



The Buzz

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August 26, 2015

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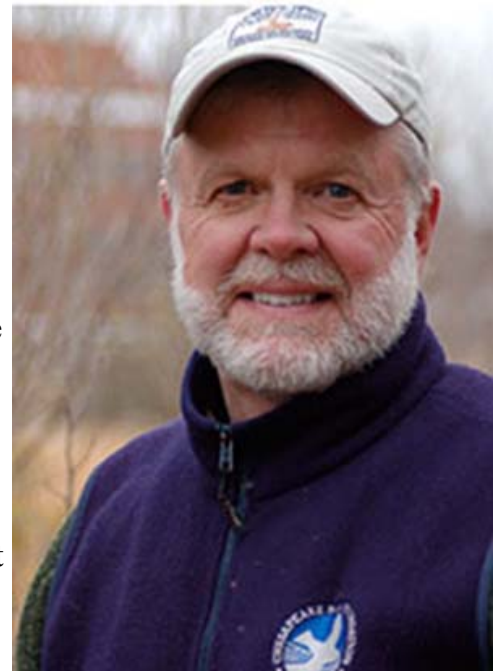
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Capt. John Page Williams will speak at our Club meeting on August 26. He is a Senior Naturalist at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation in Annapolis. Awarded the title of "Admiral of the Bay," he has a more than 40-year career teaching and writing about the Bay, one of our nation's greatest natural resources. And according to our own fishing enthusiast, Ernie Rojas, Captain Williams is a fantastic fisherman who knows how and where to fish the Bay.

Williams created the Bay Foundation's education program in the 1970s, modeling it on his earlier experience with Outward Bound and teaching at a school in Virginia. He also led CBF's development program and early outreach efforts as a writer and lecturer. He has published numerous articles in newspapers and boating and fishing magazines, as well as three books about the Bay.



Joe Evans, with the Department of Natural Resources' fisheries service, has called Williams "one of a kind" for his "steady environmental impact" over the last four decades. "On most any given day, you'll find John Page Williams on the water, testing fish finders, lures, and tackle," Evans wrote several years ago. "Or he might be bending the ears of policy-makers and politicians with his well-tuned conservation thesis."

In his book *"Fishing in the Wake of Captain John Smith,"* Capt. Williams shares his favorite fishing spots along the John Smith Trail. From the Susquehanna to the Rappahannock, Williams tells you about Captain Smith's wildlife encounters at each site and the types of fish you will find, and more important which types of bait and tackle to use. A *"Boater's Guide to the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail"* is a free online publication that introduces paddlers, skiffers, and cruisers to exploration of the Capt. John Smith Trail. John Page weaves practical information for today's boaters with the historical context of the Chesapeake waters Smith explored 400 years ago.

With the mix of history, environmental issues, and fishing the Bay, Captain Williams' presentation surely will be one no one will want to miss. If you are interested in joining the Save the Bay effort, check out the CBF Website at www.cbf.org.

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Upcoming Items

Potomac River Smallmouth Club - September Meeting

Join Us Wednesday, September 30 for PRSC's next monthly meeting. Joining us will be Brad Fink, a District Fisheries Biologist for the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. We will be back at our usual location and time....the Vienna Firehouse at 7:30pm. Please join us for what should be a very interesting presentation.

Picture Raffle - Smallmouth Bass Print

As a fund raiser, PRSC is raffling off a smallmouth bass print. Tickets are \$2 per ticket, 3 tickets for \$5 and 7 tickets for \$10. We will be selling tickets until we have the drawing at a PRSC meeting later this year. We will have the print at the upcoming meetings.



Potomac Riverkeeper

Riverkeeper Investigates Coal Ash Mines

Dominion, one of Virginia's largest energy companies, owns and operates the Possum Point Power Plant, located just south of Alexandria on a peninsula between Quantico Creek and the Potomac River. Since filing Notice of Intent, Potomac Riverkeeper Network has been monitoring the facility for illegal discharges into Quantico Creek and taking water and sediment samples at the site perimeter, to test for unsafe levels of heavy metals. They have also joined state lawmakers in calling for testing of drinking water wells for nearby residents, to find out whether their drinking water has been affected by the coal ash leaks into groundwater. PRKN is using litigation and grassroots political outreach to push for a full cleanup of Possum Point's coal ash pollution, investigation of Dominion's handling of coal ash, and the excavation and removal of all coal ash at the site to a lined landfill away from the Potomac River. Their goal is to make sure these toxic coal ash ponds are no longer a threat to Quantico Creek, the Potomac and public drinking water supplies. For more information, please visit their website at <http://www.potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/possum-point>.

Potomac Conservancy

River Center Open House - Lock 8

Saturday, September 19 - 10:00am-2:00pm. What is the River Center? Join Potomac Conservancy staff and the River Center Guides for an open house at the River Center at Lock 8 and get answers to these questions and more! Learn more about the history of the lockhouse, Potomac Conservancy, and ways you can get involved in the fight for clean water. We'll even have a fly fishing demonstration from Orvis! For more information, visit their website at www.potomac.org/events.

Message from PA Boat and Fish Commission

"S.O.S. - Save Our Susquehanna!" Campaign Aims To Help Sick Bass

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has launched an "S.O.S. - Save Our Susquehanna!" campaign to fund water and soil conservation projects along the Susquehanna River, whose young smallmouth bass population has been plagued over the last decade by illness and elevated mortality rates.



From now until the end of the year, the PFBC expects to receive \$3 million in revenue from sales of approximately 130,000 resident annual, senior resident annual, and non-resident annual licenses. Under the S.O.S. - Save Our Susquehanna! - campaign, once the \$3 million threshold is met, all additional sales from the three licenses will be dedicated solely to funding Susquehanna River projects.

"To kick off the campaign, we are pledging \$50,000 in matching funds from the Commission," Executive Director John Arway said. "I'm optimistic that we will raise and exceed the \$50,000 from anglers, other conservationists, and anyone who cares about our natural resources and supports our efforts to do everything in our power to protect and conserve them."

"The Susquehanna River is sick and someone has to take steps to fix it before it is too late," said Arway. "This is about conservation and protecting our aquatic resources so they may be enjoyed by future generations as guaranteed by our state constitution. We need leadership to begin working on fixing problems that we know exist."

The campaign coincides with the upcoming start of bass season on June 13.

Arway added that anyone can contribute to the campaign by purchasing a fishing license. "The fishing license is simply the mechanism we're using to raise the funds," he said. "You don't have to be an angler. You just have to care about the Susquehanna River. By buying an annual fishing license, you can help make this campaign a success."

Also, individuals can demonstrate their support by purchasing a special S.O.S. - Save Our Susquehanna button for just \$10. A fishing license is required in order to purchase the button and all proceeds from the button sales will go to fund the campaign. Buttons will be available to purchase on June 8.

Arway added that anglers and individuals also have the option of contributing to the campaign by writing a check to "S.O.S. - Save Our Susquehanna" and mailing it to the PFBC headquarters at P.O. Box 67000, Harrisburg, PA 17106.

Fishing licenses and buttons can be purchased online through the PFBC's [Outdoor Shop](#) or at any of 900 licensing agents across the Commonwealth.

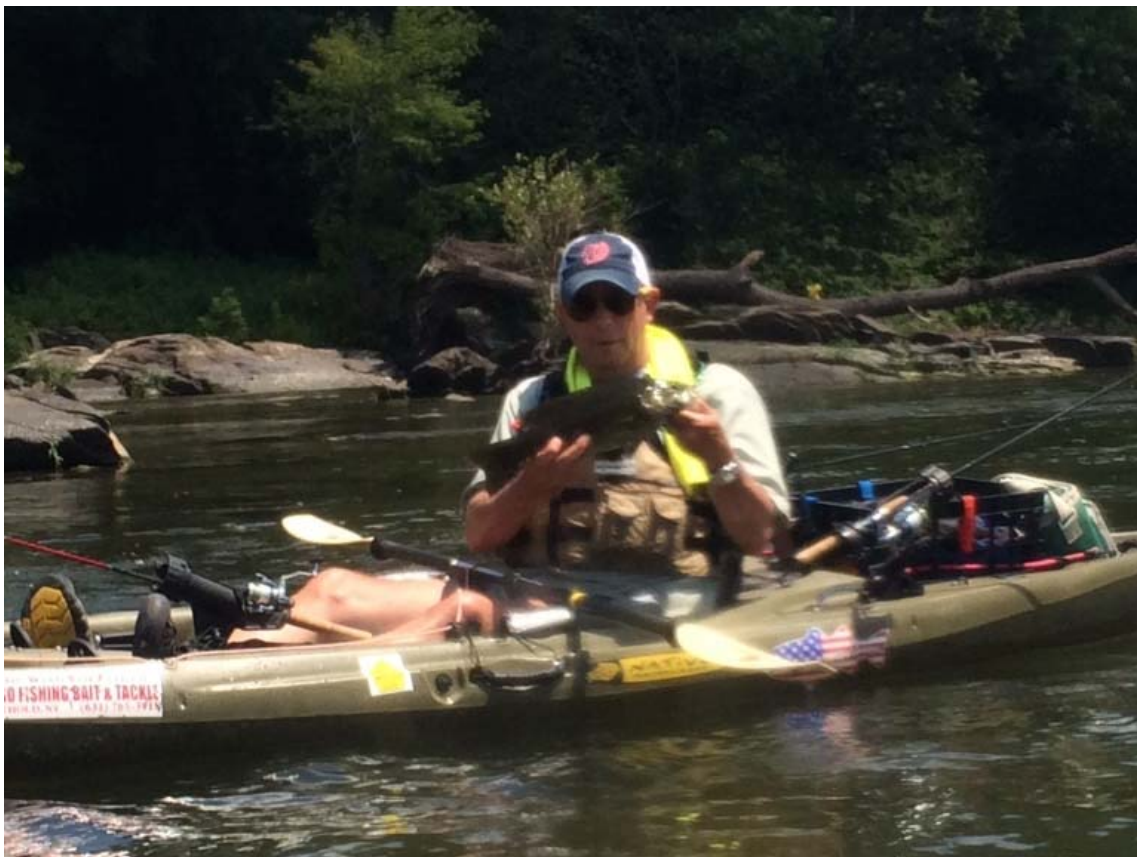
PRSC Trip – 340 Bridge to Brunswick

By Terry Cooney and Jamie Gold

On Saturday, July 25, ten fellow members of PRSC did a club trip on the Potomac River from the Rte 340 Bridge down to Brunswick Campground. The trip was led by Jamie Gold, and the other participants were Wallace Harvey, Terry Cooney, Steve Kim, Jack Turner, Luke Frazza, Herschel Finch, Marty Burkard, and John and Quinn Lipetz. Doing this trip with a large group is a challenge because there is very limited parking at the Rte 340 Bridge, known as the Potomac Wayside. So I called the Brunswick Campground, located just below Brunswick, MD on the Potomac, and arranged for them to shuttle us to the put-in.

Overall the morning was pretty slow and frustrating, with relatively few fish caught by the party. This was a surprise as this is my favorite section on the Potomac River and usually loaded with hungry fish. However, things improved dramatically for the rest of the afternoon.

Below are comments from some of the fishermen on the trip.



Terry Cooney with a very nice Potomac River smallmouth.

Terry Cooney - I know Jamie was probably frustrated by a start that was a little slow but it may have helped make the day. The afternoon top water bite was phenomenal. Two thirds to three quarters of my fish came after lunch. After lunch I switched to a small Case fluke, green with red fleck, and started nailing them (circle hooked thru the nose - no weight), then I switched to a Zoom Super Fluke Jr., in Albino, and the magic continued or even increased. I counted 38 (one Blue Gill) which included a 17," 3-15's and several 14's. One of the 15's came below the Brunswick Bridge. I caught the 17 in the rapids below the Class 2 and dragged it thru the Class I water beneath it backwards, with the line wrapped around my freakin anchor rope! We managed to get ourselves straighten out before I let him loose. Geez. Marty may or may not wish to tell you about his frolic in the rapids. Now that would have been a good picture! I was using all ultra lite tackle with 6# mono.

ick Campground – July 25, 2015

Jamie Gold - Things were slow for me in the morning. Eventually, I tied on a salty sinking minnow in green pumpkin on a slider head and started to pick up fish. After lunch, I switched to a Natural colored small jacks worm....and that was the ticket. I had consistent action on that for the rest of the trip. At times I went back to the fly rod, with no success. And at the end of the trip I did throw the buzz bait for a while – with three blow ups but no fish. But I kept coming back to the jacks worm and kept catching fish. Steve tried to resist tying one on, but could no longer stand watching me catch fish. So he put one on and joined the action.

Marty Burkard - Thanks for the photo, Terry. My dip in the rapids turned out to be quite refreshing and fortunately I didn't lose any gear. Here are the photos I got of your 17" fish - sorry they're a bit blurry.

I had pretty good success with topwater - boated eight smallies and a bluegill on a 1/8 oz. buzz bait, two more (including an 18") on a firetiger Tiny Torpedo, and a few more on bubblegum-colored Zoom Super Flukes on a circle hook.

Wallace Harvey - Yep, Saturday was one of those days that one seldom forgets. I worked the dickens out of a plastic worm all morning to little to no avail. I got a lot of short strikes and fishy that only bit the worm, not the hook. Lucky for me, I ran into Marty just before lunch who said that top water was the trick. As I like poppers, I put one on and bingo! The rest of the day was filled with strikes and fish. Not every cast, but often enough to make me not take it off. Unfortunately, the best I could do was about 13 inches. However, I'll take what happened a lot better than not catching anything. Been there and done that!



Marty Burkard with a nice smallmouth of his own.

Marty with an 18" smallmouth, the big fish of the trip.



Smallmouth, Small Wa

By Herman Yam

This year's frequent and heavy rains made it often challenging, if not dangerous, to fish on the Potomac and the Shenandoah river systems. While kicking around ideas for places to fish with smallmouth bass that would recover more quickly from a strong rain, Kris Anderson suggested Lake Thompson. It was a place I once knew well. Frustrated by the unpredictable water levels of the big rivers interfering with weekend fishing, Kris and I made plans to give the oversized farm pond at the Western edge of Fauquier County a look.

Before my bass fishing skills had come around, I used to fish Lake Thompson for trout during the winter and spring. In those days, I caught no smallmouth, but heard plenty of stories about them from the official VDGIF publications and the eccentric fellow who hung out in a bellyboat in February. When John Odenkirk, VDGIF biologist, visited our club last year, I asked if the smallmouth were still there. He confirmed that they were and also spawning without any stocking help.

The lake is ten acres in surface area, fed by a spring that fills the space behind a modest and problematic earthen dam (more later) that makes up the Northeast shore. The result is cradled in a small valley among the rolling hills of the Thompson Wildlife Management Area. A path that winds around the shore allows for easy lake access in the winter when pitching Powerbait and spinners. Once the weather warms up, however, the underbrush grows in fast and thick around much of the lake, requiring bushwhacking to successfully access a handful of open shore spots. A boat would be necessary to fish the lake properly after April.

On a Sunday morning in July, Kris and I drove 40 minutes along I-66 from Centreville to Lake Thompson. After unloading his canoe, we were on the water by 8:30 AM. The sky was partly cloudy. The occasional surface activity produced by small baitfish being harassed by some manner of predator fish was an encouraging sign. We cast to these spots without success, our lures perhaps being a bit too large to be of interest. Moving on, we paddled for the only island just off the Western shore. There, we received some swats from what were likely sunfish, but nothing hooked.

The clouds thinned a bit as the sun rose, so we did the obvious thing and made for the shady Southern shore. This side has substantial weed banks reaching out into deep water and some rocks. With a slight breeze pushing the boat, we drifted along the shore. Throwing his cast into a pocket in the weeds, Kris found a fish that managed to get unbuttoned on

the way back, but looked rather brown when it jumped. Encouraged by this, we made a few more passes in the area, but to no avail. As we reached the end of the shore into the mud flats where the spring water stream fed in, I threw parallel to the weed bed and got a solid hook up on a Carolina rigged 3 inch Gulp leech. After a solid fight a 10 inch smallmouth bass was boated and released.



The Boat Launch Area.



Out Across the Lake.

aters: Lake Thompson

Shortly after, Kris followed up with a 12 inch fish on a four inch black and white swimbait. We spent most of the day repeating this drift. There were a few fish that hit but threw the hook, however we managed to boat a 10.5" fish on a Texas rigged five inch Senko and an 11" fish on a three inch green tube fished with tube head jig. We were done and off the water around 2 PM.

Smallmouth bass are present in decent numbers and lengths at Lake Thompson. The ones we caught were not particularly bulky for their length, which may be indicative of a dietary issue. The lake appears too small to support a substantial shad population and the VDGIF population sampling bears that out. One may speculate that many of the stocked trout are wiped out by humans or birds before the smallmouth bass become active, so we will likely not experience the Southern California scenario where the bass get fat on trout dinners. Most of the baitfish we saw appeared to be minnows and small sunfish. Still, there are bigger bass there, here's one of John Odenkirk with an 18" fish at the front of his 2015 report (<http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/fishing/waterbodies/reports/Thompson%20Management%20Report%202015.pdf>) on the lake, so it's worth a look if you want to fish deep water or get there early enough to fish topwater.



Kris With a Smallmouth Bass.

All of our catches and near misses happened along the South shore of the lake, which is closest to the road. The bank there is steep and shaded by tall trees, with a good mix of weeds and rocks in the water. The island might be productive earlier in the day if you fish the deeper side away from the shore. The north shore is shallow mud with overhanging brush. The only structure of interest was a deeper pool in the rough midpoint of the shore with a beaver lodge. This structure is very exposed, we fished it for an hour without anything to report. According to some photos I found online from when the water level was much lower, there is also a rock pile off this shore that would be worth looking at.

We did not work the dam area. Presumably the water is fairly deep here, but there is not much overhead coverage. The dam itself has lots of tall grass on the shore and thick emergent weeds in the water, likely limiting pressure from shore anglers. As mentioned previously, problems exist with the dam. It is 60-70 years old and not up to Commonwealth of Virginia safety regulations. No formal repair plan is in place, though VDGIF and their engineering consultants are making assessments to formulate options. Many other VDGIF lakes around the state are in similar shape. The dam also has some issues with the drainage system. The emergency drain in the lake malfunctioned and drained the lake in 2008, again in 2010 and yet again in 2012. However, the lake has been at full pool for two years and counting.



The Thompson Wildlife Management Area has several different parking areas. The one that allows lake access is most easily approached from I-66. From Northern Virginia head West until you reach exit 18 (Route 688) at Markham. Take a right and head north for about four miles. You will pass another parking area for the WMA and Naked Mountain Winery on the way to the second WMA parking area on the left. You can drive up the access road to a small launch area on the lake. Lake Thompson is stocked trout water, so between October 1 and June 15 a trout permit is required in addition to a license to fish there.

Herman With a Smallmouth Bass.

Chasing Six-Pound

Article and Photos by Bill Amshey

My high school buddy Bill Rogers and I traveled to Buffalo, New York, again this year in our quest to catch a six-pound-plus smallmouth bass in Lake Erie. Last year, we fished toward the end of May and needed winter clothes to deal with the cold winds. This year, we went the first week of June, and the weather was balmy comparatively speaking. But most important, the fishing was much hotter.

Our guide, Tim Braun, believes in getting on the water early. We met him both days at 5:30 AM; otherwise, known as zero-dark-thirty. Our first day of fishing, the weather was near perfect, with winds blowing from the southwest at about 5 mph or so and overcast skies. Tim took us out on the lake to spots he's gotten to know over his many years of fishing Lake Erie. Wherever we stopped, he always told us the depth and the makeup of the bottom; whether to expect to get snagged; and what kind of bite to expect from the fish.

What I learned from Tim was not to expect a hard hit from a Lake Erie smallie, as we would expect on the Shenandoah or Potomac Rivers. Lake Erie fish are in 25 feet to 30 feet of water, so usually all you feel is some added weight, like grass, on your line.

We settled into Tim's first hot spot by 5:45, and when I took the time to check my watch at 6:15, I had already landed three bruisers. Tim positioned the boat so the wind would carry us over his hot spots and rigged us up with green with black/purple fleck tubes. In 7 hours of fishing that day, Bill, Tim, and I each

caught about twenty smallies apiece, all in the 3.5-pound class or better.

Tim put my big fish at 5 pounds 6 ounces.

While I have had days where I caught more fish, I have never had a day where every fish was a tank.

Bill Amshey's 5-pound, 6-ounce tank. (Obviously too early to smile!)



Smallmouth Bass



The smallest fish Bill caught on Lake Erie.

The next day, the weather changed dramatically. The winds were blowing at 20-plus mph from the northeast, keeping us off the main lake. We stayed inside the Buffalo harbor seawalls, where we fished the Niagara River. Tim again positioned the boat so we would take advantage of the wind and the current to get the best drifts in productive areas. Again, we each caught about 20 fish apiece. While not as large as on the main part of the lake, they fought and jumped more like river fish. The smallest fish I caught was in the 2-pound category, but he probably was the best fighter of the trip.

I was having such success with Tim's tubes that I didn't

really try anything else. My buddy Bill fished a drop shot rig with a green pumpkin/purple 4-inch Roboworm on a 1/0 hook, a creature bait, and a Rattle Trap with little success.

Capt. Tim Braun is a no frills guide (bring your own lunch), but he definitely puts you on fish. He can be reached at Braun's Outdoors Bass Charters & Guide Service. He fishes Lakes Erie and Ontario and the Niagara River. In addition to smallmouth, he'll take you for walleye and perch trips, too.

Contact info:

WWW.BRAUNSOUTDOORS.COM,
BIGBASSTMB@ROADRUNNER.COM,
716-837-5649 (home), or 716-860-5564 (cell).

Tim suggests that the best time of year to fish Lake Erie is mid-May until late June. He says that's "trophy time." Late September until late October is another good target time. July through August is also good fishing, and the weather is stable.

Bill Rogers with a 4-pounder.



Three Days, Three Ri

Article and Photos by Bill Amshey

Over the winter, Jamie Gold and I received an invitation from sports writer Bruce Ingram to fish three rivers in three days. Bruce planned a trip to the New, Maury, and James Rivers. Jamie and I of course quickly accepted, but had to patiently wait through the long winter and spring before Bruce finished up his classes at Botetourt County High School. Bruce's home in Botetourt County, named after Lord Botetourt, a popular Virginia Colony governor, put us within easy reach of all three rivers.

The afternoon we arrived, Bruce planned a late afternoon, early evening float from the put-in just below Claytor Lake to the take-out at Radford. The New River is well known for a good evening bite. This would be a 4- to 5-hour float depending on how hard we fished. There are some riffles on this float, but really no significant water obstacles. Bruce's gracious wife, Elaine, fixed us up with roasted venison sandwiches and off we went.

We threw just about everything that evening short of the kitchen sink: Bruce's favorite poppers by Anthony Hipps of Lexington, North Carolina; Jamie's chartreuse Walt's poppers and Sneaky Pete's, Clouser minnows in various colors, Chuck Kraft clawdads, Senkos, and other plastics; and my Senko's, Case plastics, broken back Rapalas, and my go-to red Bandit crawdad imitator. Not much worked. The best we can say is that we didn't get skunked.



The Maury River hemmed in by overhanging trees.

Early the next morning, we set off for the Maury River, which Bruce said was a bit low for this time of year. The float we agreed to was from the Jordan's Point Park in Lexington to Ben Salem Wayside, a full-day float. The Maury River

has to be one of the prettiest and cleanest rivers I have ever fished. In many places it is hemmed in by high rock walls and overhanging hardwood trees. There are no chicken farms along its 43-mile length, and thus there have been no fish kills like those that have plagued several other rivers in Virginia.

I found the river fairly narrow and shallow, no more than 3 feet deep in most places with occasional deep holes. Our float included Class I and II rapids and lots of long riffles. Amazingly, we saw only one other fisherman the entire day, and even more amazingly he turned out to be a distant, unknown relative of Bruce's. Now, what are the odds!



Jamie and Bruce fly-fishing the Maury riffles.

vers & One Life Vest

The fishing again proved to be slow. We attributed it to the crystal-clear water and the bright blue skies. I had some luck on a small Yamamoto shad-shape plastic jerkbait. Jamie and Bruce worked their fly rods with some success. While we all caught fish, we didn't pull in any that would give us big-fish bragging rights.

Meanwhile, I was having problems in my sit-on-top kayak navigating the boney Maury waters. I am sure that my fishing buddies were as frustrated as I was, as I proceeded to get hung up on virtually every riffle and stretch of whitewater we came upon. At the last significant stretch of whitewater, I got hung up badly on a ledge and just could not get freed. When I did, the kayak and I parted ways, with me hanging on to a side handle. Jamie was the first to try and stop my kayak and me as I was pushed through the rapid. Bruce did catch one end of my kayak and pulled me into calmer water. Thank goodness, as the rocks ahead really would have hurt.

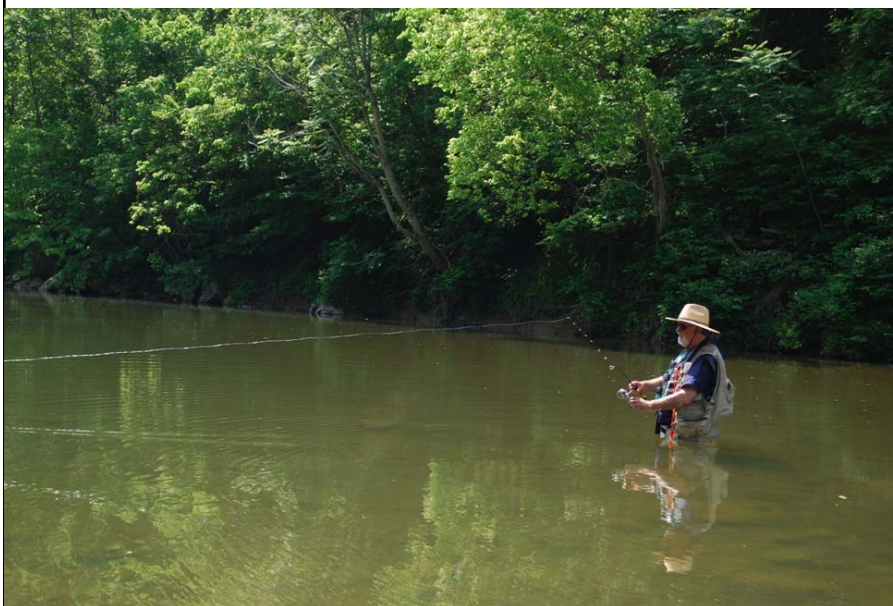


Some faster water on the Maury.

From a safety perspective, I was wearing an old-fashioned big and bulky life vest, which I have to confess that I do not usually do. The vest helped me keep my head above water, and it also protected my upper body from a lot of hard hits on rocks. I had bruises up and down my arms and legs, but none in between. And thanks to watching a safety YouTube video by former PRSC president Jeff Little (www.tightlinejunkiejournal.pivotshare.com) I was wearing long pants that day that protected me from numerous scrapes and cuts, suffering only one cut on my left ankle.

At the take-out, we discovered the reason I looked so inept. My kayak had developed a leak in the seam and had taken on several gallons of water. I'm not exactly a small guy, so my kayak already sits pretty low, but the added weight of the water turned me into a catastrophe waiting to happen, which it did that day on the Maury.

The next day, Bruce and Jamie fished the short Horseshoe Bend to Springwood float on the James River. Jamie was hoping to tie up with a musky on this float, which has a long series of deep pools and long riffles. But Jamie had to settle with some rock bass and Bruce with some smallies caught on a fly.



In our three days of fishing, we could not find any consistent success with anything. The overall best baits were the soft plastics. Bruce's and Jamie's fly rods were unproductive on all flies.

While I was sore and limping at the end of our three days on three rivers, the one life vest saved my butt, and I have a much deeper respect for water safety. We all know stories of fishermen who weren't quite so lucky. I urge all readers to remember to be safe when out fishing.

Bill Amshey working some big rock structure.

You Can Make A Difference

From Ernie Rojas

It's easy!! If you agree with the below letter, just email e-mail the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Senior Naturalist, John Page Williams (jpwilliams@cbf.org) with the subject line:

Anglers for Clean Water.

Include your name and home town.

Thank you for your help!

July XX, 2015

Governor Terry McAuliffe Chairman, Executive Council Patrick Henry Building 1111 East Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe and Members of the Chesapeake Executive Council:

As you approach the 2017 mid-point assessment for the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint, we the following Bay anglers write to express our concerns about disappointing overall progress toward the Blueprint's pollution-reduction targets. Clean water and healthy fish habitat are what we live and breathe.

As members of the Chesapeake Executive Council, you have accepted responsibility for the progress--or lack of it--made toward the Blueprint goals. When the Council's members signed the new Bay Watershed Agreement in 2014, you reaffirmed your commitment to the Blueprint's water quality goals, including having programs and practices in place to achieve 60 percent of the nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reductions by 2017 and 100 percent in place by 2025.

We celebrate the success of some states in some sectors to reduce polluted runoff; however, at our current pace, Bay-wide efforts to reduce total nitrogen will miss the 2017 target by more than 50 percent. We can and must accelerate our efforts in order to achieve a truly healthy Chesapeake.

Only your leadership can get the Blueprint back on track. If not, this latest attempt to restore water quality throughout the watershed will be relegated by history to the already too-long list of missed deadlines and cleanup failures.

We applaud the magnificent conservation efforts that many farmers have made over the past thirty years, but more of the Chesapeake watershed's acreage is now in agricultural production (25 per cent) than any other land use. To reduce the impacts of intense food production, more farmers must participate in these clean water programs.

For the Chesapeake and its tributary creeks, streams, and rivers to regain true health, the region needs the Executive Council as a whole to exert its leadership. Thus we respectfully urge you, the Council's members, to take strong action in support of the Blueprint, including investing more federal resources, particularly through USDA, to help Pennsylvania accelerate reductions. We ask not only for ourselves but for our children and all that will follow us onto the great waters of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. We want them to know the joys that we have known through fishing in this National Treasure.

Tight lines,

[John Doe, Williamsburg, VA]

Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

Seems like the last month or so there are forces at work that seemed determined to use our waterways as sewers and dumping grounds for anything they want to get rid of. West Virginia seemed to lead off with a spill in Elk Creek, a tributary of the Kanaha River of a chemical called Crude MCHM, which is used to clean up mined coal of surface impurities before being loaded and shipped led the way last month. From what I can find out, not a lot is known about this chemical's toxicity beyond the usual tests that were made so an MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) sheet could be filled out for it. One of my first questions about the situation was when I saw the photos of the facility where the leak occurred; who permits a facility of this type to be built within mere feet of a river that is used as a source of drinking water? I had the same questions when I saw pictures of the coal ash release into the Dan River in North Carolina. WHY would the state allow a huge power generating station to build coal ash waste ponds right next to a major waterway that's used for drinking water? And now, just in the last week, our own Potomac Riverkeeper has had to file suit in Federal court against the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission for continued violation of their discharge permits for a number of years. Legal action is always a last resort for any environmental group or agency, it's expensive and time consuming. But sometimes it's necessary. And this time, it's apparently so serious a matter that the FBI has stepped in and demanded files, records, and other information on this case from the WSSC for their own federal investigation.

At some point you have to ask yourself why do these companies, and utilities, think they can get away with it? What makes them believe that they can pollute our waterways and foul our drinking water with no consequences, and why do they do it seemingly year after year?

The ultimate answer is *we* allow them to. We have abdicated our responsibility as citizens and allowed our elected officials to make these decisions for us. We have allowed our officials to become corrupted by lobbyists and the pull of easy money in the form of campaign contributions, donations to favorite 'charities' and the promise of "good jobs for their constituents" if they only allow a variance in the permit regulations or give them a 10 year break in property taxes or some other accommodation. I have seen this process reenacted time and time again, multiple times even out here in my small formerly rural county. I suspect the entire shopping complex that was built at the intersection of RT 522 and I-66 was built with the help of permit and environmental variances that various developers received from a compliant county council.

I also suspect most of us have no clue as to how our local permitting processes work. We count on our county and city managers to hire competent people in the form of municipal managers and development experts at planning commissions to do this for us.

Maybe it's time to start looking at what our environmental issues might be before that power plant or chemical storage plant is erected down by the river or that shopping center or housing development is laid out over top of a wetland.

Having done a little study into how our local permitting process works out here in Warren Co. for a major housing development, or shopping center, I've come to the conclusion it's designed so that the most number of people have to sign off on every phase of the process. From the sale of the land, to the permitting, the tax structure, to the final approvals, it seems like half the people in local government have to sign off on them. The process is long (or shockingly short depending...) and purposely designed in my opinion to be convoluted, confusing and frustrating to the average person. I suspect a number of rather wealthy individuals (no..I know...but that's another story) in this county have become that way by helping to grease the wheels of this process over the decades.

So I've come to a decision to attend more town and county council meetings where permitting issues are being discussed. Most counties publish a public schedule of these meetings and the vast majority are open to the public. Sadly I have learned that 'the public' rarely shows up, let alone the local press for these meetings and local officials wave a lot of discussion as a result. I learned a long time ago raising kids...that certain activities need to be monitored carefully to prevent improper use, unsafe practices and sneaky collaboration among peers. And when you stop paying attention...stuff gets broken.

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This is my favorite picture for July. PRSC member Jed Woodill was fishing down on Lake Chickahominy with Greg Cronin. They landed 15 fish over 16 hours on the water, including 12 bass, 2 Perch and a pike. He only landed three of the bass but one of them was this beauty. He said, "I know it is the wrong species but at this stage I am not picky. It measured 19.25 inches and 3.5 lbs.



2015 Contest Results

August 2015 Report By Jack Cook

Finally we have some action in the fishing contest. Randy Chandler is the only member with more than one total. Randy's 3 section total is 224". If you remember, Bill Pearl won the William Shriver Award last year with only 2 sections. When Randy called in his results he said, "Bill Pearl thought he was such hot (I'll substitute the word "stuff"), winning with only a two section total. This year I intend to really kick his (substitute again) butt!"

When I told Bill about Randy's remark he said, "There is a long way to go in this contest. We'll see who is holding the trophy in November."

Believe me, there is no love lost between Randy and Bill.

Two of our members rented a boat for a day of fishing on the Chesapeake Bay. When it was time to return the boat, they were not in. So the dock master took a bullhorn and shouted, "Boat 91, please return." The marina owner overheard him and said, "We don't have a boat 91." The dock master paused, looked back at the water and called again, "Boat #16, is there a problem?"

2015 Results

Section 1, Biggest Fish:	Randy Chandler, 16"
Section 1, Best 5 Fish:	Randy Chandler, 76"
Section 2, Biggest Fish:	Randy Chandler, 20"
Section 2, Best 5 Fish:	Randy Chandler, 76"
Section 3, Biggest Fish:	Wayne Tate, 19.5"
Section 3, Best 5 Fish:	Bill Pearl, 87.5"
Largest on Fly:	Wayne Tate, 19.5"
Best 5 Fish on Fly:	Randy Chandler, 60"
New Member:	
Grover Cleveland Contest:	Wayne Tate, 19.5"
William Shriver Award:	Randy Chandler, 224"

For contest rules and information, visit
<http://www.prsc.org/fishing-contest/>

The Potomac River Smallmouth Club was founded in 1988 as a non-profit recreational club in accordance with IRS section 501(c)(7). Dues are \$40/year. Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) at the Vienna Volunteer Firehouse. Club by-laws and member rosters are published once a year and available during meetings or upon request. The Club newsletter, "The Buzz", is emailed to all members prior to each month's meeting and is available at local fishing/tackle shops. Articles, photographs and general information relating to smallmouth bass fishing are solicited. The Buzz reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. Observations, conclusions and opinions expressed in The Buzz are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the club, its officers, or the editor. All materials submitted become the property of the club. Every effort will be made to return photographs at the monthly meetings, however the printing process occasionally results in the destruction of a photograph. Send copies and make sure YOU have the negative.