



# The Buzz

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Volume 26, Issue 7

July 31, 2013

## Bruce Ingram - Outdoorsman

### Upcoming Items

**PRSC Meeting**  
August 28, 2013

**Shenandoah River Events**  
Summer 2013

**Potomac Cons.**  
August 2013

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Author, sportsman, photographer and conservationist Bruce Ingram will discuss his wealth of knowledge about fishing for smallmouth bass on the James, New, Shenandoah, and other of our favorite Virginia rivers at the PRSC Club meeting on July 31. When not teaching English in the Botetourt County, Virginia, school system, Bruce spends much of his time fishing, hunting, birding, and enjoying the great outdoors.

He has been an outdoor writer/photographer since 1983. His extensive knowledge is reflected in the many books he has published, including *James River Guide*, *New River Guide*, and *Shenandoah/Rappahannock Rivers Guide*. Bruce's latest book, *Fly and Spin Fishing for River Smallmouths*, covers how to catch smallmouths on fly and spinning rods throughout the year, plus such topics as conservation easements, riparian zone creation/protection, taking kids fishing, canoe camping, birding by canoe, and much more.

Bruce's books on the James, New, and Shenandoah/Rappahannock cover all float trips available on these rivers, plus information on access points, rapids, fishing hot spots, and trip planning. Basically, paragraph by paragraph, mile by mile, Bruce takes you on a trip down these rivers, so that when you go on your own trips, you will have a safe, productive fishing experience. Many of our Club members have copies of Bruce's books, which he will be selling and autographing at the July meeting.

Bruce has also sold some 2,100 articles to magazines and some 2,400 photos. He regularly writes for such magazines as *Virginia Wildlife*, *Wildlife in North Carolina*, *White-tail Times*, *Turkey Country*, *Turkey & Turkey Hunting*, *Game and Fish Publications*, and many others. The Outdoor Writers Association of America has honored Bruce with six writing awards.

You can learn more about Bruce Ingram, as well as purchase his books, by visiting [bruceingramoutdoors@gmail.com](http://bruceingramoutdoors@gmail.com).

Hope you can attend the July meeting, which promises to be very informative.

Speaker Bruce Ingram with a nice river smallie.



Club Executive Board	<h1>Upcoming Items</h1>
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# Shenandoah River Rodeo

By Herschel Finch and Jamie Gold

On Saturday, July 13, Shenandoah Riverkeeper (and former PRSC President) Jeff Kelble hosted his 6th annual Shenandoah River Rodeo. We've had a great time at these events in the past, and this one did not disappoint.

This event was originally scheduled to be held at the Low Water Bridge Campground on the Shenandoah River. However, with the rain that week, the low water bridge was in fact the underwater bridge. So the location was changed to the Harpers Ferry Adventure Center (<http://harpersferryadventurecenter.com/>). This was our first time there, and it is a really beautiful spot and turned out to be a great venue for this event. In October the Adventure Center will be hosting a fly fishing event that should be a lot of fun.

During the day, attendees were on the water fishing with guides in the fishing contest. The plug of water from the rains did not hit this area until about 1pm, and apparently the fishing was great before the water arrived.

The evening events were highlighted by great BBQ, live bluegrass music by Shenandoah Alley, and a raffle of various prizes. Jamie won a heavy duty rain suit, so he is now ready for the next hurricane to hit. We both caught up with some old friends and made some new ones. All in all a great event.



# A Fishing/Sampling Trip w

Article and Photos by Herschel Finch

*A minor preface:*

*Having written this back in May, some of my conclusions, observations and projections are moot at this point. With all the excess rain and high water events we've experienced in the intervening months, no one expects this year's spawn to have actually survived. I'm afraid the 2013 spawn is a complete washout.*

Given the recent reports we've had of fish with lesions and a few dead smallies here and there on both forks, our concern for what's happening on the Shenandoah is at Defcon 5 right now. And Jeff Kelble weighed in on a thread on Riversmalies.com, the online forum, recently about these disturbing reports. At the end of his comments Jeff mentioned that he and Brenden, a six month employee who is doing an algae study for the Potomac Riverkeeper, were going to do a sampling trip high up on the South Fork of the 'Doah near Elkton. His last line of his post was something like: "If anyone wants to join us I have an empty seat up front in the raft and could really use someone to help me fish for some samples for the USGS lab in West Virginia." That's all I needed to hear. I got on the phone to Jeff immediately and told him I was ready. My next stop was my boss' office to tell him I'd be out the next day. Luckily I have a lot of vacation time I've earned over 30 years of employment and a very understanding boss, as well as a corporate management that supports employees' volunteer work outside of work, especially when that work benefits the community at large. I arranged to meet Jeff at the Front Royal commuter lot at 6:00 am I followed Jeff in the truck to Elkton down I-66 to Harrisonburg and then east to Elkton. We set the shuttle and were on the water by 8:00am.



We were only going to collect samples (and fish) until about 1:00 pm so Jeff brought along his small outboard for the raft so we could blow through a couple of the long pools that are up there on that float. This would allow us to take out early, retrieve the vehicles and make the two and a half hour trip back north up I-81 to the USGS lab in West Virginia.

# with Jeff Kelble—May 2013



Our first stop was just below the first long ledge area as this was a prime spawning area and Jeff wanted water samples from next to an active spawn bed...and boy did we find active beds. For the rest of the day, every spawning area we checked had active beds with clouds of black fry being guarded by aggressive male smallmouth. I think it bodes well for the 2013 spawn (*editor's note: please see the preface to this article*). And the fishing was actually pretty good. Jeff and I had no problem catching fish on a pretty steady basis all morning. Meanwhile, Brendan was going chest-deep getting water samples and obtaining algae samples by scraping various rocks he pulled up off the bottom.

It was surprisingly hard to catch fish with lesions. We were hoping to get about two dozen or so, but in the end we collected only about fifteen fish that displayed lesions or the beginning of lesions. We were running late by the time we reached the 4.5 mile point of the float, so we had to motor out in order to get loaded up and up to the lab before it got too late.

At the lab, Jeff and Brendan went to work labeling bottles and plastic bags while the lab technicians, directed by Dr. Deborah Iwanowicz, dissected and removed gonads, livers, gill parts and dissected the individual lesions they found on the fish. The various parts were included in separate specimen bags and accompanied the fillets that Jeff was busily providing them after the technicians got done with their work.



individual lesions they found on the fish. The various parts were included in separate specimen bags and accompanied the fillets that Jeff was busily providing them after the technicians got done with their work.

# Sampling Trip cont'd

While all that was going on, I was standing back watching the process. Not being schooled in the proper protocols for preparing the samples, all I could do was watch. So while I was standing there, twiddling my thumbs for the most part, one of the director/managers, Kay Briggs, came down to see who was burning the midnight oil (it was actually only about 6:30 pm at that point) in the labs. She came over to find out who this strange fisherman-type person was in her lab. After I told her who I was and what my part in all this was, she gave me a real treat. She told me there was something in the other end of the building I might be interested in. So, after walking to the other side of the building and going through a code-locked door, Kay told me to go over and look into a very large, twelve foot diameter tank with a net over it.



Inside the tank were about fifteen or so full-grown adult male Snakeheads!! They were a dark, shiny brown with those very distinct markings, and actually were quite beautiful. In another tank was about the same number of female Snakeheads. The females were slightly smaller, and not as dark, having an almost yellowish color to them. After I got my jaw back up off the floor, she explained why they were there. John Odenkirk (of course) had shocked these critters up for the lab early in the year for their research purposes. They don't generally advertise they have them there for obvious reasons. Folks tend to panic over these things. But at this point, some eleven years after their discovery in the region, they've become part of the ecosystem. They're here, they're not going away, and the minuscule number of Snakeheads that anglers and bow-hunters manage to bag isn't going to make a very big difference in the population. So they need to know everything they can about these fish: how they live, what they eat, how and when they breed, what diseases are they prone to, and most importantly, what diseases they carry.

All in all I learned more on this particular trip than I have in a very long time. It almost felt like a field trip I remember from high school, but way more interesting than a grocery store distribution warehouse or touring the governor's mansion! IF you ever get a chance to go up to the USGS Fisheries Health Lab in Leetown, West Virginia, you should go.

At this point, it'll be a while before we hear anything about what the samples can tell us about what's going on with our current situation in the river. But in the meantime rest assured that from what we saw that day, the smallmouth spawn is a pretty good one, and there's some pretty cool folks up in WVA doing some pretty important work for us. I feel like my tax dollars are well spent up there.



# July 4th Smallmouth Trip

By Ernie Rojas and Jamie Gold

Five of us (Ernie, Jamie, Miguel, Travis and Bob) met up at 6 am on the Fourth of July for a morning fishing trip to Algonkian Park. For avid fishermen like us, what better way to start our Independence Day celebrations than doing what we love to do? We started early so we could get on and off the water before the heat of the day set in...and it was a gorgeous morning.

Some of the guys went north from the boat ramp, while others headed south, to find fish.

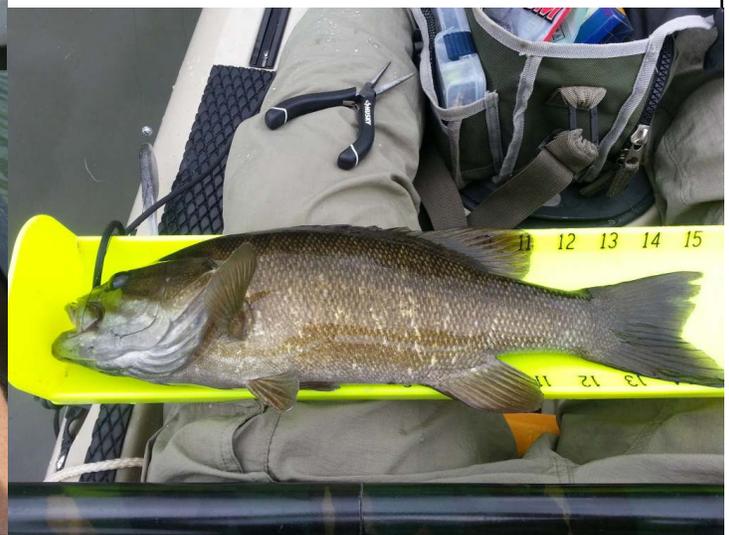
Ernie spent the first hour trying to figure out why his Hobie pedals were not working. He had floated a half mile before he could even fix it. So he had to paddle back to the ramp...with a short paddle! He finally reached Bob and was cussin' the Hobie out....ready to put a For Sale sign on it. Bob walked Ernie through checking out the boat and that is when they realized that Ernie did not have the pedals locked in properly. Oops! Fixed!

While there, Bob hooked into a feisty smallmouth.



Once Ernie was fixed up, he went to the other side of the island and caught his first one...a teeny LMB! Ernie then caught four more smallies, all were less than 12".

At 10:45 Ernie saw the guys coming back to the ramp so he headed back as well. Right in front of the ramp, Ernie caught his biggest...a 13 inch smallie! We were done by 11 and beat the Jet Skis today. Jamie caught 20+ fish including a 20" channel cat....all on a fly! Miguel caught a bunch including a 15" smallie. Bob had over 20. No report from Travis as he was still fishing when we left!



# Michigan Lake Fishing

Article and Photos by Jay Eiche

As the photos I sent along with this article show, the inland lakes of Michigan can produce some big smallies. We fished both Burt and Mullet Lake near the top of the lower peninsula of Michigan from 14-16 June 2013. I met a high school friend, John Irwin, at his house in Grand Rapids and drove up to fish with his guide buddy, Leo Wright. Leo guides for a number of species, but is a smallie lover, as is evidenced by his many trips to Virginia to fish with folks like Chuck Kraft and the Kovach boys. His website has all the contact information you should need to schedule your own Michigan smallie trip:

<http://leowrightguideservice.com/>

John and I had talked about fishing together for years, but busy lives and long distances had kept it to just that – talk. A couple of summer’s ago now, I had a serious medical condition arise and as has always been the case, John stepped up to help my wife Tanya and I through it. It was pretty ugly for a time and it seemed as if all my friends were doctors. Things are better now, but different. One of my many blessings is that my wife grew up with a father who was a serious fisherman. She decided that she’d heard enough about all this fishing talk, and conspired with John’s wife to set up this fishing trip with John to thank him for all he’d done



during those dark days.

So that ended up being a trip to Indiana to visit my folks, drop off our Lab Ally for an extended visit and then on to our “lake fishing with Leo.” Drive time to Frankfort, Indiana is about twelve hours (600 miles), then another four hours to Grand Rapids, and another four hours to Indian River where we had a cabin rented. Indian River is your typical north woods lake town – lots of pine paneling, stuffed animals, and platter portions at dinner, fudge and ice cream du jour for dessert. Temps were great, mosquitoes bearable and spectacular views.

# Michigan Lake Fishing cont'd

Leo picked us up at 7:30 am each morning with his East Coast Flats Skiff and off we headed to the nearby lakes. Leo's boat does double duty as he also guides in Florida during some of the winter months. The boat has an extremely clean deck that is perfect for the fly fisherman, along with casting platforms that I sat on, as the lakes seldom were calm enough for me to want to get up on them. We fished in 10-15 feet of water for the most part, looking for spawning smallies.

Unlike my trips to Erie fishing in May for spawning lake smallies, these fish didn't seem to have any interest in tubes, or jig & pigs dragged along the bottom. We caught the majority of the fish on



bubblegum superflukes, with most of the rest coming on crankbaits or spinnerbaits. John broke out the fly rod a few times, but that didn't seem to be the ticket either, catching only a few fish. Fishing the first day on Burt Lake produced the most and biggest fish with a number at 5lbs, or close to that. Fishing the second day on Mullet Lake was fewer and smaller, while on the last day back on Burt Lake the winds blew us off the water. It appears that the forecasted 6-8 mph winds were only off by about 20 mph. Heaving 1/2 oz spinnerbaits into

a gale is generally not most fishermen's idea of ideal conditions.

Good times with great friends – we drank a few beers, told a few lies, and solved most of the world's problems. It doesn't get much better than that. Expect to see John and Leo back this way to chase a few Virginia smallies sometime soon. My thanks to Tanya for setting all this up, to Leo for taking us out and putting us on some great fish, and to John for being there when we needed you. Love ya John boy.



# PRSC On the Water

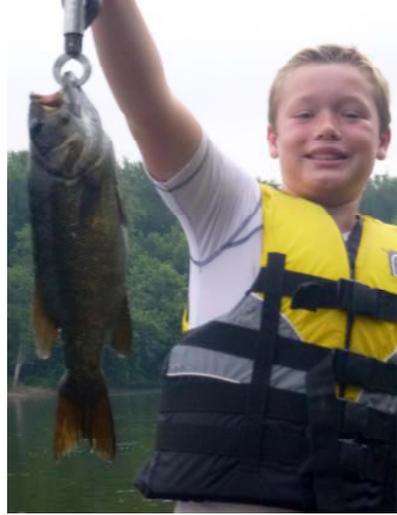
By: Jamie Gold

Members of PRSC have been busy this past month catching and photographing some awesome fish. Enjoy, and feel free to submit pictures of fish that you've caught for next month's Buzz.

Nice Potomac River Smallmouth.



Another good Potomac River Smallmouth.



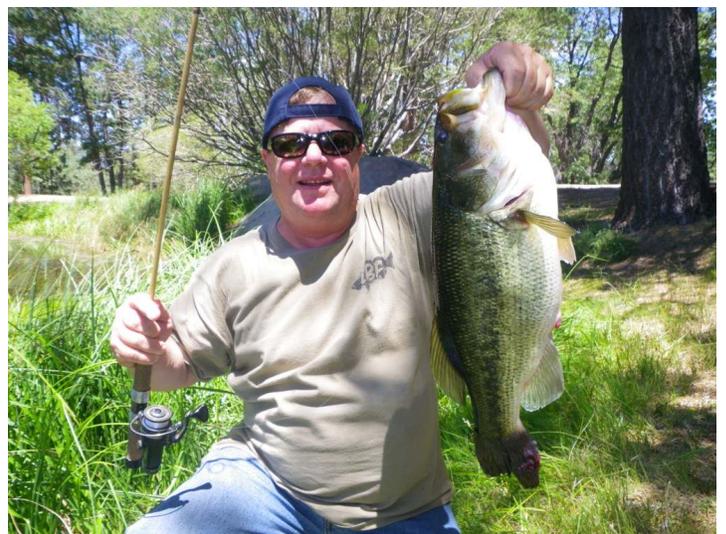
Steve Adams. Photo by Jamie Gold.

James Zampetti. Photo by Chris Schaupp.

A Potomac River Catfish.



Pic of a Monster California Largemouth.



Sue Zampetti. Photo by Chris Schaupp.

George Thurston. Photo by unknown.

Good Healthy Smallmouth.

Jeff Kelble Going to Collect Some Samples.



Caught and Photographed by Ernie Rojas.

Jeff Kelble. Photo by Herschel Finch.

16.5" Potomac Smallmouth.

Ready to Launch for Another Great Trip.



Herschel Finch. Photo by Jamie Gold.

Photo by Ernie Rojas.

Spectacular View of the Potomac River.

15" Potomac River Special.



Photo by Herschel Finch.

Ernie's friend Miguel. Photo by Ernie Rojas.

# California Bassin' Adventure

By George Thurston

For years, my high school buddy has been telling me about a private lake in California that holds huge largemouth bass. Rumor has it that the bass are bigger than 20 lbs. I have been telling my buddy that he needs to fish that lake with a Senko, but my buddy's been in denial because he knew of no one that ever caught a fish on that, let alone someone catching it with an artificial bait. Since California has a feeding season that lasts most of the year, I can believe this. I go to California to visit my Dad a couple times a year, so this month I decided to add a few extra days onto my trip and visit my buddy.

Typically my buddy and I fish a big lake at 7,000 feet above sea level for trout. We use Luhr Jenson lake trolling spoons with a leader and a night crawler at the end. Usually we slay them with this technique. We hit the lake on the Fourth of July but the lake traffic was so high from recreational boaters that we decided trolling for trout was not going to be productive. My buddy started talking about this private lake and I said let's try it.

We stopped at the local tackle shop and found a guy that worked there that's known my buddy since he was knee high to a grass hopper. We told him that we were interested in chasing bass, and I asked him what is the best color Senko to use. He said that the dragon flies are thick now, so we should use a smoked root beer color with orange and green flakes. I bought a couple packs of 4" Senkos in that color and a couple packs of 1/0 gamakatsu EWG hooks. The tackle store guy told me I needed 5/0 hooks and 5" Senkos, but I'm confident with the rig I chose so went with that.

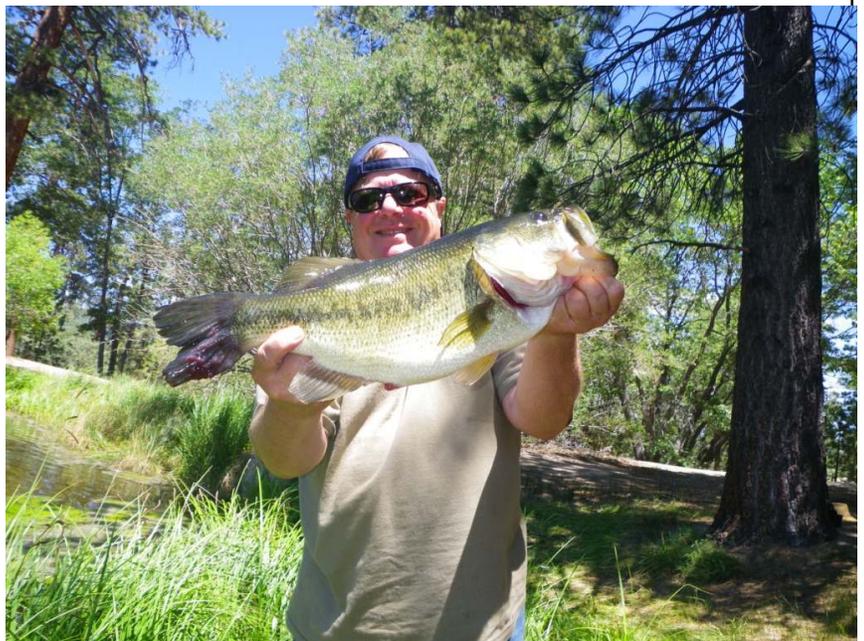
I went through my buddy's fishing gear and realized it was in sad shape. I selected the longest rod he had, which was a one piece fiberglass rod with a Tennessee handle and rings. I took his Shakespeare spinning reel, which sounded like a 2-stroke weed whacker when I reeled it. I took the reel apart, cleaned it, and lightly lubed it with some old reel lube and line. The line was a new box of 6 lbs. test Stren blue line. New is relative, since the line was probably purchased when we were in high school, but it was kept in a drawer out of the light, and the mountains are very dry with little humidity. I gave the line some good yanks and it didn't break.

The private lake's at about 8,000 feet above sea level and requires a healthy uphill hike to get there. I'm not used to the altitude, so was winded by the time we got up there. The lake was beautiful, sitting right in the middle of pine trees and huge granite stones. His nine year old son started throwing night crawlers on a bobber and hooked up with nice bluegills right away. I rigged up the rod and started casting with it. The fiberglass rod is very different than the high modulus graphite rods I'm used to. I started casting the Senko and fishing with a Slider lift and drop technique. The technique is to cast and let the bait sink to the bottom, then after a pause, lift slowly, and let the Senko back to the bottom. The repeat until the bait is back to shore.

On the third cast, I felt the familiar "thunk" that a big bass makes when he takes a bait. I reeled up the slack, saw the line start moving out towards the center of the lake, and then set the hook hard. I knew I had a big bass when the drag started screaming. The lake is pretty clean and free of debris, so I tried to keep the bass in the top part of the water column so she (big bass are always she's, right?) would not hide under one of the big granite boulders.

Since we had hiked in, we had no net, so as I was fighting the fish, I looked for a place to land it. I found a nice little micro cove, which was full of grass, so I brought the fish over into the cove and slowly pulled it up to the grass. As soon as the fish was out of the water, the line broke, but I was still able to grab the fish.

I have no idea how big this fish is, but she's a pig. I've caught 10# largemouth in Florida and this fish dwarfed them all. She was so heavy, my buddy's nine year old son could not pick her up without help.



After taking a few pictures, I went into the shallow part of the lake, revived the fish, and she swam off to live another day.

# Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

As you will notice at Wednesday's meeting, I'm not there. (Dry those eyes John Lipetz...I'll be back next month). Charlene and I have taken the opportunity to get away for a few days from the hustle and bustle of Front Royal (?) and head for parts, as of yet, undecided as I type this. But since I have this wonderful bully pulpit, I'll take the opportunity to lay upon you, those fabulous tidbits of wisdom I normally do before the main program or speaker:

Back on July 13<sup>th</sup>, we had our annual Shenandoah Rodeo at the Harper's Ferry Outdoor Center. This is was a VERY last minute change of venue for us due to a large slug of water coming downstream from one of the frequent storms we've been getting moving across the state this year. Personally speaking, I'm a little tired of the rain because of all this mid-summer grass-cutting, not to mention the high water events, is interfering with my fishing. Although our attendance at the Rodeo was down somewhat due to the move, we still had a great time, the guides still got to take out clients and hold the 'contest' and of course, we still got to embarrass, harass, and otherwise ridicule the winners and losers. Good music by Shenandoah Ally was also provided and the natural amphitheater seemed to enhance the quality of the music. It was by all accounts a rousing success despite the last minute adjustments we had to make. Special recognition is due (I think) for Mr. B's Barbeque in Berryville. He was new to our little shindig this year and to this southern boy who was barbeque and collard-green raised in NC, the food could NOT have been better. Well done Mr B and company! Many thanks as well, to the PRSC members who came out to support a great cause.

Now, in August we have another event coming up: The Shenandoah Riverfest. This event will contain all the usual things we have taken to expect from Jeff Kelble and the staff at Potomac/Shenandoah Riverkeeper: good food, (three different food vendors this year!) music, frolic and frivolity. But in addition, there's also education at this particular event. Many of the premier conservation and environmental protection organizations in our area will be there with displays, activities for the kids, and a chance to perhaps join them in their efforts. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy, Izaak Walton League, Friends of Andy Guest State Part, Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries are just a few of the folks coming with displays. And yes, the Potomac River Smallmouth Club will also have our fishing show display there. We'll be helping to inform the public about the Smallmouth in our rivers and perhaps gain a few members. There will also be a number of vendors selling earth-friendly arts and crafts, among other things. And let's not forget the raffles that will be held that some of our own club members have been fortunate enough to benefit from in the past.

There's also a new contest at this one, one we're hoping will become an annual event and only get bigger as we go along. There's going to be a Cardboard and Duct Tape Boat Race. This race will take place right out in front of the park. I suspect the winners will be whoever is able to keep a boat together long enough to reach the finish line. Now we're going to need volunteers to help run this race. You'll need to be IN the water to help 'rescue' anyone who needs rescuing, and snag any stray cardboard and duct tape that should end up in the river as well. The race will start about 1:00 pm and it'll all be over by 2:00 pm, I suspect. There will also be some kid games in the water as well and they will need some help to keep the kids corralled and entertained. I helped them out last year and had a ball! In addition, I'm going to need some folks to help me man the PRSC booth.

The Riverfest will start at 10:00 am on August 10<sup>th</sup> and run until 4:00 pm in the afternoon. If you can be there for any part or even ALL of that day I sure would appreciate it, and if you'd be willing to help with the boat race that would be even better. I'll be arriving about 8-8:30 to set up our booth, as well as the Warren Co. Izaak Walton League booth. If you do want to help with the boat race or anything else, please come with good sturdy river shoes, quick dry clothes, and of course, a PFD. You know...just dress like you're going fishing, that should be easy for all of us. I guarantee you'll have a great time.

If you'd like to help out, please give me a call, send me an email, text, or hit me up on FaceBook. (I'm about the most tech-savvy old guy you ever met aint I?) Seriously, this is a great time, and is shaping up to be even bigger than last year, and only get bigger from here. The local organizer folks have actually had to turn away vendors! We're almost out of room in the big picnic area!!

As my Grand-daddy use to say: "Ya'll come on...we're gonna have a BIG 'ole time!"

**PRSC**  
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This is my favorite picture that I received this month. Here is former PRSC President Jay Eiche with a simply incredible smallmouth bass he caught on a lake in Michigan. Please see the article on his trip in this month's issue for details about the trip and more pictures of some amazing fish.



# 2013 Contest Results

**July 2013 Report** By Wallace Harvey

Good Morning Sports Fans! We have another new entrant for the fishing contest for new members. Bill Szymanski did real well last month. He got a 19.5-inch large fish. And, to help things along he got 82 inches for his best five in one day. Way to go Bill. All right all you new guys to the club, get out there and beat that! The challenge is on.

I do not have any new reports for you "old guys" in the club. I know you have been out there. Lets hear from your successes and failures. I know I have had lots of times that I lost the big one. I'm sure you have had the same. It is frustrating, but it always makes for a good story.

Speaking of stories, here is a short one. As a lad fishing with my Dad, I hooked a nice "Greenie" using live shiners. I had a good fight until he hung up on a stump. While trying to get him off, Dad's line took off with another "Greenie." He landed an 8-pound bass. In all that time I kept trying to get mine off the stump. Just as Dad got his off the hook, mine came off the stump. Once landed, I had an 8.5-pound bass. That had to make for our day, as we did not catch another fish all day. But, we did not care, as we had two real good ones in the boat. Moral, don't give up. If hung up; hang on; it may come loose. What is your story?

## 2013 Results

- Section 1, Biggest Fish:** Jay Eiche, 21.5"
- Section 1, Best 5 Fish:**
- Section 2, Biggest Fish:** Bill Pearl, 18"
- Section 2, Best 5 Fish:** Bill Pearl, 80"
- Section 3, Biggest Fish:** Jack Cook, 21.5"
- Section 3, Best 5 Fish:** Bill Pearl, 92.5"
- Largest on Fly:** Wayne Tate, 20"
- New Member:** Bill Szymanski 19.5"
- William Shriver Award:** Jay Eiche, 21.5"
- Grover Cleveland Award:**

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 \$35/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.