



September 2006

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

The Gunpowder River Best Tailwater in the Mid Atlantic?

This month's program features a great tailwater fishery near home. The Gunpowder River for more than two decades has emerged as one of the finest tailwater trout fisheries in the east. Lucky for us, it is a short drive, just north of Baltimore.

Stacey Smith, this month's featured guest speaker, knows the river and its trout like the inside of his fly box, having guided on it since 1991. Stacey will share his knowledge and stories about a stream that is fast becoming a must-go-to destination — not only for folks in our Chapter, but also for many fly fishers in the Mid-Atlantic.

A member of Trout Unlimited and a fly fishing instructor for L.L. Bean's Outdoor Discovery School, Stacey has decided to hang his waders just minutes from what has become a great and challenging stream. Less than an hour away and full of wild trout that can challenge your fishing abilities to a high level, the Gunpowder is truly a wonderful destination that serves as a source of great enjoyment for many of us throughout the year. Come and hear a veteran fisher talk about his home water. Maybe you will learn some of its secrets, and why Stacey Smith believes that wild fish don't read the same books we do. Please visit Stacey's web site at www.findsfish.com.

— Nick Weber

The Gunpowder River

Monthly PPTU Meeting
Wednesday, September 20, 2006
7:00 PM

FEATURED GUEST SPEAKER

Stacey Smith

Veteran Flyfishing Guide & Instructor

Also Don't Miss the Tying Bench &
Anglers Corner Segments

(See details, Page 5)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE!



- **September 23, 2006 — Outing to the Gunpowder — Stream Clean-up, picnic and fishing.**
- **Brook Trout Conservation in Maryland.**
- **Fall Outings Schedule — Gunpowder, Western Maryland, Beaver Creek.**

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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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

EDITOR: Matt Baun
Phone: 301-937-8015
mattbaun@yahoo.com

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

By Nick Weber

After a summer of fishing and interesting fishing destinations, we begin the fall season with the anticipation of cooler weather, more willing trout, and wonderful fishing experiences before the elements decide our fate at the tying bench. With September comes the beginning of what some call the fall season for trout fishing. It is also the beginning of our Chapter program year with meetings, outings and other events that we sponsor and take part in.

We are planning an interesting program schedule starting with this month's featured guest speaker on the Gunpowder River — whose wild trout are worthy of the distinction. Note elsewhere in this issue you will find a novel conservation and social approach to the September 23 Outing on the Gunpowder. In October, we will learn more about South Central Pennsylvania trout streams from a guide who is on that water almost daily.

Our focus on conservation continues with our chapter's participation in the Maryland Brook Trout Alliance, a newly formed organization whose mission is to protect, enhance, and restore brook trout in Maryland. An article on the organization appears elsewhere in this issue.

In addition, our chapter intends to continue our efforts in conservation education by supporting several area schools with Trout in the Classroom. Through this program, youngsters not only monitor the hatch and growth of trout, but also learn about the environmental aspects of quality trout habitat. Conservation and trout fishing initiatives continue to be a focus for us in the Patuxent River watershed as well.

Continued growth and renewal should be and will be a goal of our Chapter for the coming year. We urge you to be an active participant in our Chapter by your attendance at our meetings, at our sponsored events, and importantly on our projects. It is through your participation that our organization will experience success in conservation and education, as well as sport fishing. Please participate, lend a hand, and make a difference. See you soon! ■

Tackle and Tactic Tips

BY JAY SHEPPARD

Fly fishing for trout is a challenge. A fisher has to make a whole range of decisions once he reaches some trout water: How to approach the water, where to wade and stand (or kneel), where to cast, what type of cast, what fly, leader characteristics, flows, wind, where the trout may run once hooked, and a few dozen other parameters. Each of those factors has several to many dozens of options, too. When you add them all up, at any given time when on a trout stream, the fisher may have hundreds, if not thousands, of alternatives from which to choose. This is what makes this sport a challenge (and a curse) to many.

Fly fishers need to take their time to learn the sport. None of us learned to run a hundred yards a few days after we learned to walk. Fishers need to slowly learn from practice many of these minute 'tricks' so that they become second nature for the most part—like writing or other hand-eye skills. I am often fishing with others who may have been fishing for many years, but clearly they are not practicing during the time they are not on the water, so they have to relearn their subtle casting tricks on their infrequent outings to a stream.

No matter what the local waters offer, we need to practice for the times we eventually hope to come on some fabulous spring creek or out in the far west. I have been asked many times to help someone who has done little or no fly fishing to prepare for some grand trip to some far trout water, such as Yellowstone Park or the San Juan. That is like learning how to pitch a baseball for a few days and then going to Yankee Stadium to pitch against the professionals. The trout one meets on most of these popular rivers around the world have seen many flies and fishers. They know most frauds from a natural insect. The scenery might be grand, but the fishing will likely be poor if one does not practice, practice, practice ▶



Here is one thing you can practice: casting to a target under varying wind conditions and distances. Use a plate on your lawn as a target. From 20–35 feet away from various angles and wind conditions, try to drop weighted and unweighted flies of various sizes on that plate. On a stream you often have only a small target in which to drop the fly: too far in front and the drift will change before the fly gets to the trout or too close and you will spook it. After a practice cast, lay down the rod and walk along the line and leader; are they arranged as you wished them to be?

On heavily fished streams one must often drop a small dry fly in the bubbles, as the trout have learned 98% of their natural food floats down the river in those bubble lines. Have a family member or friend advise you if your practice casts are striking the ground behind you. Learn how to do side casts from either side of your body. Practice, practice, practice! The trout will give you your final test. ■

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The subscription (see back) is now payable. Check your label—if the "PP-" date is "0906" (or there is NO "PP-" and date), you can send your \$15 now, and you will not have to worry about paying at the September meeting. Some members paid twice this year, so they already show "PP-0907." Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER - TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. The subscription covers only the Conservationist and related administrative expenses; all donations above expenses at raffles, etc., go to the resource and educational programs and not to support our members with free Conservationists. **Final mailing** for those having "PP-0906" on their label will be the November issue. If you wish to receive the Conservationist via the Internet, please indicate this with your check and provide your email address. **There will be NO separate mailings to remind members of this obligation. Please take note and action today! You will not want to miss our January issue and all the other 2007 issues with their announcements, reports and tips. Thank you.**

Maryland Brook Trout Conservation

BY NICK WEBER



Beginning in February, the Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited and ThorpeWood, an environmental education center located in the Catoctin Mountains, began work to facilitate the launch of a new group to protect and conserve brook trout in Maryland. More than 50 participants representing more than two dozen non-profits and public and private agencies concerned about the plight of Maryland brook trout have met three times now to focus on brook trout conservation in our state. At the second meeting they adopted the name Maryland Brook Trout Alliance (MBTA) for the newly formed conservation effort.

MBTA was formed in Maryland to support the larger regional mission of the national Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture. The Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) is the nation's first pilot project under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, which directs locally driven efforts that build private and public partnerships to improve fish habitat.

The conservation goal addressed by the MBTA is to restore and protect brook trout populations across Maryland. Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) are the only trout native to Maryland. Maryland brook trout populations have declined by 90 percent across the state as the result of land-use decisions made over the past hundred years that increased sedimentation, nutrient runoff, and water temperatures, and from more recent impacts as our population, road network, and water needs continue to grow. Once widely distributed throughout the state, a recent survey indicate that brook trout are restricted to only a few watersheds. Only 300,000 brook trout now live in Maryland. As a result, they have been listed as a species of Greatest Conservation Need (GCN) by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Natural Heritage Program.

The purpose of the MBTA is to halt and reverse the impact of stressors that are rapidly decreasing Maryland's remaining brook trout populations and to re-establish populations wherever possible.

The MBTA's efforts are already gaining substantial momentum. We are developing plans to implement a comprehensive, sustainable, science-based program for Maryland brook trout recovery and protection ►

In addition, we have already organized multi-disciplined work teams in four key watersheds (Savage, Youghiogheny, Gunpowder, and Monocacy River) where 90 percent of Maryland's remaining brook trout reside.

The role of these teams is to galvanize stakeholders, resource users, and local and state agencies to advance coordinated habitat protection and restoration projects to improve water quality and insure the future of brook trout in the four watersheds. Three of these large watersheds flow into the Chesapeake Bay. The long-term goal of this statewide project is to implement strategies that sustain healthy, fishable, brook trout populations, which in turn leads to overall healthier watersheds for the state. The Potomac Patuxent Chapter has elected to be part of the Gunpowder watershed and work to initiate projects based on watershed data available from state and other sources. We also have membership on the steering committee that will monitor, coordinate, and help guide the MTBA and the watershed organizations. Let me know if you are interested in participating in this interesting and important conservation program. We could use your input. ■

Patuxent Report

BY JAY SHEPPARD

My expectations are that maybe 15–20% of the brown trout survived this summer's flows and heat; in a normal year, we might see 20% of the stocked fish survive. The moderate flows should leave a fair number of trout scattered up and down the river for the rest of the year. Only a very small number of rainbows might be found to hold over this year in a few sections.

If you are interested in helping in the annual electro-fishing surveys of this stream, please contact me by the September meeting. This is always a good opportunity to help and also to see where the trout are (or are not). This is a weekday pursuit with **chest waders** required. Dates and times have not been determined as we go to press. Similarly, if you have any interest in the Gunpowder or other stream surveys, let me know, too, by Sept. 15. There may be some fall stocking of the Patuxent system in October. I do not have any schedule or numbers. If you are interested and have not been contacted in the past about such activities, please get in touch with me. ■

Joining or Renewing TU Membership

Using Membership Application – New members can join TU using the special introductory membership application. This membership application offers a special rate of \$17.50. To ensure our chapter is credited properly for rebates, please ensure our chapter's 3-digit chapter # appears in the code box: **236**. Also ensure the return address on the application is Trout Unlimited, PO Box 7400, Woolly Bugger, WV 25438.

Joining Using the Website – New members also can join TU online at www.tu.org/intro. The special introductory rate of \$17.50 for new members is only offered through this link. To ensure our chapter is credited properly for rebates, please ensure our chapter's 3-digit chapter # appears in the **Chapter Number** field: **236**. The new member enters their name, address, email, and credit card information. **NOTE:** Please ensure spelling is correct as this information is automatically added to the TU database system with what is entered.

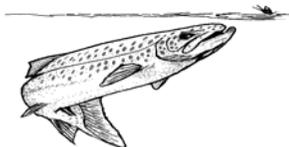
Renewals for TU Members:

Existing members should be renewing their membership to TU by any of the following methods:

- Membership Renewal Statement that is mailed to them,
- Calling Customer Service at 1-800-834-2419 to renew over the phone, or
- Online at www.tu.org. For online renewals, click on the **Join/Renew** tab at top, then click on the "Renew Membership" link on the left. You will need to know your login name and password.

Changing chapter affiliation:

National TU has had a process where members who renew are cross checked for their ZIP codes. If the ZIP falls in another chapter's jurisdiction, the member has been reassigned automatically to that other chapter. When you receive your membership card after renewing, please verify to what chapter you are assigned. Call the membership number above to have your affiliation changed to any chapter at any time. Also ask that your membership record be flagged so that no changes in chapter affiliation will happen in the future without your specific request on the previous page.



MDTU-PPTU Joint Gunpowder Outing Stream clean-up, Picnic & Fishing

MDTU & PPTU are having a joint cleanup, lunch and fishing outing at Bunker Hill Road in Hereford, Md. on Sept. 23 beginning at 9am. MDTU will provide picnic after streamside cleanup. Fishing will commence right after lunch. MDTU would like a guesstimate on how many will be attending from PPTU as soon as possible so they can order the picnic supplies. If you plan to attend please contact Dennis Covert at denniscovert@hotmail.com or, call 410-740-8337.

PPTU MENTOR PROGRAM BEGINNERS & BEYOND

One-on-one stream side 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 paid a supporting contribution will be asked to contribute \$15.

Contact Ken Bowyer at 301-627-7154 or e-mail kenbowyer@comcast.net.

Tying Bench - Stop by the Tying Bench this month and see a great fly to use in a hopper/dropper combination on the Gunpowder this fall. Our tier this month, Jim Greco says one of his deadliest combinations is a size 10 - 12 Madam X with a Size 14 - 18 wet ant trailing on a dropper. Jim will demonstrate on how to tie the Madam X (a great and simple hopper [cricket if tied in black] pattern that has won the Jackson Hole one fly contest. He will also show how to rig it with a dropper for fishing on the Gunpowder this fall.

Angler's Corner –Dennis Covert our Outings Chairperson will be there to discuss the upcoming outing to the Gunpowder on Saturday, September 23. He will share his thoughts about the Gunpowder and may open his fly box as well to view a few of his secret weapons. Stop by and chat with Dennis about the clean up, picnic, and fishing outing with our neighboring TU Chapter that promises to be a unique experience.

Tying Bench and Anglers Corner will take place at the Monthly PPTU Meeting on Wednesday, September 20. Both segments run concurrently from 7:00 – 7:30 PM.

2006 FALL OUTINGS SCHEDULE
MARK YOUR CALENDARS

September 23, 2006

Gunpowder River — Stream clean-up & fish

October 13-14, 2006

Savage & North Branch of the Potomac Weekend Camping Trip.

November 4, 2006

Beaver Creek

Subscriptions

The **Potomac-Patuxent Chapter** of Trout Unlimited has two subscription rates: **Regular or Family** (\$15/year) and **Student** (free). PPTU invites members of other TU chapter to subscribe to the **Conservationist**. The Chapter operates on a September-to-September basis. The subscription is totally separate from TU dues. Send all correspondence, changes of address, or subscription orders to our PO Box (below). Your subscription expiration for the Conservationist is indicated on the address label as PP-0906 or PP-0907.

ADDRESS CHANGED?

If you have moved or see any error in your label on this newsletter, please advise 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.

Last year we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. First, make sure we have your correct address, including ZIP, and that your dues are paid up (label reads PP-0906 until this November, then PP-0907 after that). If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy. For future reference, we try to mail the newsletters to our active members about two weeks before the next meeting. Remember, we have no newsletters or meetings in December or during the summer months of June, July and August.



Return Address:
Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
Wheaton, MD 20915

FIRST CLASS MAIL

PPCTU Begins a New Year – President's Special Message

Trout Unlimited is a conservation organization whose mission is to "conserve, protect, and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds." Our chapter's conservation activities are focused primarily on trout waters on the northern fringe of the Metropolitan Washington area; the upper Patuxent, the Middle/Little Patuxent, the Paint Branch, and the Northwest Branch. Our stewardship of these streams includes protection, restoration and improvement of the wild trout habitats in the Paint Branch and the headwaters of the Patuxent River, plus stocking of hatchery-raised trout in habitats that support trout on a more seasonal basis. These stewardships have materially helped to maintain trout populations that provide both educational and recreational resources nearby the homes of our members. Through our chapter's association with other TU chapters in the Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited we coordinate with and participate in conservation projects in trout-bearing watersheds throughout Maryland, and recently in the Maryland Brook Trout Alliance. Please give back to these special local areas through participation in our conservation activities.

Our conservation activities are fueled by a combination of in-kind contributions (e.g., members' voluntary labor) and money from chapter fund-raising activities (e.g., raffles, book sales and library rental fees), grants, and to a small extent, by fractional rebates of your TU national dues.

We meet monthly from September through May, except for December. Each meeting features a topic that will increase your knowledge of trout fisheries, improve your angling abilities, or update you on coldwater fishery conservation activities. Also, at our chapter meetings, chapter members may borrow from our trout fisher's library of videos and books. Our mentor program which takes fishers to nearby trout waters is a great way to become familiar with our streams as well as the tactics and techniques to be successful. The Chapter also hosts monthly outings to various streams. Between monthly meetings, we meet (exchange information) electronically on our chapter listserver. To subscribe, send an email from the email account you want added to the listserver, to ppctu-subscribe@yahooogroups.com. I urge you to also visit our web site at www.pptu.org for a broad look at Chapter activities and information.

We distribute our chapter publication, [The Conservationist](#), eight times a year in the same months as chapter meetings either by mail or electronically. The publication keeps you abreast of upcoming chapter activities and also includes feature articles that will sharpen your angling knowledge. To defray the costs of printing and mailing the publication, we ask for a \$15 **Annual Supporting Contribution**, due each September. (The contribution request is waived for individual full-time high school and college students who provide us with their graduation dates.) As a reminder of your contribution status, the mailing label on [The Conservationist](#) carries the expiration date of your Supporting Contribution just above your name (e.g., "PP-0906"). We trust that you will find the publication valuable enough to renew your Supporting Contribution annually. In addition to receiving [The Conservationist](#), your **Annual Supporting Contribution** will permit you to receive a discount on our fly tying class fee as well as other Chapter related items such as library rentals and shirts, and free service for our mentor program. You should be aware, however, that by paying your annual Trout Unlimited dues you are automatically a member of Potomac Patuxent Chapter, No. 236, if so identified by zip code or by your request. The **Annual Supporting Contribution** is voluntary, and hopefully you will support us with your contribution because it helps support our Chapter activities which in turn brings value to your trout fishing experience. In addition to receiving [The Conservationist](#), you receive other benefits of your contribution as noted in the examples above. Please cut out the Annual Supporting Contribution coupon found on this insert, mark it with your preference of how you wish to receive [The Conservationist](#), and mail it to: Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU, P.O. Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915

If you have any questions, suggestions, or other comments, please let us know. We hope to see you soon and regularly at our meetings and other activities.

May the rises be many,

Nick Weber, President

School Children volunteers planting trees to improve habitat of stream riparian buffer.



-----Cut Here -----

SEND YOUR ANNUAL SUPPORTING CONTRIBUTION and RECEIVE THE CONSERVATIONIST FOR A YEAR!

The \$15 Annual Supporting Contribution per year covers not just the production of the Conservationist (8 issues), but also helps in sending it to many of our local tackle shops, newspapers, other TU chapters, DNR offices, and others. The remaining portion is also used to pay for the meeting room rentals and other chapter administrative expenses. Full-time students receive the Conservationist for FREE, if we have their expected graduation date. Please complete and return this form with your check for the coming season. If your label already reads "PP-0907," you still need to return this form **if you wish to receive the Conservationist over the Internet**. Otherwise, please make the check payable to POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER and mail to the address on the back page, or the address below. Please select one or both options. Should you need to change your selected delivery method(s), we can allow only one change during the coming year.

Please mail my Conservationists for the coming year to: (give complete mailing address or include mailing label). If there is a label and any corrections are needed, please note the changes and return. Students receiving free copies should provide the date of their expected graduation.

Please send me an email notice that the next Conservationist is available for downloading. PPTU will send you a link to a special web site to view and download the issue (Adobe PDF file). This link will not be made available to anyone who has not selected this option. The PPTU.ORG web site will only be posting the first page of each issue for the first month after it is printed—so those on this special mailing list will be the only persons having access to the entire file for its first full month. My email address for this notice is as follows (please print clearly): _____

Mail to: **Potomac – Patuxent Chapter TU, P.O. Box 2865, Wheaton, MD 20915**