

The Conservationist



PPTU.org

Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

Mar 2026 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

“Spring Brook Trout Fishing” Guest Speaker – Jeff Murray

Mar 18th, 2026

We are pleased to welcome Jeff Murray of [Murray's Fly Shop](#) as our March speaker. Jeff will help us get ready for spring Brook Trout fishing. Many of you are probably familiar with Murray's Fly Shop in Edinburg, Virginia. Taking [Murray's Mountain Trout On-the Stream School](#) in Shenandoah National Park with Jeff in my early days of fly fishing definitely set me up for future success.

Jeff was born and raised in Edinburg and spent a lot of time growing up around the shop, helping out, and learning along the way. Fly fishing has been part of his life for as long as he can remember, and over the years he's been fortunate to spend a lot of time fishing, guiding, and teaching anglers on rivers and streams across the country.

Much of what Jeff learned came from his father, Harry Murray. He instilled in me the virtue of carefully paying attention to fish behavior, how flies and fly lines move through the water, and how small changes can improve presentation. Jeff enjoys sharing what he's learned and learning from others.

Murray's Fly Shop was founded in May of 1962 by Harry Murray. The shop began out of necessity – Harry needed a reliable supply of fly-tying materials for his own fishing. What started as a practical solution quickly evolved into tying custom fly patterns for other anglers who recognized the effectiveness of his designs. In 1964, Murray's Fly Shop moved across the street from its original location to its current home at 121 South Main Street in Edinburg, Virginia, where it has remained ever since. Over the years, the shop became a trusted resource for fly anglers across the country. For 52 years, Murray's Fly Shop produced a paperback mail-order catalog, helping generations of anglers access quality fly tying materials, flies, and fly-fishing knowledge long before online shopping existed. That commitment to education, quality, and practical fishing experience continues to be its guiding principle today.



– *Scott Cernich*

Mar 18th Chapter Meeting

Laurel Volunteer Fire Department
7588 Van Dusen Road, Laurel, MD 20707

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

[Chapter Meeting Zoom Link](#)

Visit our website: [PPTU.org](#)

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Contact Us:

mail@pptu.org

Presidents' Column - Craig VanderKolk



As I write this column, our weather has been all over the place. It was a beautiful day for our Yellow Breeches outing and then threatening snow for volunteers placing signs on the Patuxent. It's been a crazy winter, but the Chapter has been busy.



Trout Unlimited has begun promoting a new national message, “Every River Needs a Champion”. I recommend everyone go to their website and watch the video and learn about the new focus of the mission of TU to preserve cold water fisheries.

Our chapter has been busy over the past year working to Champion the Patuxent River. Last spring and summer a dedicated group of volunteers led by Jay Shepard and Bob Bokulic monitored the dissolved oxygen below Brighton Dam. This work was presented to WSSC along with the Maryland Department of Environment and Department of Natural Resources to support changes in dam output by WSSC to improve water quality. While the Patuxent is not a true year around cold water stream, it brings people out to hike and fish. This raises awareness and understanding of the changes in the environment with drought and higher temperatures our world is experiencing.

Over the winter, volunteers Ron Kerrick, Lou Reichel and Ron Briggs bushwacked the trail from Haviland Rd parking lot upriver to improve access. This past weekend, Tom Brosnan, Kevin Savercool, David Fraunfeld, Kevin Sutherland and his son (who also helped bushwacked on another weekend in December) placed signs at all the access points of the upper and lower Patuxent including Cabin Branch. These signs help make anglers aware of the

regulations for fishing the river. Finally, this week more volunteers will float stock the river with browns and rainbows for the upcoming season. All of these volunteers have helped champion this river. I hope each of you will consider volunteering on the Patuxent and other projects of the chapter this coming year.

This month and spring there are other activities to keep fly fisherman busy. The Lancaster Fly Fishing Show is March 14 & 15. It's a great place to cast rods, learn new techniques and fly tying. You can also support the local fly fishing businesses by visiting their booths and picking up a few items for the upcoming season. The Maryland Fly Fishing show is the next weekend, March 21 at Towson University. While it's a little smaller, it also has speakers and presentations along with some vintage fly fishing rods, reels and other gear. PPTU will have a table and we're looking for volunteers to help staff the booth.

We are planning another Swap Meet this spring, look for an announcement for a date and time soon. It's a good opportunity to clean out your basement or fly fishing closet and sell stuff you no longer need and help support the chapter.

Finally, I hope to see you all at the next speaker's night, which is a great chance to learn about Brook Trout fishing from Jeff Murray of Murray's Fly Shop in the Virginia's Shenandoah area.

Craig VanderKolk
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

Upcoming Events and Outings - PPTU

March 5th – Social Movie Night with Pizza!
Landover, MD

March 14th, 15th – The Fly Fishing Show
Lancaster, PA

March 21st – Maryland Fly Fishing Show
Towson, MD

March 28th – Outing to Conewago Creek
North of Gettysburg, PA



PPTU Outing to Conewago - Ron Kerrick

Our March outing will be at Conewago Creek in Pennsylvania between Russell Tavern Road and Biglerville Road (Route 34). This is a freestone stream located between the towns of Gettysburg and Biglerville. The stream is a short walk from either parking lot and there is an excellent, easy walking, flat trail that runs the entire length of the fly fishing only section (courtesy of the Adams County Chapter of Trout Unlimited). The trail runs approximately 1.2 miles between the two parking lots. This stream has easy wading and bank fishing. The Adams County TU Chapter is scheduled to float stock this stream on March 7th, from the Russell Tavern Road bridge to State Route 34 (Biglerville Road). This section of Conewago Creek is a Special Regulation stream (catch and release, fly fishing only), so there should still be plenty of trout in the stream for us to play with.

Directions: Distance from Silver Spring is about 85 miles with a driving time of approximately 1 ½ hours. Take Rt 270 north to Frederick. Then take Rt 15 toward Gettysburg. Go past Gettysburg and take the exit for Rt 394 (Shrivers Corner Rd). Turn left on Rt 394 and drive to Goldenville Road. Turn left on Goldenville Road and drive until you go past Rt 34 to Russell Tavern Road. Turn right on Russell Tavern Road. Just after crossing the Conewago Creek Bridge, turn right on Zeigler Mill Road. Drive a short distance, and on the right will be a PA Fish and Boat Commission parking lot.

Meeting Area: We will meet at 10:00 AM in the upper parking area which is a PFBC Angler Access lot at 420 Zeigler Mill Road, Gettysburg, PA near Rose Lane.

Lunch: Head back to the Meeting Area parking lot at 12:00 for lunch. We will be serving grilled Hotdogs & Beans. Bring your own drinks, chips, desserts and camp chairs. If you are bringing friends or family members, please let us know how many people are attending so we have enough food for everyone.

Best Double Haul Video Ever! - Simon Gawesworth

For those of you still struggling with the Double Haul, this video by Simon Gawesworth breaks down a simple and easy way to learn or improve your double haul cast.

Tip from Bob O'Donnell: Remember – Practice, practice, practice BEFORE you get on the water! Any time I'm out and the fishing is slow or off, I practice my casting (including double haul) by challenging myself to hit difficult spots or practice casts I don't use often. It makes things easy the next time you go out and also boosts your confidence in hitting a tough spot and perhaps getting hooked up to a nice fish. [Watch the video.](#)

Photographing Fish - John Juracek

Ever wished that your photographs of fish looked as pretty as the fish themselves? We probably all have. Here are some of the things I think about when photographing fish. Perhaps you'll find value in them too.

Foremost in my mind is an appreciation for what the fish have provided in the way of sport. If I'm going to ask for their picture, as well as for the excitement of their capture, I feel a responsibility to accord them a certain measure of respect. I try to show them off in a pleasing manner. I try to make the photograph about them, and not about the angler or about me as the photographer. No hero shots, no funky poses, no unusual lens effects.

You may feel differently. If, for example, you would like to include the angler in your picture, think about having her look at the fish and not at the camera. Doing so directs attention to the fish, which is sort of the point. You can have your picture taken anytime.



Photographing fish by yourself is difficult. And it can be hard on the fish. It's better to seek the help of a friend. Both you and the fish will be glad you did.

Focus the camera on the eye of the fish. If the eye is sharp, everything else in the photo—sharp or not—will appear acceptable. If the eye isn't sharp, nothing about the photo will look good.

Do not remove the fish from the water until the camera is ready. Limit the time the fish is out of water to 3-4 seconds. If you wish to reshoot, put the fish back in the water between pictures.

Holding a fish with the front hand facing palm out and the back hand facing palm in shows off the fish in an attractive manner. Whenever a fish is held with two palms out it's awkward looking, for us and the fish. And invariably, too much of the fish gets covered over by hands.

As much as possible, keep the thumb and palm of your front hand hidden behind the fish. Doing so provides an uninterrupted view of an important body line. Same goes for the fingers of the front hand; keep them out of view as best you can. I like the back hand

as far back as possible while still supporting the fish. Try holding fish smaller than 16-inches in one hand. I think they look best that way.

Hold the fish no higher than an inch or so above the water. This is good for the fish in case it slips from the hands, and it also maintains a visual connection between the fish and its habitat. Isolate the fish from its environment and you'll end up with a photo of—forgive me here—a fish out of water. Consider, too, getting the camera down to the fish's level; it's a more pleasing perspective than shooting from high overhead.



This isn't everything involved with photographing fish, but it's a start. Give these suggestions a try and I think you'll find your pictures to be respectful of the fish and eye-pleasing to boot.

John Juracek is a fly fisherman, writer and photographer from West Yellowstone, Montana. For twenty-some years he was a partner at Blue Ribbon Flies, a local fly shop, and is currently the head casting instructor at the School of Trout and Anglers Academy. His writing credits include Yellowstone: Photographs of an Angling Landscape, Fly Patterns of Yellowstone, Fishing Yellowstone Hatches and Fly Patterns of Yellowstone, Volume Two.

"They say you forget your troubles on a trout stream, but that's not quite it. What happens is that you begin to see where your troubles fit into the grand scheme of things, and suddenly they're just not such a big deal anymore."

~ John Gierach

PPTU Outings Schedule for 2026 - Ron Kerrick

Details for the PPTU Outings will be posted online before each date. This is what we're looking at for 2026.

Mar 28: Conawego Creek, PA

Apr 25-26: Casselman, MD

May 15-17: Spring Creek, PA

Jun 13: Gunpowder One Fly, MD

Jul: No Outing Scheduled Yet

Aug TBD: Yellow Breeches White Fly, PA

Sep 12: Monocacy Smallmouth, MD

Oct 9-12: Savage River Camp Out, MD

Nov TBD: Steelhead, PA

Dec: No Outing Scheduled Yet

Note: If any PPTU members have any comments or suggestions for outings, please let the Outings Coordinator(s) know, at outings@pptu.org

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!



Potomac Interceptor Sewage Spill - Betsy Nicholas

Today (2/23) we have released a statement from Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN) President, Betsy Nicholas, addressing the ongoing public health and environmental crisis caused by the collapse of the Potomac Interceptor sewer pipe, which has discharged hundreds of millions of gallons of raw sewage into the Potomac River.

The statement outlines the scale of the disaster, the urgent need for transparency and accountability, and a clear path forward to protect public health, restore ecological damage, and prevent future infrastructure failures.



“This is one of the most consequential sewage disasters our region has ever experienced,” said Nicholas. “Communities across the District, Maryland, and Virginia are facing prolonged exposure risks, and yet the response has too often fallen short of what this moment demands.”

Independent sampling conducted by PRKN, alongside University of Maryland researchers, confirmed dangerously high levels of fecal contamination and pathogens—data that played a critical role in prompting public health advisories across jurisdictions.

“With repairs expected to take months and intermittent overflows likely to continue, this crisis is far from over,” Nicholas said. “The public deserves a response grounded in science, urgency, and accountability—not delay or deflection.”

PRKN will continue independent monitoring, public reporting, and advocacy to ensure that the Potomac River—and the communities that depend on it—are fully protected and restored.

“Clean water is a public trust,” Nicholas added. “This must be the turning point where we finally commit to safeguarding the Potomac for generations to come.”

Fly Fishing Film Tour - District Angling

The Fly Fishing Film Tour has returned, better than ever!



Clear your schedule as we present the 20th annual film tour on **Wednesday March 25th, 2026** - the night you look forward to each year!

Event will be held at The Arlington Cinema Drafthouse - 2903 Columbia Pike, Arlington, VA 22204.

Doors open at 6:00 pm for dining and seating. The film starts promptly at 7:30 pm.

For more information about the event please contact us:

E-mail - info@districtangling.com

Shop Phone - (703) 268-7500

More Double Haul Fun! - Hooked Up

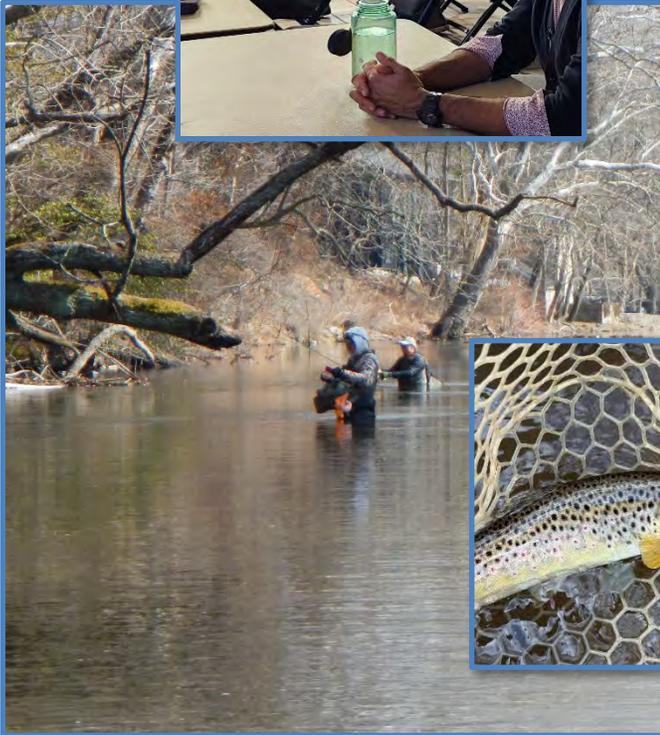
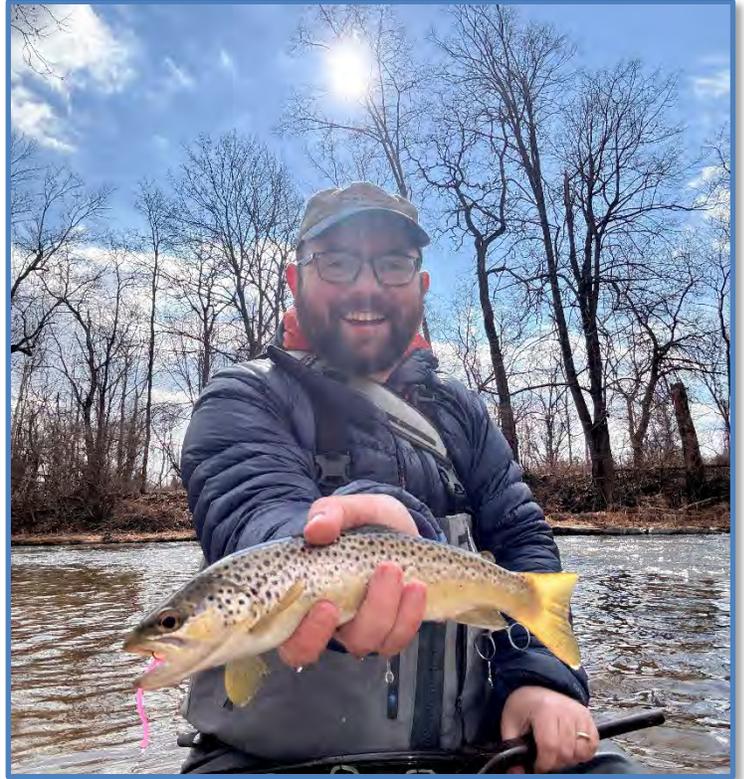
Cast From the Past: Lefty Kreh on The Double Haul Fly Cast

Learn how to perfect the double-haul fly cast with fly-fishing legend Lefty Kreh. [Watch video](#)



Members Catch - Bob O'Donnell

Fish and friends. Wish I could have gone out with you guys. Hopefully I'll see some of you on the next outing!



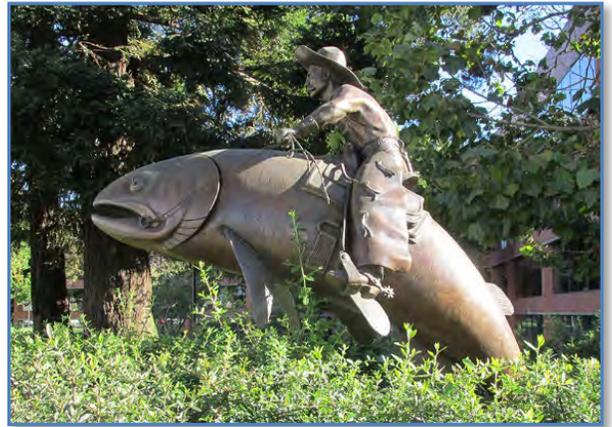
Contributions & Questions Welcome!

Send your contributions, article suggestions or fly fishing questions to the Editor in an email or as an MS Word.doc attachment. The deadline for submissions is typically the twelfth (12th) day of the month prior to the month of publication.

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Antonio's Adult BWO

Whether you like to fish BWOs in the spring or fall, this is a great pattern for even the pickiest of fish.

[Watch Video Here](#)



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