

# The Conservationist



PPTU.org

## Potomac-Patuxent Chapter Trout Unlimited

Sep 2016 • Published monthly except June, July, August and December

# “Snakeheads” Rob Snowwhite *September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016*

Washington D.C is full of consultants. Rob Snowwhite just happens to be one that focuses on fly fishing, providing expert knowledge and advice to fly fisherman in Virginia, Maryland, Washington D.C., and beyond. Rob offers guided trips in Northern Virginia and Washington D.C. Think of him as a personal trainer, coach, concierge, or tutor for the angler, specializing in urban and suburban fly fishing for warm water species like bass (striped, largemouth, and smallmouth), northern snakehead, carp, catfish, bluegill, sunfish, crappie, gar, and walleye. Rob is the only guide who has federally issued permits for working along the tidal and non-tidal sections of the Potomac River between Great Falls and Mount Vernon on the Virginia shoreline. There are no guides for fishing the other side (Georgetown, DC to Hancock, MD)

Rob’s background in consulting, education, fly fishing, and biological sciences gives him a unique approach to fly fishing education and instruction. You will gain a whole new perspective on fly fishing that you will not gain from a local fly shop, magazine, book, or TV show. Rob’s goal is to make you a competent, successful, and self-sufficient angler.

Rob is active with Project Healing Waters and the Tidal Potomac Fly Rodders. He provides Orvis with a fishing report for the Tidal Potomac and writes a fishing blog. You can read his blogs and find out more about him at [www.robsnowwhite.com](http://www.robsnowwhite.com).

– 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](http://www.pptu.org)

## OFFICERS and DIRECTORS 2015 – 2016

President: Bob O'Donnell: 410-733-0638  
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### Presidents' Column - Bob O'Donnell

Welcome back to the start of our Fall season! I hope everyone survived the heat waves and summer storms that wrapped our area in what felt like a hot wet compress.

There have been lots a changes with PPTU since the last issue. Some very good ones. Hopefully you've been keeping tabs online and are abreast of all the good stuff going on. To start with – the big change – we now have a Vice President! Kudos to Alan Burrows for stepping up and volunteering for this position. I'm sure in the years to come Alan will make PPTU very proud.

Some of the more recent additions include holding a monthly "Beer Tie" for our members. We're still feeling things out, but the first couple of meetings have been pretty fun and relaxing. The location was donated "free" by Larry Pendleton, owner of Old Line Fine Wine, Spirits & Bistro in Beltsville, MD. Keep an eye out for the next meeting notice and don't feel like you need to tie flies to attend. The Bistro offers some nice food and libations so you can just sit back and relax and shoot the bull with your fellow members. And if you would like to try tying – we have spare vices available and plenty of hands to help out.

Another recent change, which every member benefits from, is the Conservationist is no longer linked to your ASC donations. It seemed like a good time to make this change. From what I can tell, 99% of our members generously donate their \$20 ASC each year to the chapter when asked and more often, many donate just out of good intentions on their own accord. So, with each email issue everyone in the chapter will be able to read the entire Conservationist and stay up to date on new chapter information, meeting notices, and fun activities.

In the near future, we will be adding new fly fishing videos and swag items to the library table. There's plenty of good prizes in the vault for our

monthly meeting raffles and we have a few surprises in store in terms of special rod & reel raffles at some of the future meetings.

Last but not least is the addition of a few new board members – Rachel Dagovitz, Josh Loh, and Chuq Yang were welcomed with open arms to the PPTU board. Thanks for stepping up guys!

You, the membership are the strength of our chapter. Whether you volunteer, come to meetings, invite friends to join, fish during our outings, or make small donations to the cause – you are what makes our chapter a good chapter.

“Growth is never by mere chance; it is the result of forces working together.”

Lets continue working together to grow our chapter, improve and adapt, and most importantly – have a lot of fun doing so.

Until next month, tight lines!

Bob O'Donnell  
President, PPTU

## PPTU Mentor Program Beginners & Beyond

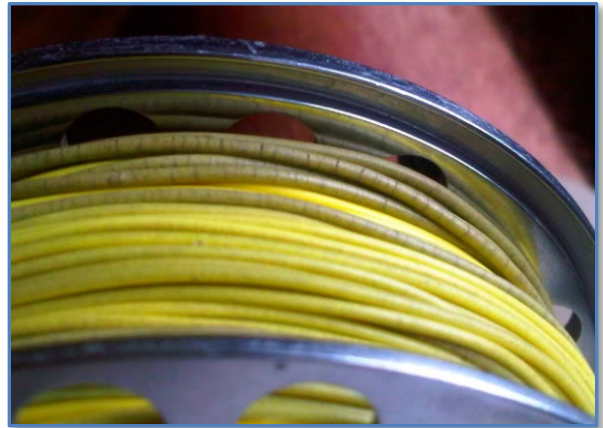
Ken Bowyer provides one-on-one streamside fly fishing instruction to PPTU members. Participants must show commitment by having waders or hip boots, a rod and reel outfit, and leader. Discussions will include equipment, knots, casting, flies, dry fly and nymphing techniques, entomology, reading water, 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](mailto:kenbowyer@verizon.net) 🐝

## Tackle and Tactic Tips - Jay Sheppard

Another summer has come and almost gone! Hope everyone got tired of catching trout!?!? OR at least enjoyed reading the trip reports on the PPCTU online forum!



Fly lines must be protected from all sorts of chemicals. Almost all lotions, creams, and insect repellents can cause the surface of most fly lines to deteriorate rapidly. I use a stick repellent that can be applied directly to any exposed skin that needs such protection. I avoid sprays. If I must use them, I apply a large quantity to the back of my hand and then rub it onto my face and neck areas. The main point is to keep the palms and fingers free of all such substances. This will not only protect your fly lines but also your eyes when you rub them!

One must also care for lines and leader materials in other ways. Heat can greatly reduce their longevity. Storing lines, leaders and other fishing gear in a hot trunk for days and weeks on end is not recommended. Mark all your leaders and tippet spools with the date of purchase, if there are no dates. Three years is about the maximum life for monofilament.

Many of our fishing hours are spent in the early or late hours of the day. Even in the middle of the day sun glare can be a problem. Fishers are strongly urged to find a pale brown, amber (best!) or even copper colored set of polarized sunglasses that fit their preferences for style. The standard gray lenses on most such sunglasses eliminate a lot of actual light, which is critically needed as the sun is setting or rising. The sunglasses need to be removable either



by flipping up from prescription glasses or hanging from a chord in some manner. In my own experience, Polarized sunglasses are an absolute must for the trout fisher. The trout are far easier to see. Watching trout and their reactions to your fly presentations is critical for improving your success. The only real negative is that the reduction in glare also reduces the ability to see tiny insects or your fly floating on the surface, as well as tiny dimples of trout sipping in low light. So removal of the Polarized lenses from the field of view is very critical to seeing minute changes in the surface of the water. My own estimate is that I use my sunglasses only about 30–50% of my fishing time.



Roll casts are certainly needed on brushy streams like the upper Patuxent River. There are a large number of overhanging limbs that thwart trying the standard overhead cast. One trick I learned on that stream many years ago was how to roll cast back under a low branch to reach a pocket next to the bank. This is a side roll cast. It is really not much different that a regular roll cast, only that the plane of the loop that is formed is off to one side or the other. Instead of bringing the tip of the rod more or less straight down in front of you with the usual sharp snap, the rod tip is brought over to one side or the other and then rolled forward at about a 45° angle. If done correctly, the plane of the loop slides under the low branch and drops the fly back under where you want it. Practice this cast a few times to see the effect.

Side casts are also very useful, as mentioned many times in the past. On streams like the upper Patuxent, being able to back cast the line only a few feet above the water and then forward cast the line and fly in a similar plane is crucial to keeping the fly over fish. The looping line also has less visibility to the trout in clear, slow water. Some trout become

alerted to an angler's presence by the flash of line a dozen feet over the water. So this cast can be useful on heavily fished waters (e.g., Gunpowder) that offer ample casting room but well educated trout. Keeping the rod and cast low may allow for better stalking of those wary or smart trout.

## Patuxent Report - Jay Sheppard

The usual low flows of late summer were briefly overwhelmed by a fast moving flash flood the night of July 30–31. That was the same rain event that ripped up downtown Ellicott City. About 4' of water flowed over the roads and flood plain of the Patuxent River above Rt. 97 (Georgia Ave.) for a couple of hours. I suspect the gravel parking lots at Hipsley Mill and Howard Chapel got flushed into the woods. Any accumulated fine sediments was also sent down to the reservoir! We do not see flood events of that magnitude very often, but they can rearrange the large woody debris in the stream! As we get into hunting seasons later this fall, be sure to wear some bright hat or other clothing if fishing Monday through Saturday on this challenging stream. The State Park is a hunting zone, for the most part.

We have not heard anything with regard to the refurbishing of Brighton Dam. WSSC seems to be really dragging its feet on doing this work. In the mean time, we are still trying to come up with a solution for the low Dissolved Oxygen (DO) below the dam in the summer. We want this remedied by the time the dam repairs are completed and we have new control gates working.

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!*

## **Conservation Donation Received – TU Board**

We were both surprised and impressed by a donation letter sent to PPTU. Bill Tong an 8th grader from Clarksville Middle School, in Clarksville, Maryland, founder and president of the Youth Fisheries Sciences was recently awarded the Maryland Tawes Award for his conservation work. Bill in turn decided to share the wealth with PPTU and donated \$300 to us. We in turn hope to team up with these students in a future PPTU event.

For more information on this adventurous group of young anglers and conservationists, please visit their web site. <http://www.yofisc.org/>

## **Thank You, Thank You, Thank You! - Carol Stevenson**

On Saturday August 5<sup>th</sup> Carl Smolka, Lou Reichel, and Bob O'Donnell participated in assisting the Chesapeake Women's Anglers host a Fly Fishing 101 session at the Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary in Upper Marlboro, MD with Victor Jones, the naturalist at Merkle. It was yet another hot, steamy day in Maryland but several hardy souls showed up for a wonderful presentation put on by CWA. Carol expressed her deepest thanks to PPTU for stepping up and helping out in the classroom and outdoors in casting and fishing at the ponds. Those that attended remarked on the wonderful time they had and the wealth of knowledge they walked away with that day.

The Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary is the only wildlife sanctuary operated by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. It is the wintering ground for several thousand Canada geese, the largest concentration on the western shore of the Chesapeake Bay.

For more information, including the history and directions, please visit DNR's website:

<http://dnr2.maryland.gov/publiclands/pages/southern/merkle.aspx>



## **ASC Donations – Annual Request Drive - PPTU Board**

With the start of our fall season we always send out a reminder and once again reach out to our membership for a small donation to assist the chapter in its operating expenses. Your Annual Supporting Contribution (ASC) of \$20 goes a long way in helping cover the chapter's administration costs, educational programs, and community service projects. The contribution is year-to-year, so if you've already made a donation, great! If not, consider making a donation at this time. Donations can be mailed in, processed online or made at any of the monthly chapter meetings.

Website ASC donation link:  
<http://pptu.org/Join/join.shtml>

## **Where Part of PPTUs Money Goes - TIC - Alan Burrows**

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) is one of the many important activities that we support at PPTU. TIC connects elementary, middle, high school and college students to their local environment and watershed. The program teaches students how to raise trout from eggs to fingerlings. It culminates with a field trip during which students release the fish into DNR designated trout streams and participate in habitat studies. This hands-on learning process



fosters both conservation ethic and ecosystem connectivity. Monitoring tank water on a daily basis helps students gain an appreciation for the high quality water resources needed not only for trout survival, but humans as well.

Nationally there are over 4,000 schools actively participating in TIC. Over half of those are supported and managed by Trout Unlimited (TU) Councils and Chapters. TIC in Maryland was started by two PPTU members in 2004 with three schools in Montgomery County. Today the program is still managed by two PPTU members and is active in over 90 schools throughout the state of Maryland and the District of Columbia. Each year we touch over 10,000 students and release over 10,000 fingerlings. This is the largest all volunteer TIC program in the nation. TIC in Maryland and the District of Columbia is supported by the Mid Atlantic Council (MAC) of (TU) and its seven chapters.

PPTU is active in supporting the schools in its catchment. This includes 5 schools in Southern Maryland, 9 schools in Howard County and 27 schools in Montgomery County. That support includes conducting training programs, and the delivery of fertilized rainbow trout eggs to all the schools within hours of the eggs being available. In addition technical support is provided as the students raise the trout, and volunteers provide assistance when students release their fingerlings in late April and May.

On a morning in December or January 25 to 30 PPTU volunteers deliver eggs, fish food, and a MD DNR license to raise trout to the schools. For each trout release, we try to recruit 3 – 4 volunteers to assist. Schools often have 40 or more students participating in these field trips. The volunteers man stations to release trout, do macro-invertebrate sampling, demonstrate fly tying and teach fly casting. As you can imagine, this requires a large number of volunteers. If you are able to set aside a couple of half days a year to assist with these activities your help would be greatly appreciated. Training is provided for the volunteers.

Our vision is that by the next generation, TU will ensure that robust populations of native and wild cold-water fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters. If you share

that vision, please come and help us introduce students to the wonderful world of trout.

## Reeling with Pride - Vatnsdalsa (courtesy of Dennis Covert)

Eric Clapton was reeling with pride. The rock legend broke a local record when he caught a 28-pound salmon while fly-fishing on the Vatnsdalsá River in Iceland last week. But it wasn't an easy feat.



The fish had Clapton, aka "Slowhand," on his knees "begging darling please" after the first hook. According to a Facebook page sponsored by the Vatnsdalsá anglers, the Layla singer ran half a mile down the river before he was able to reel the beast in - almost three hours after his first cast.

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#236 of Trout Unlimited**

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## PPTU One Fly Contest – Sept 25th - Dennis Covert

Time to put your fishing skills to the test! Once again PPTU will be holding its annual One Fly contest on the beautiful Gunpowder River. Come one come all for a day of fun and potential bragging rights for the year if you walk away as top dog in this annual event.

Its pretty easy, we meet in the morning at the Massemore parking lot on the Gunpowder around 8:00 am and declare the 1 fly you will fish with for the morning. The angler that nets the highest “total inches” of trout wins the coveted One Fly.

The rules are simple: pick your best fly and fish until the deadline while measuring your catch. If you lose your fly, you’re done totaling fish but continue to fish for fun anyway. We meet back in the parking lot at 12 noon to compare our success. Afterwards there is usually a trip to the local watering hole to celebrate with lunch and a cold drink.



Bob O’Donnell is still bragging about his whopping score of 43” last year. (All those 3” fish added up) We’re tired of listening about it. So come sign up and have some fun with us and more importantly, keep Bob quiet for another year.

## Presidential Environmental Award - Alan Burrows

At the White House on 8/16, Charles County, North Point High School teacher Lolita Kiorpes was presented with a 2016 Presidential Environmental Education Award. Among the environmental activities cited were Horseshoe Crabs and our

favorite, **Trout in the Classroom**. Way to go Lolita! The award presentation can be seen here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tdZN4oeq5Q&feature=youtu.be>

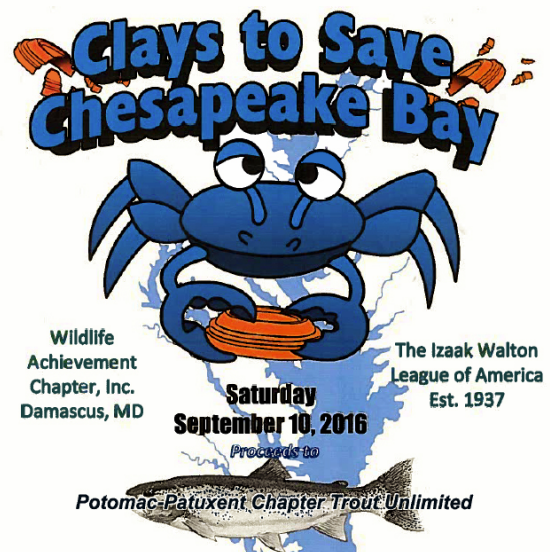
Note: Scrub the video slider to about 36:10 for the saved show to start and the kids/teachers presentation kicks in about 1:23:30.

An additional detailed write up bio on Lolita can be accessed here, fourth person down the page:

<https://www.epa.gov/education/presidential-innovation-award-environmental-educators-piaee-winners>

## Breaking Clays to Save the Bay - Jim Crowell

Our good friends, the Izaak Walton League's Wildlife Achievement Chapter (IWLA-WAC) is once again having a fun shoot to raise money....well actually for us. Proceeds from the shoot will once again go to our chapter to support our education and conservation activities. The date is **September 10th** and the details will be published on our web site. PPTU has received a substantial amount of money over the years from this shoot. I would encourage any PPTU member who has any interest whatsoever to attend, bring their friends, and show our appreciation to the IWLA-WAC.



## Why Did I Lose That Fish? - Courtesy of Kyle Wilkinson

One thing that never gets easier to swallow is losing a fish, particularly a big one you've been working hard to hook. I feel very confident in my ability to calmly coach people through fighting a fish, but the ultimate reality of this sport is that some of them are still just going to get away.

Here are three of the top reasons I see many fish lost that could have been landed.

**Don't Touch The Reel Handle.** This is easily the number one reason I see customers lose fish. It is always a goal of mine to get any fish of size on the reel when fighting it. That said, (and perhaps many of you can relate) having your hand on the reel at the time a fish decides to make a run is a recipe for disaster. When fighting a fish you must always anticipate another run is likely to happen, especially with the first attempt to net it. I see many customers get so caught up in the moment with the fact that they're bringing the fish closer to the net that—even with my verbal reminding—they seem to forget this. My suggestion if you've ever found yourself in the above situation is to practice taking 3-5 quick turns of the reel and then take your hand off. If the fish still seems willing to come closer, grab a few more quick turns and then again... hand off. Work on gaining line back in shorter, more controlled bursts and you'll be in business!

**Use Your Rod Angles.** Have you ever watched someone fight a tarpon? What position is their rod typically in? Ever noticed that it's angled way over to the side? Perhaps clear past the 3 or 9 o'clock position? The reason for this 'down and dirty' position (as it's often called) is that the greater angle you have your rod at when fighting a fish, the more pressure you are applying. Positioning your rod off to one side or another will transfer more power to the butt of the rod, which as I believe most of us know, is where the power is. And while fighting a trout like a tarpon is far from what I'm getting at, keeping your rod anywhere beyond the 12 o'clock position is

going to help you control the fish much more efficiently and effectively. Another way to think about this is to angle the rod the opposite direction the fish is looking. If the fish is looking upriver, I'm going to have my rod tilted/angled slightly downriver and vice versa. I truly believe (and am welcome to criticism here) that you can wear a fish down mentally. This is always the better choice over wearing it down physically. Sure a fish can and will get tired throughout a fight but I'm confident that if every time a fish tries to go one direction it gets pulled the opposite it will end up in the net much quicker.



**Chase It Down.** The degree to which my final point can be put into place is going to vary from river to river, however is still something that should always be in your game plan. The majority of fish you hook are going to run down river, particularly the big ones. Sure, I've seen many big fish charge upriver after being hooked, but as soon as this initial run is over they almost always play the retreat game and head back down. When fishing any place that has the potential of producing big fish, planning for this downstream chase should be something you're constantly prepared to do from the instant it's hooked, but it doesn't stop at simply following it downstream. Your goal should always be to get even with the fish. Staying even with a large fish during the fight (and then incorporating tip 1 and 2) is guaranteed to help you start putting more of those big fish in the net!



## Win a Sage Fly Fishing Package! - Mollie Simpkins

Sage fly fishing products are synonymous with quality and many only dream of having a Sage rod in their arsenal. Not only do you have the opportunity to win a Sage One rod, but also a Sage reel (loaded with Rio line), and a Sage Typhoon Chest Pack. SCORE! For a suggested donation of \$25 per entry, you will have the chance to win this package worth over \$1,300!

Molly attended a few PPTU meetings while she was in the area being involved with Casting for Recovery. I still stay in touch with her. She finally made it to Bozeman and landed a nice job in a great location. Proceeds for this fundraiser benefit the Greater Yellowstone Coalition. Thought I would share with the membership. Deadline for this contest is September 30<sup>th</sup>. Good luck!

Bob O'Donnell

[https://secure3.convio.net/gyc/site/Donation2?idb=2095393166&df\\_id=5262&mfc\\_pref=T&5262.donation=form1&idb=0](https://secure3.convio.net/gyc/site/Donation2?idb=2095393166&df_id=5262&mfc_pref=T&5262.donation=form1&idb=0)

## Members Catch! - Bob O'Donnell

Once again our members have been busy putting the fish to task and doing so in some gorgeous places. Making me jealous to boot! Great stuff guys. Keep sharing those pics and stories.



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**  
Phone: 410-733-0638  
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### TRICOS!!!

There was a lot of chatter about Tricos on the forum lately. I've been lucky enough to hit a hatch and spinner fall a couple of times. Its exciting to watch and can be a little frustrating if you're not prepared for it. I've experienced both.

This video and the fly patterns mentioned will serve you well if you're targeting these little guys or the next time you're on stream and accidentally run across a swarm. Good luck!

<http://www.orvis.com/news/fly-fishing/videos-3-great-patterns-trico-time/>



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