

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

Nov 2018 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

“The Latest News on the Gunpowder”

Gene Howson from Backwater Angler

A full service fly shop just steps from the Gunpowder River

Nov 28th, 2018

Our speaker for the Nov. 28 chapter meeting will be Gene Howson, shop manager and guide for the Backwater Angler (<http://www.backwaterangler.com/>), located in Parkton, MD.

Gene will discuss one of his favorite topics: fishing the Gunpowder River. He will also share his observations of how the river has fared after this past season's torrential rains.

A degreed environmental scientist, Gene has fished the Gunpowder for over 12 years. He took over management duties at The Backwater Angler in 2016. Before that, Gene taught primary and secondary school science in Peru for several years.

Welcome Gene!

– *Karan Singh*



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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mail@pptu.org

Presidents' Column - Alan Burrows



How can we hook Millennial anglers?

If you are reading this, chances are you're a Baby Boomer or maybe Generation X, and we are glad you are here. Sadly the fact is that we are not getting any younger. As we age, there will be fewer of us actively participating in Trout Unlimited activities. In order to make sure that we continue to have clean cold fishable water, we need to recruit the next generation. Enter the Millennials with numbers topping 70 million. Our challenge is how do we recruit these people?

The news isn't all bad. According to a Fish and Wildlife survey, fishing has grown by 2.7 million people between 2011 and 2016. That was about a 9% increase. I'm not sure that this increase has impacted TU or our chapter but it is up to us to see that it happens. So what can we do?

First we have to find these people. While they may be associated with down town living, they are also associated with concern with our environment. That is a big common denominator. If your kids, or neighbor's kids or your nieces or nephews are Millennials, then invite them to be part of a conservation organization that focuses on clean, cold fishable water. And its free for the first year!

Second, we can help them gear up. Many (probably most) of us have enough equipment to put at least one more person on the water. Let's identify that gear and put it to use.

Third, let's invite them to a fly fishing 101 class. We have plenty of skill in the chapter and I believe members are willing to share. We can keep it light, put it on a pond and let them catch a fish on a fly rod.

Fourth, we can expand the mentor program as needed to offer one on one tutoring on a trout stream. Again we have enough people who can make time to take someone fishing and you all know how good it feels to see someone catch their first trout.

Fifth, share your knowledge and your spots. Most of us who fish the local waters know where to

find fish on a regular basis. We need to be willing to share that info with new anglers because it's more fun in the beginning to catch fish rather than prospect and enjoy the scenery.

Sixth, break the stereotype. We are not a bunch of grumpy old uneducated men and women who disdain company and socialization. We are an educated group of conservationists who believe in protecting the environment we enjoy. Even if you choose not to fish, everyone should appreciate cold, clean fishable streams and rivers and trout only live in pretty places.

Finally, practice patient persistence. In this new world of instant gratification many will expect to catch a fish at each cast. If you have a chance to mentor a Millennial, make the outing fun and educational. Talk about conservation as well as trout. We need these people to understand what we love and to love it as well.

Until next month, tight lines!

Alan Burrows
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 Tactics 101 – Winter Fishing - Notes from Kirk Deeter

Winter fishing can be highly rewarding. It's possible to arrive at your favorite location and have the entire stream to yourself! Time to relax, soak in the outdoors and let the solitude wash away the worries of the day. You can also catch fish!

There are a couple of simple rules you can follow to increase your chance of hooking up this time of year: Slow Down; Size Down; Tone Down.

Slow Down - When water temperatures drop, the trout themselves slow down. Their metabolisms decrease. They become more lethargic. They don't chase flies as actively as they would when the water temperatures are in the ideal trout zone of 45 to 65 degrees. One way around that, of course, is to fish in tailwaters - the water released from those dams remains at a relatively constant temperature (usually in the 40s or 50s) throughout the whole year.



When trout are moving slow the angler should slow down as well. Rivers are usually at their lowest and clearest in midwinter. Bright-white, snow-covered banks reflect light and exaggerate shadows more. While winter trout typically aren't as "jumpy" as they are in the summer, that doesn't mean they are much less spooky. Try to slow your pace and movements by at least 25 percent when you fish in the winter. Be careful where you stand so not to cast long shadows over the runs you target. Relax a bit, spend more time high on the riverbanks spotting fish before casting. If you can see and then specifically target trout, your odds of hooking up are exponentially greater than they are when blind casting in the winter.

Size Down - Fish with smaller flies in the winter, and most of your winter fly fishing is nymph fishing. At any time of the year, midges comprise more than 50 percent of a trout's diet. So these small insects are extremely important for anglers to understand and imitate in every season. But the midge game is especially important in winter, because there is not much mayfly or terrestrial activity going on.

Black Stoneflies are a good bet on our local streams. A little black stonefly is a good fly to have in your winter box. While these stoneflies share the same basic shapes and dark colors as their spring and summer counterparts, the winter insects are typically much smaller (like size 16 or smaller). You cannot go wrong in most streams fishing little black stoneflies and small midge patterns (like zebra midges, juju midges, and black beauties) the vast majority of the time.

Go smaller with your Strike Indicator: Never throw big, gaudy strike indicator in the winter. Instead, try using small pieces of yarn, pinch-on foam, or when the water is really low and slow, use a dry fly such as parachute Adams for an optional strike indicator.



Tone Down - Be Dull (Seriously): As a rule of thumb, winter demands duller, darker colors more than any other season. That applies to everything--from the flies you fish, to the colors you wear on your body. Typically, small black flies are best in winter. Tans, browns, and greens also tend to work well. Black or glass beads tend to work better for weighted flies. Put that bright Hawaiian shirt away until spring and summer, in winter wear white, black, tan, or sky blue. On a snowy riverbank, a bright red baseball cap is going to be a dead giveaway to the trout, and it could negatively impact your fishing.

If you spot poaching please place a call to the

Catch a Poacher Hotline
At
1-800-635-6124

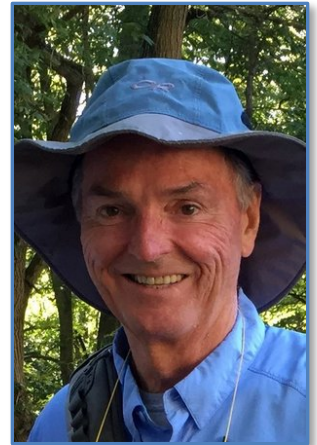


Add this number to your cell phone contact list!



PPTU Member Carl Smolka Passes - PPTU

Carl Smolka, a longtime member of PPTU, passed away on October 24th. He made many considerable contributions to TU and this chapter, as well as to Project Healing Waters at both Ft Meade and Walter Reed Hospital. He will be sorely missed by all who knew him. More on his contributions will appear in a future Conservationist.



In lieu of flowers Please send donations to Carl's favorite charity Project Healing Waters:

<http://projecthealingwaters.org/>

Family address for cards:

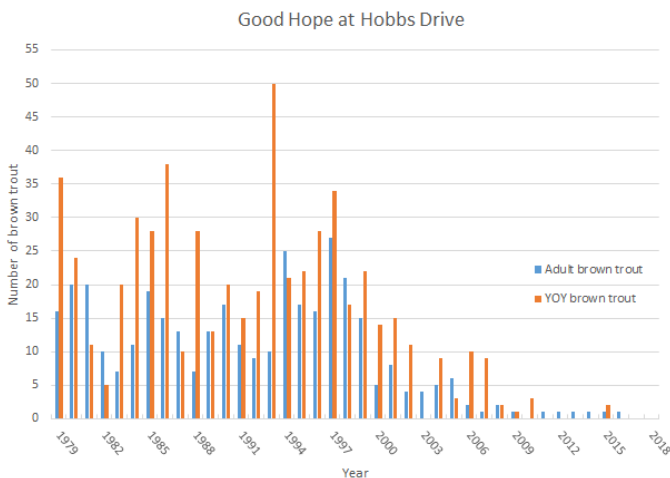
4227 Norbeck Road
Rockville, MD 20853

You can read Carl's obituary here:

https://www.colefuneral.com/notices/Carl-Smolka?fbclid=IwAR3uJ-6rRWqbLPafM_3hSRJDJkNXAeN-6PaJ4B2vk-QDbdYT0_DEIeeTrDs

Paint Branch Update - Joe Robinson

For the past 39 years, Maryland DNR has conducted electrofishing surveys of the brown trout population in the Good Hope tributary of the Paint Branch. For standardization, this survey has been conducted at the same long-term reference station (approx. 300ft). With trout numbers recorded over the last several years at historically low levels (in fact, 0 trout in 2017), DNR Central Region Manager Mark Staley reports that “due to low trout density, we decided it would be more meaningful to electrofish a longer distance to get a better “snapshot” of the trout population in the Good Hope tributary.”



Back in August, Mark and his team sampled from the mouth of the tributary all the way upstream to the ICC crossing. They electrofished at four locations, all considerably longer stretches than the reference station, effectively hitting all areas that might hold trout. Their results were far from encouraging – only five adult fish in total, ranging from 10.5” to 12.5”, with no young of the year found. As Mark states, with no evidence of recent reproduction, this “puts the population in a precarious position and a successful spawn is needed soon.”

The collapsing trout population in the Paint Branch is the result of habitat degradation due to the cumulative impact of encroaching residential development and general climate change. I think it’s important that we continue to respect this stream and monitor its health and that of its inhabitants, but realistically, there probably is little we can do to help reverse this downward spiral. But what we can do is

take a lesson from the Paint Branch, and use it in our continued efforts to help maintain our thriving streams through education and continued stewardship.

PPTU Beer Tie - PPTU

Every 2nd Monday of each month. Old Line Wine Spirits and Bistro is our host. Stop by and check us out and try your hand at fly tying. We always have an extra vice and tools available for the curious or new tier.

Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits and Bistro
11011 Baltimore Ave. Beltsville, MD 20705



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

STREAM Girls - Trout Unlimited

A combination watershed and angling education program, STREAM Girls is a partnership with the Girl Scouts of America to take middle school-aged girls through eight core activities to view their stream as a scientist, artist, and angler.

They get a complete picture of what their stream could mean to them as a citizen of their watershed.



Members Catch - PPTU

No one actually caught the bear but it just goes to show what you might find while fishing with PPTU.

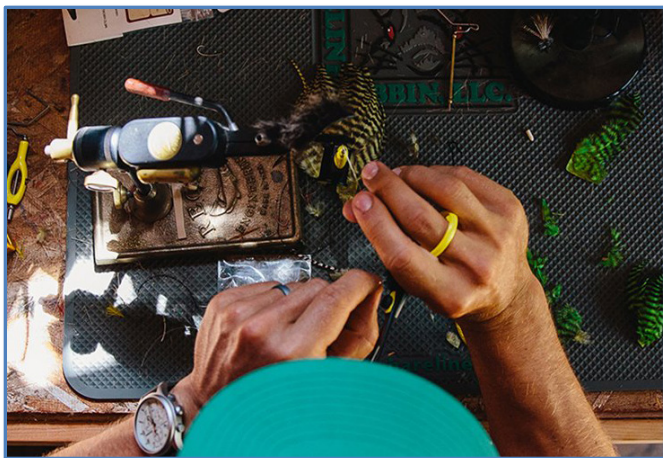


Contributions should be sent to the Editor as plain text in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

Editor: Bob O'Donnell

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Email: TroutWrangler@yahoo.com



Fly Tying Videos

Since this is the last issue before the New Year, I figured why not share more than one fly tying video.

Loon does a great job and has a pretty decent archive of flies. Additionally, you'll learn some good techniques to try out on your own. And if you've never seen Loon Live you should give it a look the next time it airs. I was often on line at the same time with Carl Smolka – just one more thing I'll miss about not having Carl around.

https://loonoutdoors.com/blogs/fly-tying-videos?mc_cid=81ea4500fa&mc_eid=2260c64a6a



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