

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

October 2014 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

Matt Snell

Brook Trout in Maryland:

“Where We've Been and Where We Are Going”

October 15th 2014

This month we welcome Matt Snell. Matt is the Brook Trout specialist for Inland Fisheries Division of DNR. Matt will share with us his vast experience as a lifelong angler and scientist.

Matt is a native of south central Pennsylvania and grew up fishing the limestone streams in the area. Matt was an avid angler from an early age. Matt was the president of his high school's fishing clubs and as a senior, recorded over 300 days on the water! Matt graduated from Frostburg State (MD) in 2004 with honors. During this time he also received a Nemaquin chapter (TU) scholarship. Matt Joined DNR in 2009

Matt will be discussing the history and health of Maryland's Brook trout population. This is something he is more than qualified to address. He'll discuss the progress that has been made and also outline the challenges ahead.

– *Marc Hutzler & Nick Weber*

On the Bench – Gene Cyprych will be the featured tier for the 7 PM hour.



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, Maryland

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

Night falls and a soft cool breeze drifts through the house and lingers into the morning hours. I pour a steaming cup of coffee and settle down on the couch, curled up under a throw for a short spell to rest my eyes before heading into work. Our cat decides to join me and stretches out in my lap. He too closes his eyes as he sniffs the breeze to take in the scents hanging in the air, scents only he can detect. It's a slow start to the day, but a relaxing one. I think at one point both of us were purring. In between dream states I stroke the cat roughly, almost a massage, and notice all the variations in his coat and imagine all the flies I could tie. I'm sure my wife wouldn't notice a little fur missing here or there, the cat has plenty. Lost whiskers would make great mayfly tails. Ugh, it must be time for work I tell myself; maybe not. The cat just repositioned himself, curling up in a tight warm ball. I hate to wake him. At least I tell that to myself.

Fall's reach is upon us. The leaves are starting to turn. Cooler air and football takes over the country. Some of you fishermen may reach for other toys to play with this time of year, getting a tee time in, or a wonder through the woods in orange attire, maybe even open the garage and dust off that leaf blower. I'll stick with my fly rod. The football and weekend task lists crowd will be off the streams leaving them more open than past weeks. The lesser crowds often make a stream walk more enjoyable. I've been out several times in the fall where I've had the stream pretty much to myself. The fish are active, starting to put on weight and I'll be happy to give them a go.

Beetles, ants, crickets, and hoppers are a meal ticket for success this time of year. I could get by with some tippet and small box of terrestrial flies but I still find myself dragging every fly I own down to the stream. Maybe I'll wise up this fall; maybe not. I may continue wearing my over stuffed vest, it does provide some warmth in the cooler weather, at least I keep telling that to myself. Maybe I'll get around to making up a day's worth

box of flies for my favorite stream; maybe not. The cat just nudged me for attention and I have a feeling more couch time is in my immediate future. A short sip of coffee and I'm back to rubbing the cat, dreaming about flies. The PPTU "One Fly" competition is this weekend. I think my entry might be the "Cat's Meow".

October brings lots of activities for PPTU. The October Outing and Campout in Western Maryland will be on October 10th, 11th and 12th, with the opportunity to fish the wonderful Savage River and other western Maryland streams. Oct 18th is our annual "Hot Dog" sale at Bass Pro Shop. Stop by and help out for spell if you want to have a little fun that weekend. Bring the family, buy a dog, do a little early shopping. Have you seen the Holiday displays? Geez.... On Oct 19th, the Damascus IWLA will once again have its "Save the Bay" fun shoot. I encourage you to go and tell your friends. PPTU was once again selected as the recipient of this great fundraiser that goes toward our conservation efforts. It's a nice chunk of change, and fun too! Lunch, a little shooting, plus you get a cool hat. I have a little competition going with my son, who outshot me last year. I'm taking him again and maybe my wife too. This year is MY year. And if both my wife and son outshoot me... Well, I'll just leave it there. 🌸

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** will be asked to contribute \$20. 🌸



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

Tackle and Tips - Jay Sheppard

We are definitely living in the Information Age! It can certainly be overwhelming at times, but compared to the 'dark ages' of just several decades ago or long before that, we cannot complain. When I was a kid I usually had only the State highway maps to show me where rivers and lakes were located and maybe a road nearby. As far as what to fish with or how? Not a lot of information was out there. One had Outdoor Life and Field and Stream but little more in generic terms to advise what to use or how to catch any fish. Now the Internet offers a whole kaleidoscope of possibilities to learn virtually anything. Not just what is happening on any stream at any time, nor what flies to use, but how to tie the flies you will need the next day and how to present them.



One of the more useful new tools I have found is Google Earth. Simply, this is a mosaic of satellite images combined to make a visual map of the planet's surface. Depending upon the quality of the images, one can usually see whose car is parked in somebody's driveway when the satellite passed over—or more importantly, who is parked at a

'secret' fishing spot you thought you were the only one who knew about it! Although following small streams under a heavy forest canopy can be a challenge in many places, one can certainly learn the 'lay of the land' and take advantage of the information presented on Google Earth. If you always wondered what was on the other side of the woods or field as you walked along your streams of choice, this software will answer that and many other questions.

Although private land ownership is not delineated, most public land resource managers have worked with Google Earth to show where their lands are located. One can see park, forest, and refuge boundaries in most parts of the country. It is truly helpful to know where you are headed and who owns the lands and waters you intend to access.

I make printouts of the images I see on Google Earth to carry in the field. I can see trails, bends in streams, and other landmarks quite easily. GPS helps, but if you do not know where the trail leads or what is around the bend in the river, it does little more than to tell you where you are, how far you have traveled, and where you are headed.

I can easily research any new waters I plan to visit on a future trip. Knowing what lays ahead of you can be very reassuring and make you more confident that you will have more fun and more success. Try Google Earth. It is a free download. Don't leave home without checking it! 🌻

Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

As we go to press, I do not have any information on fall stockings or any planned fish surveys on our local streams. October can be a busy month. Stay tuned to your emails, and I will be contacting all the volunteers on my list for any help, if and when we are needed. If you are not on my email list, send me a note at jmsheppard@aol.com.

Regrettably I have some disturbing news about the Patuxent tailwater below Brighton Dam. Sometime next spring the Triadelphia Reservoir will be drained. The lake will be kept dry for the

ensuing two years. This means no tailwater fishery starting sometime in late spring in 2015 for the following two years. WSSC is doing some serious repairs on the dam that have needed their attention for many years now. One of the areas to be checked is the gates in the control tower. As you likely know, we have not seen any really cold water emanating from the dam again this summer. We are as consternated as WSSC. Something is not working properly to allow access to the bottom-most water. As a consequence, water in the low 70s was being released in late August through much of September. Those temperatures were not hot enough to kill trout. The trout were certainly uncomfortable, but not in dire straights from being in that warm water.

The second bad news we got in mid-September was that the Dissolved Oxygen (DO) was low all the way down to Haviland Mill Bridge. We are now scrambling to check and verify these observations. DNR did a second set of readings and some electro-shocking on September 16 with still lower than desired DO readings but lots of healthy fish, including one trout. At this point we have no further information on this potentially serious problem as we go to press.

There should be good holdover above Triadelphia Reservoir. The main Patuxent in the Special Management Area above Rt. 97 should provide some interesting fishing this fall. It is a hunting zone, so either wear a bright colored hat or fish on Sundays. 🌻



Award Winner - Trout Wrangler

The Mid-Atlantic Council of Trout Unlimited submitted Chuck Dinkel's name for the National Youth Education Award. We're delighted to report that Chuck won! We believe it's the first time that two people got the award for work in the same program - and in successive years as well. Our own Jim Green won last year.

The award honors individuals who demonstrate exemplary leadership, and a deep passion for inspiring young people to become thoughtful, responsible stewards of North America's coldwater fisheries.

Congrats to you Chuck! 🌸

Reminder "Save the Bay" Fun Shoot - Jim Crowell

The Damascus chapter of the Izaak Walton League of America is having its "Save the Bay" fun shoot on **October 19th** at the chapter's shotgun ranges in Damascus. Once again the proceeds from this shoot will go to PPTU to help support our conservation and education programs. The cost will be \$30 for a couple of rounds of trap and/or skeet and you get lunch and a cap as well.

The shoot is open to the public and I would like to encourage as many PPTU members as possible to participate. It not only helps our chapter but demonstrates our appreciation to the Damascus IWLA. Additional details will be posted on the chapter website as the event nears but save the date now and come join the fun. 🌸



Paint Branch Electrofishing Survey - Joe Robinson

Early last month, I joined DNR fisheries biologist Mark Staley and his team (biologists Todd Heerd and Adam Eshleman) on their annual electrofishing survey to gather data on the resident brown trout population of the Paint Branch, specifically nearer to its headwaters in the Good Hope and Gum Springs tributaries.

For those of you not familiar with the methods of electrofishing, the operator wearing a backpack-sized unit and slowly moving upstream, delivers a mild electric current to the water via a long probe. This current temporarily stuns any fish in the immediate area, and as they float to the surface, they are scooped up in dip nets, identified, and released.



The first test area visited was on the Good Hope trib. near Hobbs Rd. Along with a variety of smaller fish including dace, chubs, suckers, darters, and a few eels, we found one solitary 10" brown.

We then moved on to the mouth of the Gum Springs trib. Unfortunately, no trout were found there. At our final survey area back on the Good Hope trib. at its mouth, things brightened up a bit, and an 8.5" brown was found in one of the more protected pools. Nearing the end of the test area, we found two more trout over 11". Considering this, Mark decided to make a second pass from the beginning, and we were rewarded with the discovery of a 2.3" young of the year brown. And of course, after recording length and weight, all of these trout were carefully returned to the same spot where they were found.



The DNR has been conducting these surveys on the Paint Branch since the mid-1980s. Mark informed me that at that time, we may have found a dozen or more adult trout in one of these test areas. This decline began in the mid-1990s and has been steadily dropping. The reason is straight forward; reduction in viable spawning habitat. The cause; general encroachment of suburbia, which is why protection and restoration of this stream is such a conundrum. When I was a young teen, my family lived within a short walk to the areas we surveyed, and I spent a lot of my idle time in those woods. When visiting there now some 40 years later, the increase in housing, roads, and traffic is astonishing. (Ah, if I only knew then what I know now. Another good reason to get kids involved with TU!)



My suggestion for an enjoyable visit to the Paint Branch would be to bring along a good pair of binoculars, your camera, and field guides. If you do feel compelled to carry a rod, please practice your very best release technique if you happen to catch one of these gems, as they are rare indeed! 🌸



Win a Bamboo Rod - Bob O'Donnell

Here's your chance to win a bamboo flyrod. Orvis is holding its first ever Try-On-A-Thon! From September 20 through October 19, visit any U.S. Orvis retail store or Orvis dealer to try on any pair of Silver Sonic Waders, and you will be entered for a chance to win some killer prizes, including a Penn's Creek bamboo rod made by master craftsman Charlie Hisey in the Orvis Manchester, Vermont, shop.

No purchase necessary: You don't have to buy anything to enter the contest. Just go into the store and try a pair of waders on.

Check out these great prizes:

- The Grand Prize winner will win a Penn's Creek Bamboo Fly Rod (a \$2,395 value!)
- 2 First Prize winners will receive an American-made CFO Reel
- 4 Second Prize winners will receive the Safe Passage Carry-It-All Rod & Gear Case
- 10 Third Prize winners will receive a Hydros 3D Trout Line.

I actually own a pair and like a lot of things about them. They easily convert from chest to waist high waders and have an integrated water proof pouch. You can read more about them on line or, visit your local store and try a pair on. Maybe that bamboo rod will find a home with you.

Good luck! 🌸





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!

Annual Fundraiser
- PPTU Board

We're planning a BBQ! After some consideration, the board decided to try something new this year for our annual fundraiser, which we usually kick off about now. The initial plan is for a family style BBQ to be held at a date yet to be determined sometime next spring.

We will still sell tickets for prizes and have bucket raffles as usual, but we thought turning it into a family type affair might be fun for a change. As soon as we have all the details in place we will let everyone know, start posting messages, and selling tickets. We hope this will be a nice change for the members and turn into a regular event.

More to follow... you can almost smell the smoke. 🍷



2Fly4Hope
- Casting for Recover, Mid-Atlantic

Sunday, October 26, 2014
Rose River Farm, Syria, Virginia

The Mid-Atlantic Program of Casting for Recovery is hosting the 6th Annual 2Fly4Hope Fishing Challenge and Alumni Reunion. Join in for a day of spirited competition as 24 anglers take to the Rose River in order to garner coveted prizes and win bragging rights. Also on tap for the day, a reunion of past participants from retreats throughout the year from both Maryland and Virginia.

In addition to the competition itself, will be fly tying and casting instructions, silent auction, raffle and luncheon. Former retreat participants will be spending the day rekindling relationships and brushing up on their skills on the ponds of Rose River Farm.

Casting for Recovery
<http://castingforrecovery.org/cfr-mid-atlantic/>

For more information visit:
[2Fly4Hope Fishing Challenge](#)



PPTU is once again proud to be a sponsor and is sending a team of anglers down to the event. We are also donating flies tied by our members as part of CFR's event fundraiser.

There is still time to contribute! Bring some flies to the next chapter meeting or mail them to our PO Box address. If you don't tie you can still contribute with a few store bought flies. Everyone that participates will be entered into a random drawing for a prize. 🍷



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.

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Rose River Farm, Syria Virginia



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