



The **Conservationist**

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

May 2012

Published monthly except
June, July, August and December



SPECIAL TROUT STREAMS OF MARYLAND - MAY 16

We all have fished trout streams here in Maryland - perhaps not all of them, but several are in the vocabulary of most of us. However, to learn about many of these streams from the perspective of someone who has fished them for up to fifty years is something special. Our speaker, Jim Gracie, will give us a presentation on some of his favorite trout streams of Maryland and the special insights he has found in them over the years. His presentation will cover streams from the fabled Youghiogeny in Garrett County to the Gunpowder and its tributaries in Baltimore County. His focus will be on streams with wild trout populations. Jim will share information on how, when, and where to fish them.

Jim Gracie is a former National President of Trout Unlimited and the owner and founder of Brightwater, Inc. Jim has also worked tirelessly for Trout Unlimited here in Maryland and helped found the Maryland Chapter and several others as well. He has four decades of experience developing watershed management techniques for stream and wetland protection, stream restoration, and fisheries management. As a native Marylander, and in the fifty plus years of fishing Maryland streams, he has logged countless hours seeing, observing and enjoying the breadth and depth of the outstanding opportunities for great trout fishing in Maryland. Come hear Jim talk about the amazing wealth and diversity of Maryland's trout waters and the experience gained over time. You may also get answers to questions you may have had for some time.

- *Nick Weber*

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

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President's Column - Dennis Covert

This is the last *Conservationist* until the fall September issue; remember, starting in September electronic version only. If you are current with your Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC), send an email to pptu-subscribe@yahoo.com from the address to which you would like to receive the electronic *Conservationist* including your name in the email message so we can correlate names to email addresses. Also, there are some Chapter activities on the schedule between now and then that you'll want to mark on your calendar. On May 12th there is an instructional outing scheduled on the Gunpowder River. Mid afternoon Bob Dietz will demonstrate how to select, rig, and fish the wet fly. Then we will disperse along the river to fish the evening sulphur hatch and spinner fall. There are curfews in the park's parking areas, so put a placard on your dash alerting the park rangers that your fishing the spinner fall and will return soon after dark. In the evening, if there is an interest, we will reconvene at a local establishment (the last pool) for refreshment and maybe a tall tale or two.

This particular outing should be of special interest to new anglers. You can gain more insight in one evening fishing with experienced anglers on this hatch than from many trips on your own. And for those who haven't experienced the Gunpowder in May, it is pure delight., With its bank side flora in full bloom it's as pretty a river as you will find anywhere.

We are currently seeking volunteers for several positions within the Chapter. Volunteers are needed for the Chapter's barrel raffle, speaker's program, secretary,

refreshment committee, and outings coordinator positions. Don't be shy; you'll get plenty of support from the board and an opportunity to work with some truly great folks.

On June 20th at 7:30 pm, there is a public hearing scheduled at the Community Center in Laurel Maryland off Whiskey Bottom Road for the public to comment on the proposed parking lot to be built on the Howard County side of Havilland Mill Road. We don't anticipate any strong opposition within the community to the parking lot being built, but you never know. It might prove beneficial for us to have a number of supporters at the hearing to bolster our support just in case. The proposed parking area enhances the safety of both park users and thru traffic by providing off road parking and access.

For those not familiar, the section of river below Brighton Dam Road is a tailwater, and while the lower gates in the dam do not function properly at this time, we believe with some repair it does have the potential for a cold water release and a sustained year around fishery.

By now most of us are deep into it. The trout are there, the hatches are on, and the pull of spring is irresistible. Hopefully you've all been lucky, the elements coming together and you catching fish until you're as satiated as a bear on a Salmon run. Enjoy your summer, and we'll see you in September. 🌸



PPTU Mentor Program Beginner's & 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 🌸

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

The fence along the Patuxent just upstream from the Haviland Mill Bridge has been removed through the courtesy of the nearby landowner. Do not forget that there is a small foot bridge across the large ditch that is several hundred yards upstream also on the Howard Co. side of the river. Two macro invertebrate surveys were conducted below the dam and at this bridge in late March. The numbers of net building caddis were astounding; these are mostly olive green and less than 1/2" long. Also found were fair numbers of both scuds and a few mayflies and midges of several different types. A more complete report should be out later this spring. This should be an excellent fishery for the coming months. 🌸



Tackle and Tactics - Jay Sheppard

One of my first actions upon arriving is to sit and observe what the trout are doing before wading into a stream and starting to toss some flies or lures at them. The same goes for the stream itself. Reading a stream is critical to better guess where the trout are going to be waiting for food to drift past. From small streams a few yards across to large rivers hundreds of feet across—not all sections have food and therefore few, if any, trout. I have seen large trout waiting in very tiny and shallow pockets along the bank because a large amount of food is flushed through that particular spot. I have often suggested an experiment to toss a hundred or more ping pong balls across a stream and watch what happens to them. Eventually, somewhere further downstream, they will all pass the same spot; there may be an hour or more difference between the first and last, but they should all go through the same narrow section of the river. The drifting food in the stream is going to do the same thing.

I look for ‘food funnels’ that help concentrate some of the drifting food into narrower areas. A large, exposed rock that is 2 feet across to the stream’s flow forces the water and its drifting food to go on either side of it. Depending upon the rock and the flows, anywhere from all 24 inches to almost none of the upstream flotsam will be moved to one side and pass through a much smaller section downstream. This downstream bottom of the ‘funnel’ may only be a few

inches wide at the most. So the rock forces the concentration of the passing food by a factor of several to maybe even 24:1. If the water bumping into this obstruction is carrying prey for the trout on a regular basis, compared to any other section nearby, then there should be a trout lurking on one or both sides of the rock’s deflected currents’ edges. In my observations, it takes only a concentration factor of ~2:1 to get a trout’s attention. A factor of higher value increases the odds not only of a trout being present but also an increasing chance of it being larger.

We once shocked a brown trout out of a trib to the upper Patuxent River that had been stocked two springs earlier. This brown was in the 20" range but had no pectoral fins and one eye was gone. The pectorals are very important to help the fish maneuver in the water column. This brown had found the perfect spot to survive those two years and grew from 12 or 13" to its much larger size. The small trib had a deep bend pool that undercut a large sycamore root wad by several feet. All the food coming into the small pool at normal flows was focused into a very narrow path that passed under this root wad. The trout could have been totally blind and simply kept its mouth open to screen out the food it needed to survive. It did not have to move more than an inch or two in any direction under the protection of that root wad. No wonder it was fat and happy!

Imagine what a large log partially across the surface of a stream will create. If the upper end is next to the bank and the lower end is a couple of feet out in the current, the concentration factor could be 20 or 30:1! Such a log might have several trout along its length and behind its lower end.

Another favored spot for a trout to set up his waiting station is in the pressure zone in front of a large obstruction: logs or rocks, typically. Moving water that comes directly

at such a structure can create a pressure front that is visible on the surface as a line or crease between the moving and stationary waters. A trout with at least its rear half of its body residing in the pressure front is driven forward at the same speed as the water moving toward it: it is motionless with little energy expended. Food that comes down and hits this transition edge will momentarily stop before moving to one side or the other. That pause in the drift speed allows the trout to casually inspect it and take it if it looks edible.

In summary, watch the bubbles and other items drifting along the surface. Areas with lots of bubbles, leaves, etc., are more likely to also carry more bugs. Areas that are always devoid of any drifting bubbles or other detritus may be largely devoid of food and trout as well. Learn to think in the third dimension, as the surface only supplies about a quarter of the food for a trout over time. Look for currents that may concentrate subsurface prey and drift your nymphs and other offerings through those spots, too. So sit and watch the flowing stream. Study where the food is going and not going. Have a great summer. See you in the fall, if not on a stream casting a long rod. 🌻



Help To Stop Poachers

Reminder - If you spot poaching please place a call to

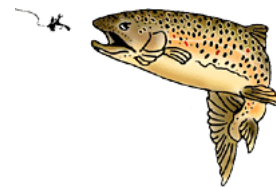
Catch a Poacher Hotline at 1-800-635-6124



Early Meeting Segments Begin at 7 PM - Nick Weber

Tying Bench

This month finds yours truly at the bench. When I talked with Jim Gracie, this month's speaker about favorite flies, he mentioned the Elk Hair Caddis, Bivisible, Woolly Bugger, and Deep Sparkle Caddis Pupa as important patterns that have been in his fly box for a long time. As a novice tier I will tie the Elk Hair Caddis. In gearing up for the meeting and oiling the old vise, I may try the Bivisible as well as it is known as a good searching pattern and one I should also have in my box. 🌻



Angler's Corner

This is another special and active month for our outings fishers. By now our Gypsy fishers will have returned from their Pennsylvania escapade April 25-28th as well as a Sulfur Excursion to the Gunpowder on May 12th. There may be the annual trip to the Ken Lockwood Gorge in New Jersey June 16-17th that Bob Dietz and Ken Bowyer head up each year. An August white fly trip to the Yellow Breeches is on tap as well. Stop and talk to Dennis and others about the fishing expectations that these outings may provide. Don't hesitate to suggest a potential outing destination to Dennis at denniscovert@hotmail.com. See <http://www.pptu.org/outings/outings.shtml> for outing listings. 🌻

**** FINAL ** NOTICE TO ALL HARD COPY RECIPIENTS**

The *Conservationist* is going to an electronic mailing starting in September. All active members will be sent detailed information about this switch later this summer via email. We note that our files do not indicate everyone has an email address and for those addresses that we do have on file, some may be wrong.

For those receiving this issue via hard copy (mailing label top line reads "PP-0912..."), we have provided what we have on file for your email address. There is a second label placed next to the masthead on this hard copy's first page. If this second, inside label has the correct email address for you, you do not have to do anything further at this time. If it is incorrect or there is no email address printed under your name, then please send us an email from the address you wish to receive the electronic *Conservationist* starting in September. For a few members, we may have two or more email addresses indicated. Again, send us an email from one of them. Send this email with "Conservationist" in the Subject line to membership@pptu.org and include your full name in the text.

If we do not have an email address for you, you will not be able to access the *Conservationist*. Please help us, help you. If you have already responded to our April plea, thank you.



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