic impact on the earlier developed “dry gas” drilling activities in North East PA that have been abandoned as gas companies have quickly migrated to “wet gas” drilling in South West PA. This migration has created a “bust” environment for North East Pennsylvania. 🌸

For those interested in more detail, you can access abstracts of the presentations and posters for this year’s and past sessions at:

<http://mddnr.chesapeakebay.net/MWMC/MWMC2010/annualConference.asp>

- **Carl M. Smolka**  
*Water Quality Chair*

Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text 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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**Gunpowder River  
Native Brown Trout**  
*- Couldn't resist a  
swung wet fly.*



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