



March 2004

The Conservationist

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter

www.pptu.org

Road Trips

We treasure those waters close to home and their fishing secrets slowly revealed after time spent on them. And we live for that long distance trip to distant lands for fish that stretch the imagination. But for places in-between, nothing beats the road trip.

Ahh, the road trip! Cuppa of steaming joe in the holder and a box of donuts next to you, good tunes on the box, some buddies in the back, and fly boxes filled with the wrong flies in the way back. Eating up miles on the highway in early morn, bad jokes and old fish tales revisited, weekend honey-dos a distant memory, roadside bathrooms a frequent stop. Then arrival at your fishing destination – too far away to be called home water but close enough that you don't have to worry about clearing your gear through airport security.

Our next chapter meeting will feature speakers familiar with those waters a road trip away for those of us who live in the DC area. We'll have Jim Keil and Lou Boezi discussing various waters in Central and Northern PA; Joshua Van Stone Forster and Jay Sheppard on Western Maryland streams and rivers; Ken Bowyer on steelhead in Lake Erie tribs; Artie Haglich highlighting the Conetquot River on Long Island, NY; and Jim Greco on the Delaware River system.

So come join us and get some ideas for that next road trip!

The meeting will begin at 7:00 PM with a *short* business session followed by the raffle of fishing related items and a short break. Then you can learn about new waters just a few hours drive away. Bring pen and paper so you can take notes if you don't have a Palm Pilot—no laptops.

Sebastian O'Kelly

Whose Environment Is It?

The continual dilution, disregard and the ever growing apathy toward our environmental protection laws poses a most serious threat to our fresh water resources. Today, history seems to be repeating itself as the balance between resource protection and commercial interests shifts towards the latter.

A book I read entitled *Susquehanna—River of Dreams* by Susan Q. Stranahan is a fascinating account of the history of that great river and the slow but steady decline it suffered from unabated commercial excesses over a century's time. This began with the great timber logging boon, then through the coal mining period, the enduring municipal neglect and, for a prolonged period to the present, the agricultural era. In between, the river endured bouts with the nuclear energy industry pursuing commercial, military and electrical power applications.

The political machinery in Pennsylvania and its courts were one sided in favor of the private interests. In the 1880's, in a suit brought by a private citizen against a coal company for polluting a local stream, the high court's judges wrote "the trifling inconvenience of particular persons must sometimes give way to the necessities of a great community".

(Continued on page 3)

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 articles, letters, fishing news, tying tips, book reviews, and even poetry about trout fishing should be sent to the Editor as plain MS-DOS (ASCII) text or Microsoft Word attachments to e-mail messages containing brief descriptions of the attachments. Attachments received without a description will be deleted without opening.

The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

EDITOR: John Colburn
(Phone: 202-545-8776)
(johnwcolburn@juno.com)

President's Column

This is beginning to be more than just a coincidence; three months ago I awoke early to write this column only to discover an overnight snow had occurred; two month ago I began to write this column during the coldest day of the new year; now—just three weeks later—we are scheduled to have the coldest night of the new year. Where am I going with this? Maybe all my years at the National Weather Service would have been quite different had I written a monthly column to my employees (I could have called it the climatological observation of the month). Then again, maybe not.

The chapter's committee and program planning and review activities are in full swing. Our first stream stockings are now completed. Two areas in particular are receiving considerable attention, youth activities and environmental issues. Our kids' program has two major components: education and fishing. The education program includes our Trout in the Classroom program and our scholarship program for summer fishing camp. The latter is an area that PPTU has sponsored scholarships for a number of years, but it's an area where we don't have many applicants.

The summer camp in Southern Pennsylvania is an excellent opportunity for a broad exposure to the complete fishing experience. Chapter members should take the time to identify a few potential applicants for the scholarship. Membership in the chapter is priced right, it's free for students. Many of us have or live near kids or may have an opportunity to visit a nearby school and speak to a teacher or counselor about this opportunity.

Our kids' fishing day is an opportunity to treat some kids to a great experience. We know the trout are in the lake, we provide the bait and instruction, so the rest is a little bit of luck! If you want to have some fun, stop by the Martin Luther King pond and lend a helping hand to one of our guests. You will appreciate the opportunity and the kids will too.

Lou Boezi

Even Steven or Win-Win Exchange

"If you and I each have a dollar bill, and we exchange dollar bills, neither of us is any richer. If each of us has an idea, and we exchange ideas, we are both richer because we have a new idea added to our original idea."

Jake Ross, Scout Executive, Boy Scouts of America

Whose Environment Is It?

(Continued from page 1)

This attitude prevailed for over a century. The dogged pursuits of few brave men in the State, over many decades, finally caused a reversal of the River's plight. In 1971, the voters of Pennsylvania overwhelmingly endorsed a constitutional amendment that declared, "The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of natural scenic, historic, and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations to come...."

Recent history is replete with examples of the Federal government attempting to reverse past policies and enforcement practices governing natural resources. Backed by big business, politicians are growing more brazen as they look the other way when development interests clash with environmental protections or when reelection times roll around.

Locally, over a period of thirty years, the Montgomery County government, pushed by a small number of environmentally conscious citizens, developed environmental policies and practices that sought to protect the Paint Branch watershed. Throughout this period and beyond, the issue of a cross county highway connector was in the master plans and under study; these long range master plans frequently contains solutions for theoretical and often nonexistent problems. There has not been a traffic study that showed any useful benefit of the ICC in reducing conventional traffic congestion patterns, in spite of the enormous costs expected for the inter county connector.

Not to be deterred by logic, local commercial and residential developers in Prince Georges and Montgomery County and in Northern Virginia, who see great financial gains, and local politicians who seek higher office and/or reelection, have continued to pursue this highway on the basis of improved traffic flows.

Recent state elections provided a Governor with partisan connections to the Federal government who have agreed to accelerate new studies of the environmental consequences of the ICC. Notwithstanding the previous Federal studies which determined excessive environmental risk to the Watershed, this time around the political climate is different.

Lou Boezi

Patuxent Report

In late February and very early March, we were scheduled to stock 2000 brown trout and 1250 rainbow trout in the upper Patuxent Special Area (i.e., stream above RT 97 that forms boundary of Howard and Montgomery counties). By the time you receive this in the mail, those fish should be interested in playing with a fly or lure. Just keep the presentations slow: these trout never had to 'catch' moving food before and may be very shy about striking anything besides a dead drifted nymph.

Please mark your calendar right now for Saturday, April 3, for the Patuxent River State Park cleanup. We meet at 8 AM at the Izaak Walton club house on Mullinix Mill Road just east and north of Long Corner Road.

Bring a heavy duty rake, waders, and work gloves. Lunch will be provided at the end of the morning at the IWLA. Our T.U. members will be divided and cover the stream under and around all the bridges for trash. You can go fishing in the afternoon, as the last stocking of the stream will be during that week preceding. This is a great activity for the family!

The cleanup is in conjunction with a similar effort all along the river from here down to the Bay on this date. Other local groups will also participate in the cleanup of other areas around this park; there are many unauthorized dump sites scattered around the park. Several truck loads of debris have been removed every spring following this event. Please help!

Jay Sheppard

Book Notes

***Tying Small Flies* by Ed Engle Stackpole Books, 2004**

Why a guy who can't see to tie a fly smaller than a size 14 would buy a book that describes how to tie flies size 18 and smaller is another reason to doubt his sanity.

But there's method in his madness. *Tying Small Flies* contains a wealth of information for anyone who would like to catch those trout that are eating those midges, micro caddis, and other insects almost too small to be seen. For the tyer of flies of any size, Ed Engle has many techniques and tips that will help him or her tie better flies, regardless of size.

Check it out. There's a lot of good info in *Tying Small Flies*.

What Is Conservation?

It's been several weeks since we began the review of Chapter conservation activities with an eye to identifying new activities or programs in which the Chapter membership might participate. After the committee was formed, I suggested to those on the Chapter's Internet listserver that we provide the committee with suggestions of projects or conservation activities that they could consider in their deliberations.

I frequently heard the refrain, "I don't know what conservation means, so I don't know what to suggest to the committee."

The following is provided to put the committee's work in some context:

Environment Canada defines conservation as "The continuing protection and management of natural resources in accordance with principles that assure their optimum long-term economic and social benefits."

Webster defines conservation as: "The act of preserving, guarding, or protecting; the keeping (of a thing) in a safe or entire state; preservation."

The **National Geographic** web page on conservation describes the **conservation triangle**: Sustainable use, preservation, and restoration are ways we can conserve the natural and cultural environment. A conservation project can use one, two, or all three of these methods.

- ◆ **Sustainable use**: using resources in ways that do not deplete them.
- ◆ **Preservation**: protecting resources, ecosystems, and structures for present and future generations.
- ◆ **Restoration**: returning resources, ecosystems, and structures to their original (or near-original) condition.

Synonyms used in lieu of conservation include: attention, care, cherishing, conservancy, conserving, control, custody, directing, economy, governing, guardianship, guarding, husbanding, husbandry, keeping, maintenance, management, managing, preservable, supervision, sustention, upkeep.

The following is the background materials provided to the committee to aid in its deliberation:

The Committee is chartered to examine the broadest view of potential conservation activities in which the chapter can actively participate.

Geographically, the scope of purview would include, in descending order of preference:

- (1) home streams: the ones now covered by PPTU Stream Committee Chairs;
- (2) other streams throughout the range of the Mid-Atlantic Council, i.e., all other Maryland trout waters in cooperative efforts with other chapters in the MAC;
- (3) trout streams in Pennsylvania that are frequently fished by PPTU members, with PPTU participating in cooperative efforts with one or more PA TU chapters. (Northern Virginia Chapter has had such a cooperative effort with the Conewago chapter for many years); and
- (4) trout/salmon conservation issues and programs of national concern, and of significant interest to PPTU chapter members.

The means of PPTU participation in any of these could range from "hands on" physical work to strictly financial support, with infinite combinations of these means.

The committee would make proposals for specific commitments of chapter resources and for cooperative efforts with other TU chapters and perhaps including third-party (non-TU) organizations to the board of directors for its approval.

Further elaborations on geographical opportunities listed above:

- (1) this is self explanatory;
- (2) other streams throughout the range of the Mid-Atlantic Council, i.e., all other Maryland trout waters in cooperative efforts with other chapters in the MAC;
- (3) trout streams in Pennsylvania that are frequently fished by PPTU members, with PPTU participating in cooperative efforts with one or more PA TU chapters; and
- (4) trout/salmon conservation issues and programs of national concern and of significant interest to PPTU chapter members. The selection of specific programs ought to be within the bounds of the four strategic objectives of the national TU conservation agenda (see the TU web site for details).

We expect to get the committee's initial report sometime in June. After we review and discuss the suggestions we may need more research done on potential conservation activities before any decisions are made. I'll keep you all informed as information becomes available.

Lou Boezi



I Want You at the PPTU Annual Raffle and Silent Auction

The PPTU Annual Raffle and Silent Auction will be held at the regular April 21 meeting from 7 to 9 PM. Refreshments will be available.

The proceeds from the raffle and auction support our educational and conservation programs.

The raffle prizes are:

First Prize—Two days of guided trout fishing for two persons on some of the famous trout streams of north-central Pennsylvania and two nights lodging in superb comfort at a private lodge. For a preview visit the Keystone Anglers web site at: www.keystoneanglers.com. Professional guides from Keystone Anglers will lead you on the streams. A \$700 value.

Second Prize—A Canon PowerShot Model A70 digital camera with 3.2 mega pixels, 3X optical zoom, f2.8 lens, frame/movie mode, and continuous shooting at 2.2 feet per second. A \$300 value.

Third Prize—One day of wade fishing with guide Stacey Crossland-Smith. Fish on nearby streams for your choice of trout or bass. A \$200 value.

Fourth Prize—An Orvis Fly Fishing Outfit consisting of TLS864, 8'-6", 4weight, 2 piece graphite fly rod; a Battenkill Bar Stock Reel and WF-4-F fly line. A \$500 value.

Raffle tickets are just \$10 each. Tickets for the Raffle may be purchased at PPTU meetings on March 17 and April 21, or by sending payment by personal check made out to PPTU and mailed to Bob Serrano, 8419 Greenbelt Road, T2, Greenbelt, MD 20770.

You need not present on April 21 to win any of the raffle prizes. You will need to be present on April 21 to win any silent auction or barrel raffle prizes.

Silent Auction and Barrel Raffle Prizes:

There will be a silent auction of 25 fishing and non-fishing items.

The barrel raffle will include over thirty prizes of highly desirable fly fishing equipment, books, assortments of flies, and a tying vise. Barrel raffle ticket prices are \$5 for 1 ticket, \$10 for 3 tickets, \$20 for 10 tickets, and \$40 for 30 tickets. These tickets will be sold only at the PPTU meeting on April 21, 2004.

Payment terms: All payments are to be by cash or personal check made payable to PPTU. No credit cards will be accepted.

For more information visit our web site: www.pptu.org.

Library Fines In Effect

The video library is an asset that is to be enjoyed by all members. When you borrow a video and don't return it at the next monthly meeting you are depriving one of your fellow chapter members the enjoyment of watching it.

The new policy for late returns is that the member will pay \$5 for each video not returned at the monthly meeting when the video was due.

All videos are always due back at the next monthly meeting.

If you can't make the monthly meeting and want to mail the video to me, please address it to:

Jack Dawson
13420 Daventry Way Apt G
Germantown, MD 20874.

PPTU Mentor Program

Beginners and Beyond

Available to members of PPTU current with their dues, Ken Bowyer or Paul Prevost will conduct one on one stream side fly fishing instruction. Interested members 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.

Contact Ken at 301-627-7154 or e-mail kenbowyer@comcast.net or Paul at 202-244-0168 or e-mail pprevost@hotmail.com

Tactics & Tackle Tips

Micro-drag is the curse of all fly fishers trying to dead drift a dry fly or nymph past a trout. Watch three small bubbles that are within a few inches of each other as they drift past you the next time you are in the middle of a stream. Notice that they do not all move in the same manner; they may circle each other or come closer or further apart. Now attach a long section of monofilament to a fly and drop it near another set of bubbles with the mono trailing off in any direction. Almost instantly the fly does strange things relative to those neighboring bubbles. That is what the trout sees as it looks up. That is micro drag: minute changes or lack of changes to the drift of the fly relative to the natural drift of materials at the same point and time.

There are innumerable ways to reduce micro-drag. Lengthening the tippet is one of the first choices. Imagine trying to cast 20 feet of 6X tippet! Just not going to happen! It will always puddle up just beyond the stiffer mono or fly line to which it is attached, unless you have a gale force wind to help or hinder even more. Try 40 inches of tippet if 20 inches is not working. The idea is to have a series of S-bends or loops close to the fly. Currents 2–5 feet from the fly will have less immediate effect on the fly if there is 4–6 feet of tippet and leader laying near the fly. There are many casting techniques that can provide some degree of reduction in micro-drag. The goal is for the fly to land about half the length of the total leader-tippet from the tip of the fly line. The more loops of leader and line you have near the fly, the greater the dead drift time.

The parachute cast will produce lots of S-bends in the leader and fly line. The cast is aimed upwards perhaps 15 feet or more **above** the target. The line simply runs out of steam and gently falls back in a heap. You can get a lot of dead drift time using this cast. Its biggest problem is that the fly can land anywhere within 3–6 feet of the intended target, even without any effect from the wind. Sometimes where one is simply searching the water for trout, this will work on all but the windy days.

A much more accurate cast in delivering the fly is called the stop or check cast. The cast is aimed and made with a length of line to reach perhaps 4–8 feet **beyond** the actual target point. Just as the tip of the line is about to turn over and a moment before anything has landed on the water, a brisk

tug of several inches is delivered to the line by the hand not holding the rod; the rod tip should be only 2 feet above the water. The line and leader with the fly will recoil like a spring back several feet or more toward the rod tip and land with a series of S-bends and loops. With practice one can usually drop the fly within a foot or so of the intended target point, even in a slightly windy situation.

Another cast is useful when there is a fish rising in a very slow or very fast section of the stream relative to the water between you and the fish. For example, the trout is in a backwater with almost no current, but between you and the fish is 15–20 feet of moving water. Perhaps 25–30 feet of line are cast with only the energy needed to cover the 15–20 feet of moving water; while making a very large or exaggerated loop in the forward cast. The idea is for the last 5+ feet of line, plus the leader and fly, to simply run out of steam and not turn over at all. If this is done right (it is not an easy cast to suddenly employ), the tip and leader will simply fall in a large puddle just inside the much slower section while the main line is dragged downstream. The drag on the fly may not start for 5–15 seconds, which may be long enough to entice the trout.

One last point that many starting fly fishers wonder about: OK, I have all this slack in the cast out near my fly. How do I get the slack out to strike a fish? Moving an 8 or 9-foot rod with the tip near the water to straight overhead will remove about 10–15 feet of slack. That should be more than enough, unless you are failing to take up the slack that is coming back **under** the rod tip and letting it loop downstream. **Practice** all of these casts, as they are important to know on our heavily fished trout streams. Try them on a pond or lawn to see how the line and leader land. *Jay Sheppard*

Address Changed? Missing an Issue?

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. Thank you. This past fall we had several reports of members not receiving their newsletters. First, make sure we have your correct address, including 9-digit ZIP, and that your dues are paid up. If you are missing a back issue, please contact us for a copy. For future reference, we try to mail the newsletters about 2 weeks before the next meeting.

Stream Safety

Everyone needs to be careful of falling in the water at this time of the year and getting hypothermia. March and April can still be dangerous if one gets soaking wet while far from a warm car.

Sport shops carry small packets that can generate a good deal of warmth; carry a few with you until the late spring.

Don't forget to throw your wallet into a zip-lock bag before your step into a stream.

As one last tip, please mark your fly boxes with your name and phone number or address. I have found several boxes over the years and been able to return only one. You can use gummed address labels covered with transparent tape on the *inside* of the lid (to prevent wear) or some other means to mark them. Otherwise, I appreciate your leaving your fly boxes along the side of the stream or in the parking lot for me to find.

Jay Sheppard

It's Still Show Time

Even though the big shows like the Fly Fishing Show at College Park have come and gone, there are still some smaller shows coming up in the next month. Two that I know of are the National Capitol Chapter of TU's show on March 20 in Bethesda. That show has been a good one in the past and looks to be another. See the NCC web site at www.ncc-tu.org for information.

Another show that looks like it will be a good one is the premiere offering of the Falmouth Flats Fly Fishers in Fredericksburg, VA, on March 27. The list of presenters and demonstrators is impressive. See the FFFF web site at www.fflyfishers.org for more details.

Those of you who didn't drive over to Middleburg, VA, for the Rapidan Chapter of TU/FFF's Fishing Show missed a good one. Plenty of presenters, demonstrators, and exhibitors attracted a good crowd.

In my humble opinion, these small shows put on by TU chapters and FFF clubs are much more enjoyable than the large commercial shows. One reason is that you know that the money raised is going for conservation and education projects and not lining the pockets of the shows' sponsors. Another reason is that you are pretty sure to see local area guides, outfitters, and fly shop personnel who can give you information about local waters.

John Colburn

The Last Word

Flyfishing Shows

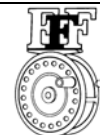
(Continued from page 8)

That was more than enough reward for long hours tying flies under less than ideal conditions. That is why I'll be tying flies with PPTU at the Bass Pro Shop in about ten days; at the MAC FFF booth at Ft. Washington, PA, March 13 and 14; at the Northwest Fly Tyer's Expo in Oregon on March 20, at the Falmouth Flats Fly Fishers show in Fredericksburg, VA, on March 27; at the FFF Conclave in West Yellowstone next August; and

You too can get that kind of reward. Next time PPTU is having a fly tying demonstration at the Bass Pro Shop or a booth at the Fly Fishing Show at College Park or any event where you can share your knowledge and experience to help others enjoy our sport and the wonderful places where it can be enjoyed, get involved and help out. You don't have to tie flies or be an expert caster. You just have to share your love of the sport.

John Colburn

Attention FFF Members



Free Flyrods, Reels, and More!

Like a new flyrod or reel for your summer fishing? Tired of the mess of tools and materials scattered on your fly tying desk—or the dining table? Fly fishing budget tapped out?

Well, the Federation of Fly Fishers has come to your rescue! All you have to do is get fifteen of your friends to join the Federation of Fly Fishers, and you can have your choice of several Sage and St. Croix flyrods, a Ross fly reel, or a BT's Rotary Tying Station! Can you recruit thirty new FFF members? You could earn a flyrod *and* a reel or two tying stations (one for your SO and one for yourself).

You don't need another flyrod, reel, or tying station? Well, recruit those fifteen friends and donate your prize to a needy nonprofit organization like PPTU.

You do have to be an active FFF member to participate in the Membership Incentive Program. For details about the FFF Membership Incentive Program, contact John Colburn at 202-545-8776 or johnwcolburn@juno.com

The *Conservationist*

The Potomac-Patuxent Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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-0903 or NTU-0903.

First time visitors receive two free issues of this publication.

MEMBER'S ASSESSMENT NOW PAYABLE

The annual assessment is now payable. Check your label; if the "PP-" date is "0903" (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-0904." Make checks payable to "POTOMAC-PATUXENT CHAPTER—TU" and mail to our chapter mail box. The assessment covers only the newsletter and related administrative expenses; all donations above expenses at raffles, etc., go to the resource and not to support our members with free newsletters, maps, etc. **Final mailing** for those having "PP-0903" on their label will be this next November issue. **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 later issues and their announcements. Thank you.**

The Last Word

Flyfishing Shows

A bit of a war story: In the past 25 years I've been to more than 100 flyfishing shows, running the gamut from the granddaddy of 'em all, the FFF Conclave, to the one day fly tying demonstrations at places like the Bass Pro shop. At most of those shows I've tied flies, giving most of them away, and talked to people about flyfishing and tying, conservation of the fisheries resources, and Trout Unlimited and the Federation of Fly Fishers. The floors were hard on my feet, the chairs hard on my seat, and the hours were long, sometimes as much as 12 hours at a stretch.

"Why do you continue to do it?" you ask.

The before and after is tiring, but once I'm there and the people start through the doors, I begin to enjoy the show. I guess I'm something of a ham actor; when the show starts I start to live. I enjoy talking to the people; telling them about fly fishing and hoping they will get into it, answering their questions and helping them to enjoy the sport.

Last summer at the FFF Conclave in Idaho Falls, I gave a 10 or 11 year old girl a soft hackle fly she watched me tie and told her to take it fishing and catch a fish with it. Two days later she came floating in, four feet off the floor, and said, "I caught a trout on your fly!" The glow on her face and the sparkle in her eyes told me that she was hooked—she was a flyfisher!

(Continued on page 7)



Return Address:

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter TU
P.O. Box 2865
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FIRST CLASS MAIL