

November 2005

The *Conservationist*

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Wednesday, November 16

The Big Raffle!

This year we will be having our major fundraising activity at our November Chapter meeting rather than in April. So, this is your only opportunity to support the Chapter and have a shot at some *really, really* nice prizes. If you haven't purchased your raffle tickets, you can still do so at the monthly meeting on **Wednesday, November 16, or purchase them from any board member in the interim. There will be three major prizes, plus a great door prize for those who wish to purchase one.**

1st Prize: A gift certificate for a spectacular **Stay and Float Package on the Delaware River at the West Branch Angler and Sportsman's Resort in Deposit, NY.** The prize is redeemable by the raffle winner or their designated representative for use between 4/10/06 and 4/28/06 or from 6/22/06 - 9/01/06. This offer includes a 3 night stay for two at the West Branch Angler and Sportsman's Resort in a large cabin. This offer includes meals during the season when the River Run Restaurant is open. However, if the River Run Restaurant is closed during the stay, meals will not be available or reimbursable. This offer includes 2 days of guided drift boat fishing or the winner can choose to substitute one day of basic instruction for one of the guided drift boat fishing days at no extra cost. Also included is \$100 for guide tips. **This package is a \$1690 value!**

2nd Prize: A **Winston WT 3 piece 8 foot 6 inch 5 weight rod with an Orvis Battenkill Bar Stock Reel**, valued at \$725. This rod comes with an unconditional lifetime guarantee.

3rd Prize: A pair of **Simms stocking foot waders**, valued at \$290. These are high quality, professional grade waders.

Again, thanks for supporting the chapter and good luck! Tickets will be \$15 each or 3 for \$35.

In addition to the main raffle, a **Magellan eXplorer 200 GPS unit**, a \$150 value, will be offered as a door prize for which tickets may be purchased for \$5. Purchase of door prize tickets will be optional. (Prize courtesy of Bass Pro Shops).

And if all of this weren't enough, there will also be a special silent auction for a **Maryland Quail Hunt**. The auction, donated by PPTU member Richard Lewis, will be for a one day quail hunt, everything provided, before March 31, 2006 for one or two persons on the Eastern Shore - minimum bid \$195. †

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

You probably have already learned that the fall stocking of our Maryland trout streams has been completed. I hope that you have or soon will get out and try your hand at these generous fish, and teach them how they should react to properly fished artificial flies (I use the term loosely to include anything in your fly box). Of course, there are a few streams not too far distant with wild fish for those of you wanting to turn your angling skills up a notch.

Continued, next page ?

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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The content of signed articles are the opinions and views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the opinions, views, and policies of Trout Unlimited, the Potomac-Patuxent Chapter, or their respective officers and directors.

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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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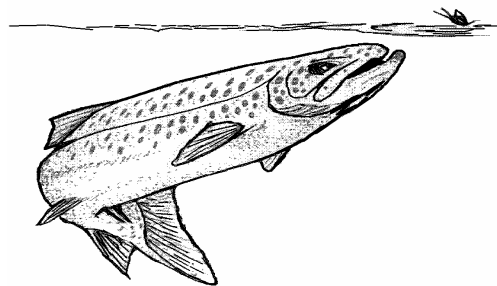
President's Column—Cont'd

As a Chapter we have several responsibilities to our members. One is to answer your trout fishing needs as best we can. We have timely topics on tackle and tactics every month in this publication as well as segments on fly tying, and chatting with one of our more expert members on any aspect of the angler's art that you wish to pursue.

Our monthly outings are a treat for those who participate as well as those who learn about them through the oral or written word. There are also conservation issues that we are working on such as the Hawlings River tree planting project — an effort to improve a local stream riparian buffer.

Beyond our nearby realm, we are lending support for stream improvement of the North Branch of the Potomac River. This resource is becoming an increasingly significant trout destination in Western Maryland. The hope is to bring about policies to improve water release from Jennings Randolph Reservoir and to reduce solids released from waste water treatment involving the paper mill at the town of Luke near Westernport, MD. Efforts by our Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited, as well as other area Chapters, and other conservation-minded groups, may help an improving fishery become an even better one. Also, stay tuned in the coming months to learn more about our efforts to raise awareness of — and increase habitat for — Brook Trout in Maryland.

Finally, I urge you to come to our Fall Fundraiser to support our Chapter's conservation and education programs that help make our Chapter beneficial to our community. See you there. |



Tackle and Tactic Tips

I have watched a lot of fly fishers over the years. Usually I want to see if they are catching anything, while I am not doing so well that day. I have also given hundreds of lessons and guided a similar number of fishers to our local and more distant waters over the past several decades. Being a biologist, I have the mentality of a typical scientist...to observe and see what is working and why.

There are several general fishing rules that need to be followed to improve the chances of a hookup and landing a fish. Every time I am casting the fly, I want to be ready to strike within a micro second of the fly touching down on the water. I do not always accomplish this goal, but my basic philosophy is that I need to practice all of the little details all of the time, as some day I will have the fish of a lifetime and maybe a state record on the other end, and I do not want to lose it on some stupid mistake, which I am prone to make at the wrong moment!

First, to be truly "fishing," the line must rest over a finger (or two) of the hand that is holding the rod. If the line is only being held by the other hand, you are not ready to strike and start retrieving or even controlling the fly line. A fisher must be ready to control the line and the fish the instant this is required. The basic retrieve on fighting any fish not yet on the reel is to let the line slip, when needed, over the finger on the rod hand. When line can be taken back, the other hand can reach **behind** the rod hand and the line striped over the finger(s). The line can be tightened, with great care, against the grip or otherwise controlled while all the angler's attention is focused on the fish's actions. At no time should the line be grasped by the non-rod hand **above** the fingers holding the line. Once you do that you are now unable to control the flow of the line beyond standing there with the line in one hand and the rod in the other. Holding the line by the rod hand's forefinger or middle finger is the norm, and the only way to retrieve line during the presentation. So, please "fish" with the line over a finger on the rod hand!

The second issue is where to hold the rod while drifting the fly. There are some very specific ?

times when raising the rod to above the horizontal is warranted, but in general, when dead drifting a dry or striping a streamer back from the far bank the rod tip should be within a foot or so of the water. I have watched all too many fly fishers holding the rod at about the 10 or 11 o'clock position while the line drifts along in the current with lots of slack between the rod tip and the fly. When it comes time to finally strike or commence a back cast, the rod has almost no maneuvering room to get all the slack out of the line. The fly either cannot be set in the jaw of the fish or be sent back for a good back cast. Poor back casts help start poor forward casts. I have seen many a fish lost with the rod starting in a high position and then no place to go after the rod is pointed backwards at 3 o'clock. Generally, the rod should not be past High Noon when the hook is set and the fish starts to run; I try to leave only enough slack to a dead-drifted fly so as not to have to raise the rod much higher than about 10 or 11 o'clock at the moment when the hook is set and the line is tight.

Part of this problem starts from the end position of the rod when the cast was first made. Many fly fishers end the cast with the rod tip several feet above the moving water. The rod should be within inches of the water **at the end of the cast, in most cases**. The simple laws of physics demands that the fly line must land short of its maximum length for every inch the rod is held above the water. If 20 feet of line is cast and the rod tip is 5 feet above the water as the line lands, then the tip of the line will be about 5 feet closer to the fisher than if the rod tip was only a couple of inches off the water. One cannot reverse this problem by lowering the rod tip **after** the line has already touched the water. If you watch carefully with a high rod, you will see the line tip coming back towards a high rod tip even before the line touches the water. Any slack or S-curves you are trying to inject into the cast are gone before you have any time to do anything about it. If the fisher is actively retrieving a streamer or similar fly, then they will be in the ultimate touch with the fly if the rod is held low.

None of the above precludes the momentary raising of the rod to mend the line or lift it over a rock or similar obstruction. There are other cases where raising the rod to keep the line off the water is also normal rod handling. Next issue, I will discuss mending the line, unless some other hot topic presents itself. †

— Jay Sheppard

Patuxent Report

The only real problem with fishing this stream at this time of the year is that much of the upper Patuxent Special Trout Area is a public hunting zone. Call the Park office at (301) 924-2127 or stop by their Clopper Road office in Gaithersburg (Seneca Creek State Park is responsible for Patuxent State Park) to obtain maps of hunting zones within Patuxent. Some of the local sport shops may also have this information. The firearm season for deer is about to start, but other firearm hunting (e.g., squirrels, woodcock), as well as archery and black powder seasons for deer will be running from now through early February. I would suggest weekdays or Sundays OR a bright colored hat on Saturdays, in particular. (Sunday hunting is not allowed on public lands.) The most hunted area is between Hipsley Mill and Howard Chapel Roads.

A fair number of holdover browns and rainbows should still be in the larger pools as winter sets into this area. I have in the past seen some of the largest browns of the year at this time. It takes some patience and stealth to find and then catch them. Wild browns have been found throughout this special trout management area, especially above RT 94. Some 500 rainbows of excellent size were stocked at the RT 94, Hipsley Mill, and Howard Chapel bridges on October 13 and October 17 on the Middle Patuxent Delayed Harvest water. They should be providing some good sport from now through the winter.

— Jay Sheppard

Autumn Outings Report

Gunpowder

On Saturday September 24th PPTU members Cathy Nutter, Lance Flood, and Larry Glatt joined me at the Massemore parking lot for the chapter's first fall outing. The weather was pleasantly mild with temperature in the low 70's and gray skies. However the 320cfs flows did catch me off guard. The flows made wading difficult - it's a little stiff when you can feel the gravel slipping when you lift your boot. However, being the optimists that we are, we sallied forth with good expectations. ?

Tan Caddis could be seen popping off the surface with fish in hot pursuit, but no takers on our various offerings. By mid morning trout were rising to blue wing olive spinners in slow water that gathered behind logs or other stream debris, but getting a good drift in that current proved to be quite difficult. We spent the morning fishing up and down in close proximity of the parking lot all of us going fishless. After a mid-morning break for drinks and a snack, we dispersed along the river. Though conditions were difficult we did manage to take a few fish. Cathy Nutter reported taking a brown upstream from the bridge on a Copper John fished as a dropper behind an ant. After seeing an inchworm suspended over the river from an overhanging limb, I switched to a #10 inchworm pattern and took a couple of browns before calling it a day.

Western Maryland

PPTUer's Patrick Masler, Michael Abramowitz, Jay Sheppard, George Vincent, and Ken Bowyer along with a guest and first time fly fisher Tim Bowers met in the mountains of Western Maryland for the October 7th, 8th, and 9th outing. As I drove west on Friday morning, rain was already spattering on the windshield, gaining intensity at Hagerstown that made it difficult to see the road. As the weather forecast for the entire weekend was rain with flash flooding, I was glad that I had followed Jay's advice about reserving the pavilion at Big Run State Park. This really saved the trip. What would have undoubtedly been a wet muddy mess became reasonably comfortable camping spot under the pavilion. We pitched our dome tents under the roof, set up our kitchens, and built a fire in the hearth keeping ourselves and gear relatively dry. The nightly rains were reduced to a minor inconvenience. At only 50 cfs the Savage looked a little bony, but decked out in the early autumn colors of yellowing-green, red, and orange she was as beautiful as ever. The overcast skies and misty weather intensified the colors. I helped Tim rig up, gave him a quick lesson in nymphing, and then turned him loose. He promptly caught his first trout, a 13 inch brown, on a chartreuse San Juan worm, followed with another brown and then a good brookie. Hoping he would splash some beginners luck on ?

Outings Report — Cont'd

me, I stayed close by. The tactic paid off with a couple browns of my own. After a quick chat with Ken and George on the road while we broke down our rods and stripped off waders, we headed to the park to set up camp. Soon Michael and Jay joined us. They started the day on the North Branch without any luck, and then finished up quite well on the Savage. After supper we shopped ideas around the fire, most of us deciding to hit the North Branch first thing in the morning. Meeting in the parking lot at Barnum, Michael, Tim, Patrick, and I hiked the path to the upper end of the upper fly section, while Ken and George hit the lower end. After a couple of fishless hours, Ken hiked up to tell us of a local guy catching big browns on egg patterns below us. After Ken released his third rainbow in about 10 minutes, most of us were digging out our boxes looking for glow bugs. I think we all caught a rainbow or two but the big browns remained true to the locals.

Back at camp that night we cooked, made coffee, and gathered around the fire to swap stories and compare notes about how many different flocks of wild turkeys we had seen. There must have been at least three different sightings just on the drive over to Barnum that morning. Dawn broke with coyotes howling from one ridge to another. After breakfast we headed down to the river. By all accounts, the Savage was good to all, giving up both brookies and browns, the best fish reported was a 17" brown landed by Jay, a 15" brown by Michael, and a 16" brown that came my way not long after I had my first Maryland bear sighting. I looked up from my nymphing after hearing some rock clatter and he was just there, about 40 yards in front of me crossing the river, he then ambled up the side of the mountain and then he was gone... Whew, what a beautiful animal!

Michael, Patrick and Tim left a day early; Monday morning had Jay and me breaking camp while listening to a barred owl. Jay had chatted with this owl the night before, and it was probably wondering where he was this morning. Declaring the outing a success we headed back to the river. I fished till about noon getting a few more brookies and a brown, George and Ken said they ventured up to check out the Casselman and caught a few small fish. Jay planned to meet Matt Baun ?

and stay till dark.

All in all in spite of the weather it was a fine outing. Fish were caught, stories were told, and no one perished from fire or flood (or bears). Can't beat that.

— *Dennis Covert*
Outings Leader

Check your National Membership Status!

There have been a series of major problems at the membership offices of national Trout Unlimited. One of the main issues has been that when TU members renew their national membership, they may be reassigned to another chapter without their requesting this reassignment. Please check either your membership card so that it reads Potomac Patuxent or your Trout mailing label. The latter should have the number 036 in the middle of the second line of the address label, along with your member number and the expiration of your national membership.

If you see a problem, contact the national offices by calling 1-800-834-2419. Make sure you have your card or a mailing label handy, in case they need your member number. Conversely, if you wish to be reassigned to another chapter, you can simply call the office and ask to be transferred. The chapter no longer handles renewals of national memberships, nor can we ask for any members to be reassigned to any chapter, including PPTU..

As a side note, the renewal form from national TU seems to indicate that when you renew your national membership that it also covers any chapter dues. We do not have "dues" in the chapter, but of what you do send to the national office, we eventually receive about a dollar. This is not enough to cover the costs of the chapter to reprint and mail the newsletter, so we ask for an assessment to cover those expenses. As indicated in the notice in this issue about the annual assessments, we use the donations from raffles and other contributions to go to the resource and not to cover postage and printing costs.

ADDRESS CHANGED? Missing an Issue?

If you have moved or see any error in your mailing labels (*Trout* or *Conservationist*), please notify **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 assessment) or **Student** (free). The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. The assessment is totally separate from Trout Unlimited dues. Send correspondence, change of address, or assessment payable to POTOMAC-PATUXENT TROUT UNLIMITED, PO Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915.

Chapter and national TU expiration dates are indicated in the mailing label as PP-0905 or NTU-0905.

FINAL NOTICE

MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT NOW PAYABLE

The annual assessment is now payable. We have not had everyone renew in recent years, so we are going to have to reduce the size of the CONSERVATIONIST if we do not have enough folks renewing. Please help PPTU and send in your money today!! Check your label—if we have stamped it in **RED** with "FINAL NOTICE," you must send your \$15 now or pay at the November meeting in order not to miss the January and next year's subsequent issues. Some members have already paid this year, so they show "PP-0906." Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER - TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. Full time high school or college students are waived the assessment, but you must send us your graduation date. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations at our raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, etc. **This is the final mailing** for those having "PP-0905" or no "PP-" date on their label. **There will be NO separate mailings to remind current members of this obligation. Please take note and action today! Thank you.**

REMINDER

The next issue of the *Conservationist* will be in early January. There is no December issue or any monthly meeting. Have a safe and Happy Holiday!



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