

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

March 2013 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December



## Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing at Ft Meade *March 20<sup>th</sup>*

Project Healing Waters first program was started at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington D.C. in 2005 by Ed Nicholson and John Colburn.

Some members of PPCTU with the aid of John Colburn began a “Good Hands” program at Walter Reed in 2008 unfortunately this program only lasted 5 weeks. But not to be deterred we found out most of the warriors were stationed at Ft Meade. So we figured if they can’t come to us lets go to them.

On September 16th of 2009 we began our first “session” in the “Freedom Center” pool hall. We had 4 volunteers and 4 warriors, a one-on-one experience. Within the first five minutes of the warriors sitting down we had them tying flies. The program at Ft Meade was born.

I am not saying we had a smooth ride in fact some very choppy waters for more than two years. We would meet in different locations almost every week. We met at the Freedom Center in the Pool hall, the kitchen and the lobby, Kimbrough Hospital 2nd floor meetings rooms, the Dog Hospital, and the R.A.S.C.O.M. (Please don’t ask me what that Acronym means). We had times when not a single warrior showed but we had volunteers. Yes it was disheartening, but we always made a point to show up and be ready. At one time the W.T.U. Commander showed up when we had zero attendance and put the program on hold. We were down for about six weeks. Then the Miracle happened.

On the March 20th Chapter meeting I will be the Guest Speaker. I will be talking about the times we have had at Ft Meade. The good, the bad and the joy some very special volunteers of PPCTU have had during our time here at Ft Meade with some very special Warriors.

– *Larry Vawter*  
Program Leader PHWFF at Ft Meade  
Past President PPCTU

### 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**

I spent the morning paying my dues to some of the various organizations & associations I belong to, and since most of them now have on-line renewals it makes it quick & easy. As I go to each site I do a quick mental assessment as to whether I'm getting enough value for my dollars spent, and on opening the Trout Unlimited home page a flood of activities and projects came to mind, mostly our Chapter's.

Over the years I have belonged to many organizations, some conservation based some not, and except for maybe my old Lions Club Chapter back in Blakesburg Iowa none I've belonged to have been as active in the community as the Potomac Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Being President these past two years has made me realize just how much time is unselfishly given by a few individuals to keep everything humming. Working with PPTU volunteers & contributors, and watching the traffic on the Boards list serve I've developed a real appreciation of just how much ground work and maintenance is required and done behind the scenes every month that most Chapter members probably aren't ever cognizant of.

As with every volunteer organization, all success depends on the willingness of its members to step forward and accept the mantle of responsibility for one of the Chapter's activities. Unfortunately at this moment we have many members doing double duty just to keep things going, and as such we desperately need some new volunteers. Our immediate needs are for a Youth Program Chair, and a Bucket Raffle Chair. Later this fall we will need an Outings Coordinator starting with the September schedule, and possibly a new Fund Raising Chair.

As we grow as a Chapter, so grows our need for new blood. For the past couple years we have operated two new information tables, one at Howard County's Greenfest held each year in April at Howard County Community College, and last year for the first time we participated in the DNR

sponsored Nat'l Hunting & Fishing week program in September at the Associated Gun Clubs of Baltimore's near Marriottsville. This April's Greenfest is covered, but to continue a Potomac Patuxent Chapter presence at both of these new activities we will need some folks to raise their hands and say I'll do it.

On a different but related subject; fund raising. Saturday March 2nd the chapter will be selling dogs and brats at Bass Pro to raise funds for the coming year's expenditures. We will begin selling around 10:30 am and sell till about 4:30 pm. March can be a cold month to stand outside all day, so we are looking for more than enough volunteers to help set up, run, and tear down the operation. We will also need a few folks to run the chapter's information table inside. Maybe we can rotate people in and out to warm up a bit. Anyway, pass the word to all of your friends and family and ask them to come on out and buy a dog, brat, or just to make a cash donation. For the money spent the food is a great value and all goes to great causes! 🍀

### **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**

By the time this is sent out, we will have already stocked the upper Patuxent Special area above rt. 97, the flies-only reach below Brighton Dam, and the Delayed Harvest section of the Middle Patuxent in south Columbia. This first stocking was rainbows. Another stocking will be of browns the first week of March on these same waters. A second stocking of rainbows is to be the first week of April. Get out! Enjoy the labors of your fellow members and friends who helped float stock these trout.



If you still want to help on the last stocking or other stream projects on these waters later this year send me an email ([jmsheppar@aol.com](mailto:jmsheppar@aol.com)), and we will notify you of any such plans well in advance.

The annual Patuxent River State Park cleanup hosted by the Izaak Walton Chapter in Damascus will be on Saturday, April 6, 8:30 a.m. to Noon. (Sunday, April 7, rain date). Focus will be on roadsides, parking lots and river crossings. Meet at the green maintenance shed on the Chapter property on Mullinix Road near Long Corner Road. Gloves, bags, and water provided. Student Service Learning credit will be given if forms are brought on the day of the event. Lunch at noon for all participants will be provided. TU members, family and friends are asked to bring their hip waders and a heavy rake. We try to work the actual stream under and near the various bridge crossings for tires, trash, and who knows what. The Ikes have been very good friends to our TU chapter. In each of the past two years

they have donated over \$1600 to help towards our conservation work both locally and around the region. We want to show our thanks by supporting their cleanup efforts. Bring the family and friends. 🌻

## Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

Since I got interest in my posting re this topic on the PPCTU list serve recently, I am revising that material and providing it here.

If one ever finds any body of water near where the 17- (or 13-) year cicadas are emerging in late spring, expect one of the most fun fishing times of your life. Numbers in the tens or even hundreds of thousands of cicadas PER ACRE are not uncommon. That is a lot of protein per acre and every predator tries to make a dent in those numbers—all to no avail! Fish, snakes, birds, dogs, etc.—all will consume as many as they can hold.



For 2013 there is to be a Brood II emergence in the coastal plain of Maryland; it actually extends south through the Blue Ridge and north through eastern PA into NJ, etc. I do not know if this emergence might extend above the Fall Line here in Maryland. If it does, the cicadas might get upstream onto the Gunpowder. Thus, the main point of this note. Emergences in this immediate area typically start about the last week of May and run for 6 weeks wherever they do emerge. I ran into this Brood II in Shenandoah Park just as they were starting their emergence in mid-May 2004 on Big Run, and the trout were just learning what they were. It was fun!

There is an interesting learning process by most of the predators in what to eat with all this food fluttering about. During the first 2 weeks most predators eat any cicada they find. Males are largely empty vessels for singing and mating. Females are loaded with eggs and larger. During the second 2 weeks most predators learn to separate males from females and mostly eat the silent females. When nudged, males typically buzz. During the final 2 weeks, many predators have learned not only how to separate males from females but that only the abdomens of the females are worth the effort to consume. As a result, one will see a lot of heads, thoraxes, and wings of cicadas laying on the water or ground. For a fly fisher, black poppers or more realistic cicada imitations will work very well! —They are silent!



If you find a body of water to fish where the cicadas are present, you need to be on the water at first light and expect the fishing to dramatically subside by the middle of the day. The reason is that most predators can only consume a small number of cicadas per day. The insects usually do not get active and start dropping onto the water until midmorning. During the Brood X emergence in 2004, I had some fantastic fishing on the lower Savage River. I easily landed ~75 trout before Noon with a lot of misses. I only caught another 20–25 the rest of the day, as the trout were largely satiated. There were lots of heads and wings floating on the water by early afternoon...the abdomens of the females having been eaten by the savvy trout.

There are several web sites that track these emergences and have maps showing where each brood might be expected. Visit this site for more info: <http://www.magicicada.org/> Remember, virtually any fish that can get its mouth around a cicada will eat them—carp, bass, trout, whatever! Use a heavy leader and enjoy some great fly fishing!! Look over the maps on the Internet and see if you have any way to get to an area where the cicadas are emerging this spring!! ...or next year.....?? Do not forget to look at the maps for the 13-year species in the southern US. Largemouth and spotted bass enjoy them, too!



At the top of my bucket list is to be able to wade and fish the Brood X emergence again in 2021 with my son and grandsons. This is the largest (geographically) brood of the 17-year species. 🐛

### **Trout Youth Camps - Nick Weber**

The applications for the two youth conservation and fly fishing camps we support are currently on line. If you know of an interested young person that would like to attend, pass along this information. Applications and more information is available on line. Hurry! The camps fill up quickly.

These schools provide interested youth with a week of exciting, hands-on outdoor experiences that give them a firsthand appreciation of the value of their coldwater fisheries resources.

### **Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation & Fly Fishing Youth Camp**

For boys and girls ages 14 to 17  
*June 16-21, 2013*

The Rivers camp is held at the Allenberry Resort on the Yellow Breeches in Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania

<http://www.riverscamp.com/>

### **Tri-State Conservation & Fishing Camp**

*Sunday, June 23 to Friday, June 28, 2013*

The Tri-State camp is held at Graves' Mountain Lodge in Syria, Virginia.

Students need to be in the 8th, 9th, 10th, or 11th grade now, or will be 13 years old by June 2013.

<http://tucamp.org/>



### **Reminder**

If you spot poaching please place a call to the

**Catch a Poacher Hotline**

**At**

**1-800-635-6124**

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



## Pro Tip: 5 Keys to Stealthy Fly Fishing - Phil Monahan, courtesy of *Orvis News*

Watch a heron stalk its prey in the shallows of a pond or a river, and you can clearly see why stealth is so important to anglers of all kinds. Yet many fly fishermen still act as if the fish were deaf, blind, and stupid, which keeps anglers from having the kind of success they desperately want. A good fly fisher is always aware of his surroundings and how his place in them may be tipping off the fish that something's amiss. Here are five ways you can be more like that heron:

**1. Blend in.** This starts with your fishing clothes. Try to wear stuff that's drab and won't set you off against the streamside background. You don't need full turkey-hunting camo, but wear both a shirt and hat of neutral colors.

**2. Don't be flashy.** That hemostat looks great dangling from your vest, but it reflects the sun on a bright day. If anything on your person is sending out such signals, tuck it in a pocket or attach it under your vest.

**3. Keep a low profile.** Trout can detect movement along the banks, so if you crouch (or even crawl, when necessary) as you approach a good lie, you'll increase your chances of moving under the radar.

**4. Watch your shadows.** Don't let your shadow, or that of your fly line, fall over the fish. Since many of their predators come from above, fish are terrified of shadows. Position yourself relative to the sun to keep shadows away from good lies.

**5. Slow down.** If you walk, wade, and move more slowly, you'll make less noise and less commotion in the water, and you're less likely to alert your quarry of your presence.



## February 2013 Outing Report - Dennis Covert

I always enjoy fishing Big Hunting Creek in late winter. I don't usually catch much if anything, but it's just the feel of the place that does it for me. Entering the Park to begin the ascent I always crane my neck to get my first look at the creek as it tumbles down through a narrow notch and out of the Catoctin range. The creek and road run together through the catch & release section, and in winter the leafless trees paint the hills a soft medium brown that stretches all the way to ridge tops where bare branches rake the sky. On sunny days especially when the snow is on it reminds me of an old Currier & Ives scene, but on overcast days like today with low mist hanging down into the hollows the Park feels closed in the hills wrapped around us.

Even though the forecast called for cold and snowy weather we had a good turnout. Eight of us in all, Ken Bowyer, Doug Portner, Dave Simms, Carl Smolka, Jim Robinson, Lou Reichel., Bob O'Donnell and myself. The condition of the creek was great, a good clear flow creating lots of pocket water, tumbling runs and plunge pools. The nature of the creek has changed since I was last there, a huge blow down now crosses the entire creek just above where Bear Run dumps in, and the willow patch at the first bend below the bridge is gone. I didn't make it up past the canyon section but would hazard a guess that with all the new woody debris in the creek below the bridge there must be a good amount above as well.

We fished about four hours, getting started about 10:30 and going till about 2:30. Ken, Doug and I fished down, the rest of the group scattered out above. We had no snow cover, and except for the odd flake blowing about nothing coming down either. About 1 pm the sun actually broke through, but the only bug I saw was a very small midge. I had expected to see a lot of little winter stoneflies crawling about on rocks, but saw none. Ken saw a few more including both Midges and Stoneflies and a very early # 20 Mottled Wing Caddis.

I fished a small black bead head Zebra Midge with a dropper of either a Stone Fly Nymph or a tiny Copper John and fishing the rig slow through the shallow sides, runs, and pools without even a bump. I could see Ken catching up with me from below and watched him net a fish out of two consecutive pools I had just vacated using #14 Flash Back Pheasant tail Nymph. He had switched from using a variety of small Black & Olive Brassies, Midge and Stonefly Nymphs and a small Egg with a blood dot as droppers off foam Red Ant, so, so much for going small. Ken's first was a small Brown he said sparkled like a jewel in the net, the second a vividly streaked 10 inch Rainbow, so some of the stockers have held over.

The only other fish netted was a nice Wild Brown of about 13 inches that Carl Smolka took using his Tenkara outfit and a Black Zebra Midge. Doug reported a couple strikes, and having one on briefly, and that was it.



We didn't fish all that long but had a good time. It had warmed up the first part of the afternoon, but by 2:30 the temperature was dropping fast so we headed to town for some hot coffee. Big Hunting is really pretty water this time of year and the size of the pools with this much flow are impressive. Looking at the MD DNR stocking schedule I see that Big Hunting Creek's C&R section is slated to receive 1000 Rainbows on March 31. That should make for some great sport when the April Grays make their Appearance.



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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**Flashback Pheasant Tail Nymph**  
*- Lou Reichel*



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