

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

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Brook Trout Conservation *Protecting Our Native Trout* Feb 17th 2016

September 2014 the Maryland Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MDTU) convened a meeting with a variety of interested parties to explore the possibility of establishing a brook trout conservation effort in the eastern part of the state. Maryland's Gunpowder basin, which rests in northern Baltimore, Carroll, and Harford Counties, supports the second highest number of brook trout populations in the state with 25.2% of the states total population. More specifically the Upper Gunpowder watershed, which is in part, within the Prettyboy Reservoir Watershed, was identified as the watershed with not only the highest existing populations of brook trout but one that has the most potential for a successful conservation and possibly restoration effort.

With the target watershed identified, MDTU has begun outreach efforts to enlist other partners whom may be able to support brook trout conservation efforts - either through their existing programs or working collaboratively with MDTU to establish new ones. As the project grows, MDTU envisions that a number of public education initiatives and private landownership outreach efforts will develop. Developing conservation measures with the support of private landowners will be the biggest challenge to the success of this effort. These efforts will require leadership from MDTU, support from local and state governments and the cooperation of private land owners. These efforts will take decades to implement and will require the ongoing commitment and leadership and membership of Trout Unlimited and a broad coalition of allied partners.

The time is now to mobilize to protect Maryland's brook trout. Please joins us as Scott C. Scarfone, ASLA, MDTU Brook Trout Conservation Coordinator as he shares with you the progress being made on this front and the long road ahead as we work to save our brook trout.

– Alan Burrows



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, MD 20901

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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Presidents' Column - Bob O'Donnell

Can you believe it? February already? I barely remember January. It sort of blew through with the recent winds and rain. I feel like it was only yesterday that I packed up the last of the holiday decorations. Somehow it doesn't seem like winter, not that I'm complaining, but I do miss seeing some snow on the ground.

With all the seasonable weather folks have been out fishing regularly. The PPTU list server has seen a lot of traffic and additionally some nice pictures of fish to cure the winter blues of the folks at home. So if you're not out fishing, what are you doing with your time? If you can't get out, this is a great time of year to manage your gear and more importantly, practice your casting.

You'll be surprised what a few minutes a day will make on your next venture to the stream. Keep your rod in a handy place and make a habit of taking it out for a few minutes each week. A couple of short casts in the yard, or the park across the street is all you need to get started. Practice the things that give you trouble on stream. Play with your casting stroke and arm movements to see how the rod feels and behaves in your hand. Eventually you'll find that "sweet" spot where everything moves fluidly and it doesn't take much effort to make the cast lay down like you expected it to do.

Practice the basics: hand grip, timing, pick-up and lay-down, roll cast. Cast in a level plane in front of you so you can watch how your line unrolls and then curls up again into a loop. Repeat it again and again until it looks perfect. Then move on to another challenge. Place a target or two on the grass and cast for distance and accuracy. Once you get comfortable, teach yourself some more advanced casts. Remember, keep the time short. If you can spare 15-20 minutes a couple times a week you'll reward yourself when it actually counts.

A couple of years ago, I had a guide berate me to no end because I couldn't execute a "Reach Cast" exactly to his standards. He had me flustered to the

point that I was tossing my fly all over the place except where he wanted it, in front of a huge Brown trout sipping mayflies. He was right to do so. I missed out catching that incredibly big fish he put me onto. I swore I wouldn't let that happen again. Since then.... I practice every free chance I get.

So if the winter blues find you being a couch spud, or the opposite – antsy and looking for something to do, take yourself outdoors for a few minutes. Heck, you can even pick up one of those indoor practice rods and not even leave your living room! There are also plenty of books and videos available as reference, plus your friends and folks at the local fly shops will give you a hand if you need it. Practice with a friend or group if you feel more comfortable. The main point is, practice, practice, practice. The next time you're out casting to a rising fish, you'll do it with confidence. Just remember, "Practice is the best of all instructors".


Until next month, tight lines!

Bob O'Donnell
President, PPTU

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 (ASC)** will be asked to contribute \$20.



Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or by E-mail:
kenbowyer@verizon.net 

Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

Carrying a rod through the woods is a potentially dangerous proposition. Losing any fly on the end of the leader is a minor annoyance compared to some of the other possibilities. The most frequent damage that can happen to place a dark cloud over any fishing for the rest of the day is a busted rod caused by a fall. There are safe ways to carry a rod. By far the safest under normal circumstances is for the rod tip to follow directly behind as you walk the trail. The rod is not held so the reel and grip are hanging below the hand. Here is the simple way to understand how to properly carry the rod:



Take the hand that is going to carry the rod and hold it palm down. Now place the rod grip on top of the hand in the crook between the thumb and the forefinger. The entire rod is balanced on top of the hand and outside the arm and body. The forefinger is placed on top of the grip and away you go. The best balance point is usually at the upper end of the grip. Point the reel so that the tip is not catching branches as much as possible. The main advantage of this position is that if one falls, the hand that is holding the rod will automatically be completely under it. The likelihood of a busted rod from falling is almost eliminated.

On the hiker-biker trail along the Gunpowder above Monkton Station, I carry the rod tip either high above my head or out in front of me. I do not trust the bikers to see the tip of the rod as they silently approach from my rear, if I were to carry the rod in the normally best position—rod tip trailing directly behind. When moving through thick brush, I may also hold the tip high above my head.



Steep hills pose a potential for a slip and fall. I tend to go up or down steep hills at an angle to the contour. That is, I do not go straight up or down but off to an angle. I then carry the rod in the hand furthest from the slope. If my feet go out from under me, which often happens, then the hand nearest the slope will not be holding the rod as I try to brace myself in the fall or slide.

I strongly suspect that car doors account for the major portion of busted rods each year. Angler falls are a close second. As much as I would like to think that big fish break a lot of rods, they are almost certainly a small fraction of all breakages. Do not lay a rod on top of a car. I have done this twice and lost a home-made rod that I loved dearly but lucked out on the second instance many years later. The fly line got caught on some of the hardware on the roof of the van and held it for a 20-mile drive. Total luck! If you are taking a long break, I suggest laying the rod over the front windshield. If you try to carry the rod in the back of an open pickup, use a bungee cord or something to keep it from flailing around or even flying away.



Avoid carrying a broken down rod through the brush. I have had two friends lose the tip sections of

their rod and not realize it for a considerable distance. If you want to carry a broken down rod, have it strung up so that the line will alert you that something has slipped out of the hand. Speaking of breaking down a rod that has been strung up all day.... Here is a tip: let the fly rest in the tip top guide and then pull the rod apart. Reel in any remaining slack between the sections such that the fly is tight. If a 4-section rod, only break it into two sections for transport. If the drag is adjustable, set it at the maximum level so that the line does not go slack. Rods go into a car last and come out first. Heavy vests, waders and other gear should be on the bottom of the pile. Consider a rod-reel case so the reel can stay affixed to the rod, and everything remains out of harm's way.

One last tip for the month: do not use the hook keeper found on most rods. Hook the fly in the guide that is the farthest you can easily reach. Then run the leader around the reel seat (not the reel) and take in the slack. This keeps a kink from forming in the butt of the leader at the tip top and gives you a lot of line already outside the tip when you get to the next pool. If you want to really bundle everything, hold the fly line and spin the whole rod until the line is up against the rod at one of the guides. Slip the line over the guide. Just remember which guide you used when you take the reserve spins out!

Safe travels on the paths to your favorite fishing holes this year. May you arrive with an intact rod and ready to go!

Dave Simms – In Memoriam - PPTU

If you have not heard, long time PPTU member Dave Simms passed away at the end of December. If we were having an outing, Dave was always anxious to sign up and go. Even when the walking and wading got difficult for him he was right there trying his best. As with other PPTU members, I have some fond memories of Dave. He was quite the character. Just ask any of the board members or others that knew him. I was fortunate to speak with him a couple of weeks before he passed away. He was hoping to get well enough to attend our next meeting and apologized for his absence. He'll surely be missed. Hopefully Dave's now in a better place, fly fishing on private waters.

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

I expect to know the trout stocking schedule as we go to press. We will need all hands on deck to help float stock the 2000 or more brown trout we expect for the upper section of the main Patuxent and the Delayed Harvest section on the Middle Patuxent. As soon as I learn the dates, I will post them to our list of volunteers. All stockings are Tuesdays through Fridays only. We used to try Mondays, but often we had a major weather event (snow or floods) over the weekend, and it was difficult to communicate with the state fisheries and all our volunteers for any changes in plans. Chest waders are required. Some experience and ability to wade down or up the middle of a rocky, log-infested stream for a mile or more is needed. We have not drowned anyone for a number of years, so we would like to keep the safety inspectors out of our lives! Stockings usually take anywhere from 4 to 6 hours of time. If you are not on my list, send me an email ASAP: jaymsheppard95@gmail.com.

We float stock three trout waters in our area: (1) the upper Patuxent River above Rt. 97, (2) the Patuxent tailwater below Brighton Dam, and (3) the Middle Patuxent River in south Columbia. The third is a Delayed harvest area where it is lures and flies only, no-kill until June 1. The second is a flies only, no-kill section from a ¼ mile below the dam down to Mink Hollow bridge. The first is a lures and flies-only, no kill section above rt. 97 and includes the Cabin Branch below Hipsley Mill as well. These last two are open to the same regulations all year, while the Middle Patuxent changes between June 1 to October 1 to bait and 2/day regulations.



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!



Awesome Wildlife Video from Nat Geo - Carl Smolka

I just happened to catch my email while setting up this issue. Carl posted a nice wildlife video by National Geographic set to music. Sit back and enjoy and if you get a chance – say, “thank you” to Carl.

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/Hodomt6bBOw>

Mid-Atlantic Council Banquet - MAC

Make a note on your calendars for Saturday, March 19th. The Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited is hosting their annual fundraising banquet. They had some pretty special prizes and items to bid on last year. A few folks from PPTU walked off with some nice fishing gear amongst other things. This year looks to be no different. PPTU will post more info on our website as it becomes available. Come out for an evening of fun and support MAC which plays an integral part in cold water conservation in the Mid-Atlantic region and trout fishing in general. We ask for your generous support enabling MAC to effectively pursue these important issues.



George Daniel is coming to PPTU!!! **- Alan Burrows**

Start getting ready for this awesome presentation! For our March 16th chapter meeting we are proud to welcome famed fly fisherman and author George Daniel.

George is a former manager of TCO Fly Shop, a professional guide and competitive fly fisher as well as the author of the bestselling fly fishing book "Dynamic Nymphing" and his latest and greatest book, "Strip-Set: Fly-Fishing Techniques, Tactics and Patterns for Streamers". He is the owner and operator of Livin On The Fly, a fly-fishing educational/guide company based near his home in Lamar, Pennsylvania. George's passion is in fly fishing education and he conducts lectures/seminars throughout the country. He logs over 200 days a year on trout waters near and far.

Enjoy a fun filled evening as George takes you on an exciting journey with streamers. He'll explain how to read the water, trout behavior, equipment, casting and night fishing as well as discuss some of the best streamer patterns being used today.

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

So tell your fishing friends and family, bring a few extra folks along with you for company and enjoy the show. We will be raffling off a really sweet rod that night as well. Put a few dollars aside and snag a couple of tickets at the door. The winner will walk away smiling with their Douglass Outdoors, DFX 4904 - 9' 4 wt. Just a gorgeous rod and a nice quiver to have in your trout arsenal. I can't wait.

Annual Fly Caster's Rendezvous – April 2 **- Jim Crowell**

The Annual Fly Caster's Rendezvous will take place April 2nd at Riverbottom Park in Williamsport again this year. It is a unique opportunity to improve your casting skills and/or learn some new techniques. The instructors come from all over the mid-Atlantic area and are all quite skilled. They run multiple sessions simultaneously throughout the course of the day. All of these are hands-on-you-try-it sessions, not just demos, so bring your rod. Details have not been released yet, but I wanted to give folks a chance

to save the date. Everyone I know who has attended these events found them to be well worthwhile, I know I did.

BamBoozle Gathering 2016 **- Jed Feffer**

I had to capture this bit of bamboo and light as an enticement for folks to come to the Bamboo Gathering on **Saturday, March 26th** on the banks of the Gunpowder, downstream of the York Road Bridge. We will cast rods, swap stories, and have some lunch. The time is from 9-1. Rain Date: Sunday, April 17th, same time and place. If you have fiberglass or graphite you want to share, bring it along. You do not need to own bamboo to attend, merely have an interest in fishing and friends. After eating, those who care to will give it their all and fish the Gunpowder. So, come get bamboozled!! For questions, and to RSVP e-mail me at jedtfefter@aol.com, or through the chapter list server.



Thanks, Jed

February Outing Being Planned **- Dennis Covert**

The February outing is going to be on the tailwater below Brighton Dam. Once it's stocked and the fish have a chance to settle in and get hungry I'll get a date out. Keep your eyes posted on our list server and the web site.



Members Catch - Trout Wrangler

Once again our members have been busy and started off the New Year well. Check it out. Post some shots from your next adventure.



Big Spring PA Outing
January 2016

Center for Wildlife Forced to Euthanize Bald Eagle - Amy Holstein

Hope this article transfers well to our site. It was the first article in a newsletter I received this week and is timely considering the recent discussion on lead products.

<http://www.seacoastonline.com/article/20160110/NEWS/160119961>

Climate Change & Chrome - Video Hatch

This film celebrates the passion for fly fishing and steelhead while educating anglers on the looming threats of climate change. Via Conservation Hawks

<http://midcurrent.com/2016/01/16/video-hatch-chrome/>

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.

Editor: Trout Wrangler
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Simple Three Hackle

You really need to have this Charlie Gelso pattern in your fly box! It's a highly effective, almost magical fly that will put you onto finicky fish.

You can check the pattern out by visiting the PPTU web site and looking under the ["Angling Skills/Fly Tying"](#) link on the left hand column of the front page. This pattern is also in the valuable *"Guide to Maryland Trout Fishing"* available at our meetings.

If you don't tie, get a friend to spin up some magic for you.



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