



March 2009

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

Fly Fishing Unique Streams

March 18, 2009

Our March program features one of Pennsylvania's best guides, Gene Giza. Gene served as park superintendents in Delaware and most of his career in Pennsylvania. Retiring as Chief of Operations in the PA Bureau of State Parks in 2003 allowed him to devote full time to his interests which are fly fishing, fly fishing, and fly fishing. With a Boiling Springs address you can easily imagine his interest can be accommodated within 15 minutes. Gene's program is not only informative but also brings out the desire to grab a fly rod, don the waders and rush out to fish the streams described in the program. Pine Creek, Yellow Creek, and the Clarion River, the waters covered in the program, are prime trout fisheries in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The program also focuses on steelhead fishing in the Lake Erie tributaries east of Erie, PA.

The unique features of Gene's program are that he identifies special regulation areas on the destination streams, interprets USGS real-data information pertaining to that stream, details major hatches and the flies to match the hatch, and recommends lodging and eatery accommodations based on personal experiences. He also lists the applicable fly fishers guide books and showcases the waters via an interesting and informative series of digital photographs that he has taken. Gene's program is a visual resource for the fly fisher and packed with on stream information accumulated over thirty years of fly fishing and nine years as a professional guide.

Gene is currently owner/operator of Four Seasons Fly Fishing Guide Service and maintains an active website (www.fourseasonsflyfishing.com) with current updates on hatches, stream conditions and tactics. He also is currently a board member of the Cumberland Valley Chapter TU Chapter and also a board member of the Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp. He is author of several articles in the Mid Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide.

– Nick Weber

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Monthly Chapter 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, then go past Holy Cross Hospital and across Sligo Creek Parkway. The Center is on the right.

The Conservationist is published monthly, except December, June, July, and August, by the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The content reflects the opinions and views of the authors and does not necessarily represent the opinions, views and policies of Trout Unlimited, the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter or their respective officers and directors. Copyright © 2008 Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

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President's Column

Opening Day (such as it is)

By the time you read this, it will already be March. It's almost Opening Day.

Now, of course, Maryland doesn't really have an Opening Day (unless you count the Orioles.) We just have a few weeks in late March when the put and take streams are closed to be stocked. Yet we still somehow refer to the day after this week ends as "Opening Day" even if we don't fish put and take. I think we have a need to recognize that winter is over, spring is here, and let the fishing begin. Never mind that many of us have been fishing all winter.

As a boy, Opening Day was second only to Christmas as an eagerly awaited occasion. It didn't matter that there were no trout streams in my area. I had been scheming for weeks to get some adult or other to take me to stocked pond. Not what I would today consider quality fishing, but it beat not fishing for trout at all. My first trout ever was taken on Opening Day, on a fly rod – rigged with a night-crawler, but on a fly rod nonetheless, in such a pond.

As a young man, I once felt the need to drive to New York state fish their Opening Day, which was earlier than my states. By this point, I was too sophisticated to be rigging my fly rod with worms; only honest-to-G*d flies were worthy of the Neversink. I was skunked, of course, as was nearly everyone I talked to that day. The only exceptions were a couple of old-timers (old time than I am now) who were high-sticking pocket water and seeming connecting every few drifts. Finally, my curiosity got the better of me and I asked them what nymphs they were using. .

"Nymphs? You can't catch trout on Opening Day with flies. We're using worms." These were two obviously skilled fishermen, expertly using fly tackle. Although I suspect they would have caught just as many fish using a nymph as garden hackle, they chose the latter. It's what one did on Opening Day.

I learned quite a bit about nymph fishing by watching them that day. I also learned not to be judgmental about the abilities of bait fishers.

The last Saturday of this month, I may just go to a put and take to celebrate this important holiday. I might even rig my fly rod with a worm.

Bob Dietz

MAC Annual Conservation Banquet – March 28, 2009

A fundraiser banquet will be held on March 28 at the BWI Marriott. This Mid Atlantic TU Conservation Banquet is being held to help fund the Mid Atlantic Council's Conservation Interests. PPCTU is one of seven member chapters of the Mid Atlantic Council who will be represented. There will be a lot of activities at the banquet including Elliott Donnelley Awards for two MAC members, and five Person and Group Recognition Awards.

Raffle tickets (winners need not be present) for major prizes including a canoe will be available at our March Meeting and as noted below. Tickets for the Banquet (\$75 - including open bar) are available. Part of the action will include Silent and Live Auctions. Sponsors are also welcome.

Save the date and help our Council continue its good work! Contact me at heritagero@aol.com or 301-919-2026. Please join us at our table. Thanks – *Nick Weber*

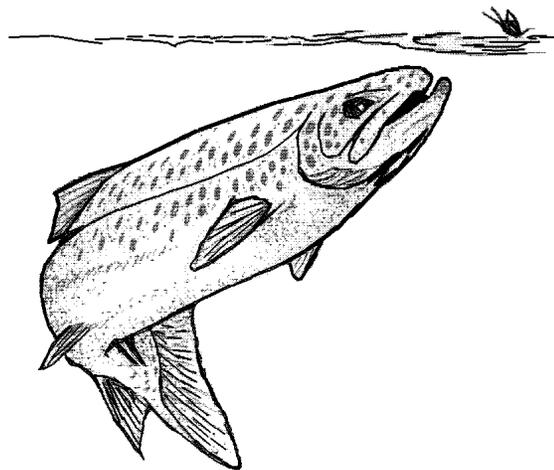
Monthly Meeting Early Segments – by
Nick Weber (start at 7 PM)

Tying Bench

March finds us checking our favorite stream information and reviewing our fly boxes to see what patterns need to be refreshed or augmented. It also greets us wishing to find a new pattern that may somehow become this season's Holy Grail. Bob Dietz has agreed to tie a fly that he finds particularly important in his arsenal, but he is keeping the pattern under wraps until the meeting. I also am not privy to the undisclosed pattern, but I know that he recently took a special fly tying class with the noted tyer Don Bastian. Not that makes a difference in wanting to see him tie, but it tells us something when an angler of Bob's abilities goes some distance to sharpen his skills. Come by Bob's post and possibly find a pattern that will enhance your box this year.

Angler's Corner

Stop by the angler's corner and get the latest on the March outing to the Gunpowder and the Great One Fly Contest. Dennis Covert with his wealth of information for this and all other aspects of Spring fishing make a stop by his early segment a great investment for what's happening here and elsewhere. Dennis also is always up to hearing about a great prospect for a future outing – so stop by his part of our world.



Have an idea for an article, or something you'd like to share with other chapter members? Material is welcome (and cheerfully accepted).

The deadline is the 12th of the month for the next month's issue.

Please send articles, ideas, etc, preferably in MS Word or in the body of the e-mail to earthmomjo@att.net.

*Thanks,
Joanne Kla, Editor*

Patuxent Report

By the time this March issue is printed, the chapter and its many friends will have float stocked three local waters as follows: upper Patuxent Special Area well above rt. 97—500 rainbows, 1500 browns; Flies Only section of Patuxent below Brighton Dam—500 rainbows and 500 browns; and Delayed Harvest section of the Middle Patuxent in south Columbia—500 rainbows and 500 browns. This is 4000 trout in about 10–11 miles of water.

On April 4, there will be the annual Patuxent cleanup day. We meet at 8:30 AM at the Izaak Walton League's parking lot on Mullinix Mill Road just east of Long Corner Road in Damascus. Bring hip boots and a heavy duty rake; gloves and trash bags are provided before you start out that morning. PPTU members work the actual stream bed below several of the bridges for trash removal. Others will work parking lots and road sides. A free lunch is provided afterwards. This is a great family activity for almost any age. Please let me know (jmsheppar@aol.com) if you plan to come out that Saturday.

Everyone is reminded to report any poaching or other illegal activity as quickly as possible to the DNR Natural Resources Police operations center: 1-800-635-6124. Try to obtain license plate numbers or other descriptive information.

Jay Sheppard

Tackle and Tactic Tips

Everyone needs to be careful about falling into the water and getting hypothermia at this time of the year. March and April can still be dangerous if one gets a soaking while far from a warm car. Sport shops carry small packets that can provide a good deal of warmth when activated; carry a few with you until late spring. Also, don't forget to throw your wallet and cell phone into a zip-lock bag before your step into a stream. As one last important tip, mark your fly boxes with your name and phone number or address. I have found several fly boxes along streams over the years, all without ID. You may be able to place one of your TU address labels on the *inside* of the lid (to prevent wear) covered with clear tape or some other means to mark them.

Wet fly fishing is a lost art that brings lots of trout to net, if you know the tricks of the trade. I am still learning. Here are few tips to get started on this ancient art of fishing. (Actually the first fly fishing was ONLY done this way.) To begin, the best fly is the soft hackle style (e.g., partridge and orange). The body should be about the same size and color of the more common emerging insects at that time. The Hendrickson/Red Quills of early April are often the earliest choices. The fly is cast across the stream to the far side. The angle across depends upon two factors: how deep one wants the fly to swim and how fast the water is moving. Slow water and a shallow drift means casting just above the suspected trout holding position. As deeper presentations and faster water is encountered, the casting target point moves upstream from the suspected trout holding spots. In an average flow with moderate depth sought for the fly, a cast nearly straight across will often work. In really fast water the fly may have to be cast to a point that is quartering upstream and across to the other side. Even from the same casting position, the fly fisher should make slight adjustments on every cast. Repeated casts to the same point can be made but each followed by other variables in the presentation: such as the amount of time allowed to dead drift and sink. This will both alter the depth and path the fly follows upon the retrieve with the same amount of line and the rod held in the same position.

The "retrieve" might be a misnomer. In most cases the fly line is allowed to come tight, and the fly is then dragged back across the stream. Further variation in a drift can be made by where the rod is pointed as the line goes taut. If held straight out across the current, the fly will swing smartly out in the middle. If the rod tip is pointed downstream of the fisher's current position, the fly may swim almost directly across the stream. Slack line can be fed out after the cast to extend the dead drift phase and make the fly swim across the stream further below the angler. The path of the fly over the bottom mimics the path of the tip of the fly line. Watch the tip of the line for the detection of any strike, which is usually quite obvious.

Thus, there are many dozens of variations of presentations available from just a single position in the stream. In some cases, the best presentation may be to swim the fly directly downstream with the current but at a slightly faster speed. Other times, a presentation that slows the fly relative to the

the current will elicit a strike. Mending of the line right after the cast or feeding or retrieving line during the 'swim phase' of the presentation can dramatically alter the speed and direction of the fly. A soft hackle fly left hanging in a slow current may elicit a positive response from a trout. I rarely get hits from a fly that is being retrieved rapidly and directly upstream in the current (very few insects can swim upstream in moving water).

As the angler moves up or down the stream, he can present the same fly to the same trout but with a totally different look (speed, direction, depth, etc.). Some presentations may be helped if a small split shot is placed 15–18" above the fly to keep it deeper. Other times the fly works best if within a few inches of the surface. Casts should be made several feet to the far side and several feet upstream of any suspected trout holding locations. I usually use a slightly heavier tippet for this type of fishing than for a nymph or dry fly on a dead drift. One of the important tricks to remember when using wet flies on a tight line is that the fish usually hooks itself. In fact, in some fast water situations, one must actually give a foot or two of slack as the fish strikes. The fish is usually turning away from the leader as it hits, so the fly can be very easily pulled out of the trout's mouth before it hooks up. Give this method a try later this spring.

Jay Sheppard

Online Delivery of *The Conservationist*

We now have an improved method for joining the listserv that announces the URL for each issue as it becomes available. If you are not already on this listserv and able to access the current issue online, but would like to be, please visit *The Conservationist* page on our website at <http://www.pptu.org/conservationist/conservationist.shtml> and follow the simple instructions for how to make this happen for you

Remember to return your videos and books on time. Many fellow members would like the opportunity to rent the books, tapes and DVDs that you rented. Late fees will be applied if they are not returned by the next chapter meeting.

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM

BEGINNERS & BEYOND

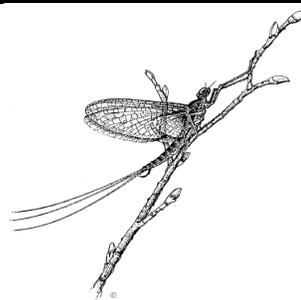
One on one streamside fly fishing instruction is available to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hipsters, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, conservation, 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 Bowyer at 301-627-7154

or e-mail kenbowyer@verizon.net.

Contact Tim Pawlowitz at 410-203-0369

or e-mail tpawlowi@msn.com.



ADDRESS CHANGE?

If you moved or if the information on the mailing label on *The Conservationist* is wrong, please email Arnie Strand at ArnzMail@Verizon.net.

You may also drop us a post card with the correction. PPTU maintains a mailing list separate from the national TU list.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Existing members should renew their TU membership using any of the following methods:

- Mail your Renewal Statement to TU National
- Call Customer Service at 1-800-834-2419
- Navigate to www.tu.org. Click on the **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left.

You will need your login name and password.



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