

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

April 2024 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

## “In Search of Good Water” With Guest Author John N. Maclean

April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024

The Maclean books that concern fly fishing, *A River Runs through It* and *Home Waters*, owe a heavy debt to Ernest Hemingway’s “Big Two-Hearted River.” Those two books and the others by my father, Norman Maclean, and me, would have been written differently without the Hemingway story, which influenced both our styles. It’s even possible none of those books would have been written absent the story, though one hopes – as I certainly do – that’s taking matters too far. But it is true “Big Two-Hearted River” convinced my father and me that fly fishing could be turned into literature in the right hands. That conviction has led me on a long chase, or quest, to find the places where Hemingway fished when he was young, on the trip that inspired the story, and when he was old and in need of the kind of solace Nick Adams, the story’s lone hero, found on that long ago trip. The quest led from the Fox River in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula to the abundant trout waters around Ketchum, Idaho, where Hemingway lived the last years of his life. I fished both places and came away, as fishermen often do, with more in the way of memories than fish, but with answers to questions as well.



Photo by Chenoa Dwyer

John N. Maclean, the author of *Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and A River* and other books, wrote the foreword to Ernest Hemingway’s *Big Two-Hearted River: The Centennial Edition*, published last year by Mariner Classics. Maclean spent thirty years at the Chicago Tribune, most of that time as a Washington correspondent, before turning to an independent writing career three decades ago. Maclean, an avid fly fisherman, divides his time between Washington, DC, and a family cabin at Seeley Lake, Montana.

The April 17th Chapter Meeting will be **IN PERSON ONLY**.

– *Scott Cernich*

### April 17<sup>th</sup> Chapter Meeting – In Person

Mid County Community Center

2004 Queensguard Rd, Silver Spring, MD 20906

Time and Day: 7:00 PM, Third Wednesday of the month except June, July, August and December

Chapter Meeting In Person

Visit our website: [www.pptu.org](http://www.pptu.org)

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## Presidents' Column - Joe Taylor



What do the arrival of Robins, backyard bulbs, striped skunks, black bears and much more have in common? They are signs that spring has arrived! I for one, can't wait. I've been tied up with other things this winter so I haven't had time to do much fishing. I actually enjoy winter fishing but it just wasn't in the cards for me this year. If you are in the same boat, then you are probably equally as excited to hit your favorite stream.

It's ironic how things come full circle sometimes. When I was younger, I couldn't wait to leave Pennsylvania (I grew up in central PA) and get out of town. Now I can't wait to head back to Pennsylvania to fish the streams throughout central PA. The endless fishing opportunities, the prolific hatches and the beauty of the surrounding landscape have been on my mind and I'm itching to get back there as soon as possible.

I have to say that one of my favorite fishing adventures is chasing the Green Drake hatch on Penn's Creek. It's just an amazing site seeing tens of thousands of three inch bugs hovering over the tree tops just waiting to descend to the river as nightfall hits. The anticipation is almost unbearable. Now, let me be clear, the fishing can be downright frustrating! You could find fish rising all around you but never even get a hit. At least that's my experience, but then again I'm not an expert fisherperson like some of our members.

You might think matching the hatch is what you should strive for, but some of the "local guides" actually do the opposite. Either tossing other patterns, or extra (and I mean extra) large drake patterns to entice a bite. For me, it's much more than catching fish, it's the adventure, comradery and sitting around the campfire that makes the trip so fun.





So, if you are excited as I am about what's just around the corner, I wish you the best of luck. Cherish each and every opportunity you have on the water and maybe if the stars align you will be lucky enough to even catch a fish or two during your favorite hatch.

Hope to see you on the stream soon!

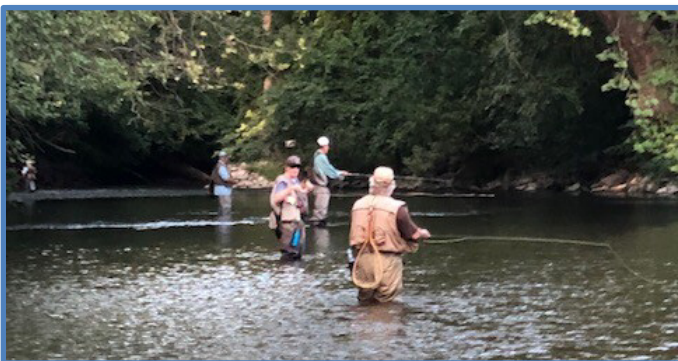
Joe Taylor  
President, PPTU



### PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

PPTU 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. all on nearby streams. Instruction will be tailored to individual needs. Members who have not made an **Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.

Contact us by e-mail: [mentor@pptu.org](mailto:mentor@pptu.org)



### First Shad Caught - PPTU

The Shad Report posted word that the first hickory had been landed by Alex Binsted out in a boat. Shad Reports for 2024 and future years will be delivered to you by the Friends of Fletcher's Cove organization.



For almost a decade, Mark Binsted has shared his first-hand knowledge of this amazing fishery with subscribers to the "Shad Report." A collection of in-depth reports on the status of the shad run, various musings about the beauty of the wildest urban river in America, and a whole lot of information on how to catch these wild anadromous fish.

Mark is pleased to team up with the dedicated Potomac River enthusiasts Friends of Fletcher's Cove who are fighting to save a cherished gateway to outdoor recreation on the Potomac.

If you wish to read and/or subscribe to the report, go to the [savethecove.org](http://savethecove.org) website and sign up. Besides the report, you can read about the issues hampering the cove and the folks trying to help save it. Check out the [Shad Report](#).

## The Catch and Release of Joe Brooks - Michael Somerby

It was January of 1955 when Joe Brooks first cast into the rich waters of Argentina's Tierra del Fuego, astonishing the native onlookers. The archipelago, on South America's southernmost tip, is famous for gusting sea winds so powerful that trees warp into permanently mangled, unnatural forms; casting a fly with any semblance of precision was unheard of, yet Brooks rolled out cast after cast on target. He then doubled down on the spectacle, landing a monster sea-run brown trout, and proceeded with the unthinkable—releasing it, alive, back into the water.



Brooks smiling upon a brown trout on a Brotherhood of the Jungle Cock outing in Maryland. Photo courtesy of The Joe Brooks Foundation

“His casting and his ability to fight the winds blew these Argentinians away,” said Joseph Brooks, Joe Brooks' great nephew. “They fished with a ‘catch it, kill it’ belief, so for him to release this impressive of a fish was inconceivable.”

To read the full story, check out Michael's article in [Mountain Outlaw](#).



*"Poets talk about "spots of time", but it is really the fishermen who experience eternity compressed into a moment. No one can tell what a spot of time is until suddenly the whole world is a fish and the fish is gone."*

~ Norman Mclean

## Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard, April 2016 Issue

Many dozens of books have been written on matching the hatch. You might want to invest in a few of them, as most are handy references. These can become especially important if you are headed to some other region of the country and want to learn a little about the hatches you could encounter on your trip. Ask around. Many of us old timers can suggest a few titles or just check a local fly shop.



Stonefly nymphs emerge by crawling out on some rock or structure and then flying off to some shrub or tree to first mate before returning to lay their eggs on the water. The moving nymphs and the egg-laying females are the most accessible to the hungry trout. The larger stones may spend several years crawling around the rocks in a stream before emerging.

Caddis pupae usually create a small bubble within their pupal skin, which sends them to the surface. Bead head nymphs with bright beads often work well. Most newly emerged adults rarely drift along for any distance. The big deal about caddis is that the adults survive for more than a day or three and come back to the stream over several days to lay their eggs as they skitter along the surface. Some adults do drift along when emerging or laying eggs.





It is the mayflies that usually get most trout fishers excited. Mayflies have a complex life cycle. They are the only insects that have two flying stages, the second being the only one mating and laying eggs. Nymphs may be short lived or very long lived. Knowing if the nymphs spend most of that stage in riffles and fast water is important to know. Some burrow into the bottom of the pools and swim to the surface to emerge. Some emerging mayflies will drift along the surface, while others may crawl out on a rock to emerge like a stone fly.

The first flying stage of a mayfly is known by anglers as the dun. The proper name is subimago. Duns are characterized by dull-shaded wings and are poor fliers. This stage usually takes a few minutes from emerging from the nymphal shuck to inflate its wings and get them hard enough to support flying. The dun is one of the most vulnerable stages for most mayflies. Some duns may float for 10–50' on the surface before they can flutter off to the surrounding trees and shrubs. When they leave the water they have only one basic motion: up and towards one side of the stream.



If the dun is not snapped up by a trout or a bird, its next job is to molt into the reproductive stage, the spinner or imago, over the next 24 hours or so. This stage is easily identified by the crystalline wings. When they return to the stream to mate and lay their eggs, they are very skillful flying machines. This stage is not usually accessible to trout until the final moments in the life of a mayfly: the dying spinner fall. The spinners may struggle for the first few minutes on the stream, but they are not going anywhere but where the stream takes them.

Knowing the life cycle is the first step in intercepting a hatch and catching trout. Knowing what time the hatch starts and ends, when any spinner fall or other activity might happen, and how the insects behave as they move from the bottom of the stream to the surface and depart into the air is very useful.

Mayflies in the early spring are generally dark bodied. As the spring progresses the mayfly species tend to get paler and paler until they reach the apex with the all white fly of August. The fall hatches return to the darker mode. The knowledgeable fly fisher will not be tossing a pale sulphur in April nor a dark Hendrickson in June or July to just see if the trout are interested.

The early and latest hatches take place in the afternoon. As the weather warms in the spring, they become earlier or later in the day. By June, all hatches are at dawn or just before dark. In the fall this reverses. There are exceptions. Weather each day can play a big role. Cloudy-rainy days seem to bring a lot of bugs out on the water. Clear, hot days will often see little hatching after early morning until late afternoon.

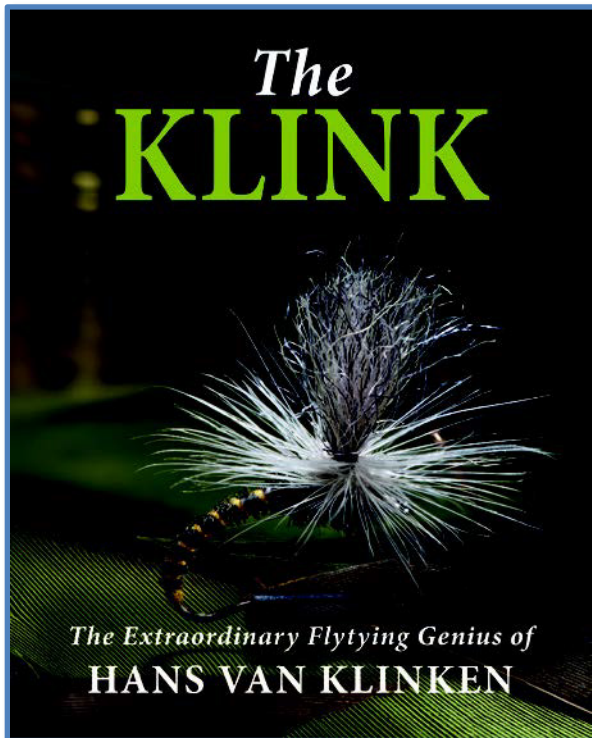
Ask! If you hear the sulphurs are starting to hatch on the Gunpowder, make sure you find out the time of day and the size and color of that hatch. The early sulphurs are not matched by the late sulphurs and vice versa. Ask what times the grannom caddis are active on the Casselman and what kind of water they prefer. If the salmon flies (giant stones) are hatching on the Madison, find out exactly where on the river they are hatching and make sure you are as close to the beginning of the hatch as it moves up the river each day. If you learn the 17-year cicadas are emerging by the gazillions in an area, get there before it is over—the emergence lasts 5 weeks or so! Grasshoppers are great in the late summer and early fall, but big hoppers are not something to usually try in the early spring. Ants can work at almost any time of warm weather, but most flying ants swarms are in the morning.

Be prepared for the common hatches and you should have a rewarding day. Do some homework before you drive even 20 miles to a local stream, let alone a drive of several hours. And please share what you saw on your trip. Go meet that hatch. Enjoy the day at matching wits with the smart trout on many of our streams! Beats a day cutting the lawn or fixing the roof—jobs that still need to be done!



## **The Klink** **- Bob O'Donnell**

The Klinkhåmer Special is probably the most popular fishing fly in the world today. It floats on the end of fly lines on salmon, trout or grayling rivers, from Britain to USA, and Scandinavia to Mongolia. This year marks the fly's 40th anniversary and to celebrate the occasion, its creator Hans van Klinken has at last written his long-awaited first book.



Flyfishers for salmon, trout, grayling and coarse species will for the first time learn from Hans himself the secrets behind his miracle Klinkhåmer Special which has caught its fans hundreds and hundreds of fish: the thinking behind the design, the testing, the variations, the reasons for its remarkable success.

Full instructions for tying Hans' most important flies are included in his engaging and revealing account of his life in flytying and fishing.

*The Klink* by Hans van Klinken (Merlin Unwin Books) is published 23 May and available in June from The Rogue Angler and local fly and tackle shops.

I found this book to be a highly interesting and beautiful read. (Yes, I got a preview PDF copy) The introduction and background on Hans Van Klinken was a look into someone that just doesn't tie flies and fish, but someone who takes the time to experience all that is around him. The photos depicted in the

book are outstanding! All of the fly patterns covered are done in clear and easy to follow steps, highlighted by an accompanying reference photo. I can't wait to dive in and tie a few for myself. For the novice to the experienced the fly tyer, there's a bit of history woven into the book and to say the least, its captured well. I would highly recommend this book as an addition to your fly tying/history library. I need to make room on my bookshelf for when it comes out.



## **Trout Stocking Update** **- MD DNR**

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources crews stocked more 4,400 trout.

### **Cecil County**

Howards Pond: golden and rainbow trout

### **Garrett County**

Youghiogheny River (catch and release): rainbow trout

Youghiogheny River, Friendsville: brown, golden, and rainbow trout

Youghiogheny River, Oakland: brown, golden, and rainbow trout

### **Prince George's County**

Greenbelt Lake: golden and rainbow trout

Lake Artemesia: golden and rainbow trout

### **Washington County**

Antietam Creek, Devil's Backbone: brown, golden, and rainbow trout

Little Tonoloway Creek, Upper (two per day): golden and rainbow trout

### [Trout Stocking Map](#)



If you spot poaching please call or text:



**Maryland Wildlife Crime Stoppers**  
**At 443-433-4112**

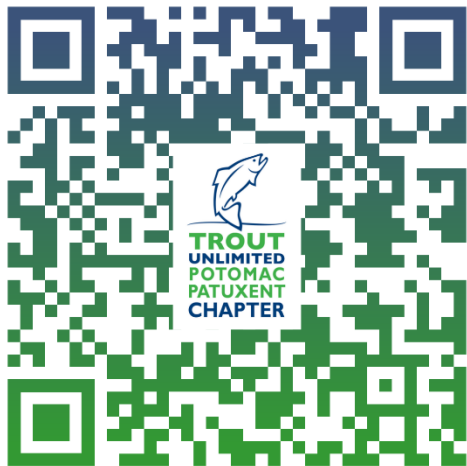


*Add this number to your cell phone contact list!*



## **FREE Trout Unlimited Membership!** **- PPTU**

If you have ever wanted to join Trout Unlimited, let PPTU cover your first year's membership! FREE! No cost except your time to send an email to [membership.pptu@gmail.com](mailto:membership.pptu@gmail.com). You will become an active TU member almost in the blink of an eye. The only requirement is that you have never been a member of TU. Optionally, you can sign up on line directly at Trout Unlimited's web site for half price - \$17.50. Scan the QR code below. Join now!



## **PPTU Swap Meet – June 20th** **- Jim Senker**

Our swap meet will be on **Thursday, June 20th** at the [Waredaca Brewery](#). The Brewery is open from 4pm to 8pm. I'm figuring we will start at 5pm.

Look through your gear and see what you can part with; slightly used gear, items you've only used once or not at all, old rods that don't see the water any longer, etc. Items you have been hanging on to may be just what someone else needs. More details to follow in the next couple of months. Stay tuned.

## **When Giants Roamed Appalachia:** **The Story of the Chestnut** **- The Appalachia Channel**

Many thanks to Joe Robinson for sharing numerous stories with our membership over the years. This one was both environmentally and ecologically interesting. Check out the video and also the follow-up video on the American Chestnut tree.

[When Giants Roamed Appalachia: The Story of the Chestnut](#)

[Chestnut Trees Are Returning to Forests](#)



On a side note – if you come across anything that may be of interest to the membership feel free to post something on line and/or email the link to the Conservationist editor and we'll get it posted into the next newsletter. Send email to:

[TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com](mailto:TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com)





## The Benefits of Trout Fishing for Your Mental Health - The New Fly Fisher

Mark Melnyk is in Yellowstone Teton Territory fishing the Snake River and its tributaries in Eastern Idaho. He is fishing with Keegan Berrett and Scott Ferrara as well as military veterans in the area. Project Healing Waters Idaho Falls has had a profound effect on these Veterans as witnessed first hand by all!

Check out the gorgeous scenery in this [video](#).

Note – This is a 70 minute documentary!

## April Outing – The Casselman River - Lou Reichel & Ron Kerrick

Lou and I have set up PPTU’s yearly outing to the Casselman River for April 27-28<sup>th</sup>.

### Outing: Mother’s Day Caddis

**Where:** Casselman River, Near Grantsville, Garret County, MD

**When:** April 27-28, 2024, Saturday and Sunday. 9:00 am

It’s that time again for the Mother’s Day Caddis Outing on the Casselman River near Grantsville in Garret County, Maryland. If the weather is right and the hatch is on, there should be an intense emergence of #14/16 mottled brown/grey wing dark body American Grannon (genus *Brachycentrus*) Caddis flies from early to late afternoon.

New members and those new to fly fishing are welcomed. There will be someone there that can assist you and show you the river. Please let Ron know if you need assistance.

For more details on the river, and a map of access points, can be found in the excellent book “Guide To Maryland Trout Fishing. The Catch - And – Release Streams” written by Charlie Gelso and Larry Coburn, who are fellow PPTU Chapter members.

During the hatch, the caddis flies swarm up and down the river in fast flight, sometimes in a blizzard of flies with eventual egg laying taking place late afternoon and evening. Even during this swarming period there can be a mid day lull in surface activity and a good time to switch to subsurface flies. This is one of the best spring hatches in Maryland and the classic dry fly experience.

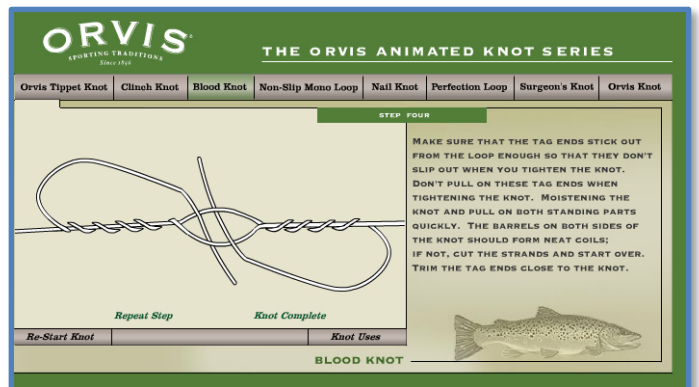


## Four Hot Tips on Tippets - Tom Rosenbauer

One of the easiest ways to improve your presentation in your trout fishing is to pay more attention to your tippet. It’s as important as the fly pattern you choose, and the size and length and taper of the terminal end of your leader can even determine how your casts look and feel. Payng attention to your tippet requires just a few easy steps.

Check out the video on the [Orvis Fly Fishing News](#).

Also, newbies and some of the others in the group may want to visit the [Fly Fishing Learning Center](#) and the [animated knots](#) page for a refresher prior to wading out this year.





## Trout Spey - PPTU

There was a big discussion recently on the [PPTU Forum](#) regarding Trout Spey. I remember a long time ago, one of PPTU's long standing members, Carl Smoka, once brought his rod to a Mid-Atlantic council meeting and demo'd it for us, besides letting us cast it. I recall how easily it shot line out and seemed like an interesting option. Carl kept talking about how fun it was to cast. I completely forgot about it until a recent post led to a string of notes on Trout Spey. Gotta' love the forum. [Sign up!](#)



### *Trout Spey notes from the PPTU forum....*

Trout spey is done with a switch rod -- so called because it can be used for single or double handed casting. They're typically in the 10 to 12 foot range (some are shorter than some Euro nymphing rods) and in the 2,3, or 4 line weight class, although if you're using it for single handed casting, you'd use DT line that's about two sizes heavier than the rating.

They have all sorts of uses. Yes, you can cast a long way if needed, but that's not the primary reason for using one. As I mentioned earlier, they're great if you have limited backcasting room, or can't wade out into the river very far. The longer reach lets you cast over, say, that rock or log in front of you without fouling it. With the proper style of shooting head, you can easily cast a heavily weight fly with a light rod. And finally, a lot of people find the two handed aspect to be easier on their shoulder than single handed casting.

Generally, they're used for either swinging wet flies and for indicator nymph fishing, although I've seen them used for dries as well.

The only downside to them is that they're yet another rabbit hole to go down, with new casting

styles and different ways of rigging them -- Skagit, Scandi or Spey styles for example. (The word Lou Reichel was thinking of was "Skagit", which isn't a rod at all, but a shorter shooting head. They're also used in single handed rods as short as seven feet.)

Our own Sean Beck chimed in with a video. Here's a [short clip](#) of the 10' micro skagit rod on the Gunpowder.

The following videos may cast some light on the subject. (excuse the pun)

[What is TROUT SPEY?](#)

[Trout Spey School - Part 1](#)

[How to Cast Your Trout Spey Rod](#)

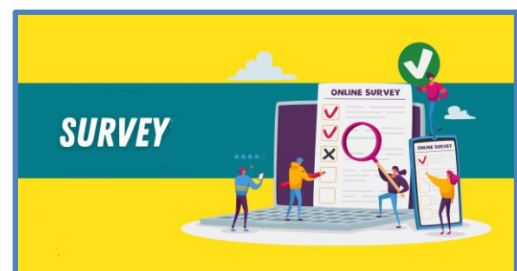
## Beaver Creek Fly Shop Open House - Precision Fly & Tackle

Join us **April 13th from 10am to 4pm** for the Beaver Creek Open House! We have a lot of exciting events on tap to include raffles, seminars, free food and drinks! It's sure to be a fun, filled day!



## PPTU Questionnaire - Bob Bokulic

Check your email soon for an opportunity to provide valuable input on our chapter activities. You'll be receiving a short questionnaire asking about your interests and preferences for chapter fishing outings, speakers, meetings, social events, and other topics. Your thoughtful response to the questionnaire will help PPTU plan activities that encourage active participation. Thanks!!



## Mending the Line

- PPTU

The movie, Mending the Line, is now available to view on both Netflix and Prime Video.

The drama captures the way two wounded warriors from opposite worlds can overcome trauma, find comfort in nature and, potentially, mend themselves. A Marine wounded in Afghanistan is sent to a V.A. facility in Montana where he meets a Vietnam Vet who teaches him how to fly fish as a way of dealing with his emotional and physical trauma.



Kudos to these guys to take action and do what needed to be done! Its hard enough doing the stocking without taking on extra tasks.

## Kudos to the Stocking Team!!!

- PPTU

Trout don't stock themselves. Typically, PPTU has been volunteering to help float stock our local streams for the betterment of all who fish. It can be a tough job depending upon the conditions; hiking into the stream, dragging float boxes with you for miles at a stretch. It can be workout. Besides the normal lay of the land, dodging boulders and downed trees, our guys often run into trash and other debris that has made its way into the river.

I'm glad Jim Senker had his camera along with him this time as he captured something special. Two of our stocking volunteers, Carson Wargo and Sharif Soliman, decided on their own to do some cleanup work along the way.

During the day they came upon old car tires in the river, hub caps, discarded 5 gallon buckets, empty beer bottles, etc. Every time they encountered such debris both Carson and Sharif removed it from the river. On the walk back to the car Sharif carried 2 boxes (one filled with discarded beer bottles, soda cans, etc. and Carson carried the discarded buckets! No one told Carson or Sharif to clean up the river!



Hopefully some of you got to see Jim Senker's video. These stills don't do the cleanup scene justice. The effort to get the tire out of the water followed by the sheer joy of teamwork in getting a job done is really something to behold. [Watch it here!](#)

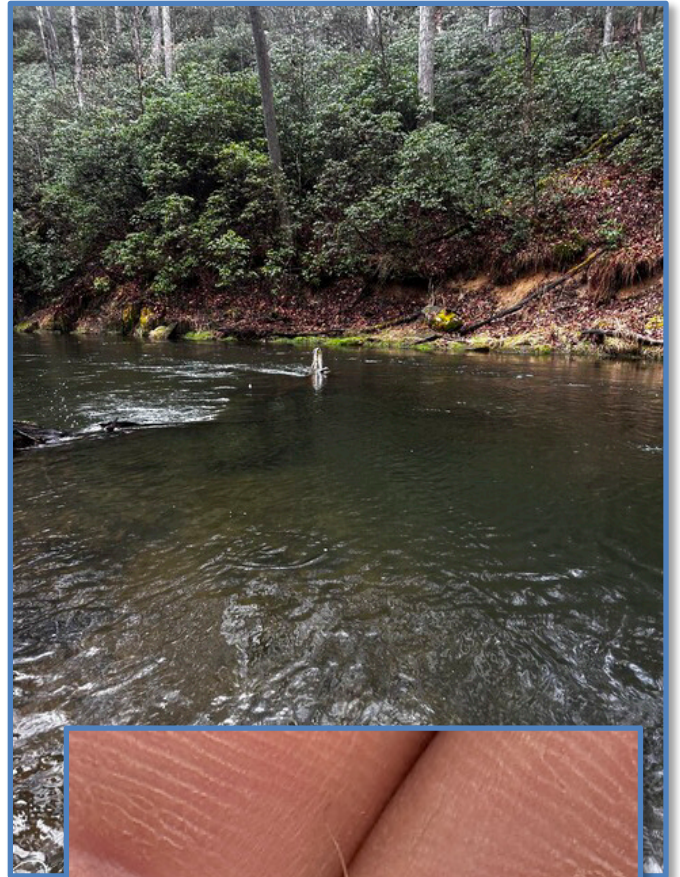
Carson & Sharif, hats off to you two! Great job showing folks that people still care about the environment and that there's still hope for us. As Jim mentioned, it was something special to watch.

Many thanks guys!



## Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Good to see some folks out fishing. When you go out don't forget to snap some photos and share them with the group. Folks like me who have been chained to a desk for a month really enjoy seeing and hearing about the adventures.





## Contributions & Questions Welcome!

Send your contributions, article suggestions or fly fishing questions to the Editor in an email. Deadline for submissions is typically the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

Newsletter available online at [PPTU.org](http://PPTU.org)

**Editor: Bob O'Donnell**

Email: [TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com](mailto:TroutWrangler@Yahoo.com)



## Klinkhammer

Since I mentioned Hans Van Klinken I thought it would be appropriate to display his famous fly. These can be tied in variety of colors and body types to match many different insects.

Here are a few different techniques for tying the fly.

[Klinkhammer 1](#)

[Klinkhammer 2](#)

[Klinkhammer 3](#)



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