



The Buzz

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February 26, 2014

Dusty Wissmath Speaks to PRSC

Upcoming Items

PRSC Meeting
March 26, 2014

**Rapidan TU
Fishing Show**
March 1, 2014

**NCC-TU Angling
Show**
March 9, 2014

**Potomac Conser-
vancy**
Winter-Spring 2014

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Our featured speaker for the February 26th meeting will be Dusty Wissmath, a well-known guide, author, fishing/casting teacher, fly designer and speaker. Dusty will speak about fly fishing in the Yellowstone region, where he regularly guides and teaches.

Before starting his fly fishing school and guide service in 1995, Dusty served as the lead instructor at the L.L. Bean Fly Fishing School in Virginia and taught at the Wulff School of Fly Fishing in New York. Earlier in his career, Dusty worked as a Biologist in Wyoming and East Africa. Dusty is a Federation of Fly Fishers Certified Casting Instructor and is a member of the Board of Governors of the F.F.F. Guides Association.

When he's not teaching or guiding, Dusty gives casting demonstrations and workshops at sports shows from Montana to Virginia. Our Program Director Bill Amshey saw Dusty present at an event and was inspired to go out and buy and use a fly rod. Dusty's articles and photographs can be found in sev-



eral outdoor magazines. Dusty is on the Pro Staff of the Scott Fly Rod Co., Ross Reels, and Hyde Drift Boats, and is a fly designer for Brookside Flies of Denver, Colorado. Dusty learned how to teach and how to analyze the cast from experts in the field of fly fishing such as Joan Wulff, Lefty Kreh, Macauley Lord and Floyd Franke. Please join us for this great presentation.

Club Executive Board	<h1>Upcoming Items</h1>
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Ready to Go Fishing?

By Michael Abramowitz

Soon the Cherry Blossoms will be blooming, the shad will be going upstream in the Potomac River, and it will be time to go after your favorite fish.

In order to have a fun and safe fishing season there are a number of items to get ready.

First is to get your 2014 fishing license.

The steps needed to get your fishing gear in order depend on whether you use spinning gear or fly fishing gear. Check your spinning rods to see if any of the line guides are bent from inappropriate storage since the fall. Fly rods are normally kept in the rod cases to prevent breakage. Check them for any nicks or other damage.

Inspect your reels to see if any of them need cleaning or other servicing. Perhaps they need to be lubricated, if suggested by the manufacturer. Newer reels have sealed mechanisms and do not need to be lubricated. Does the reel need new line to be spooled onto the reel? With fly fishing lines, run the lines through a moist cloth with a few drops of detergent. It is amazing how much dirt is on the line, which impedes casting.

Go through all of your lures. Do they need new hooks? Do the hooks need to be sharpened? Also use this opportunity to remove the lures you never use from your tackle box. For your fly rods, make sure that you have leaders and tippet material.

If you use a boca grip, perhaps a small drop of fine oil will make sure it opens and closes smoothly. Do the same thing if you use pliers or multi-tools for removing hooks from fish, cutting line, etc.

Safety on the water is critical. Examine your PFD to make sure it is in good working order. Make sure a whistle or some other noise making device is attached to the PFD. Take the canoe or kayak off its rack and check the hull for cracks, holes, etc. If any items on your boat have screws to secure the item, make sure the screws are tight.

Locate your paddle. If it is a two piece, are both parts together? If any straps are on the canoe or kayak, check their integrity and replace them as needed. Seals on storage compartments may need to be lubricated with a silicone-type grease. If you use a radio device or personal locator (GPS), check the batteries. Examine your emergency pack.

How do you transport your kayak or canoe? Is your roof rack secure on your vehicle? Where are the straps used to tie down your kayak onto your vehicle? Are those straps in good shape? If not, please replace them.

Finally, are you in shape for the anticipated fishing season? Here is a link from the internet for exercises to get in paddling shape. <http://www.bodyresults.com/e2paddlingexercises.asp>

If you have any books or videos on kayak and canoe safety, browse through the books and view the videos to refresh yourself about hazards on the water and to stay out of trouble.

Do you keep a fishing note book or diary? Read your notes to assist you with your fishing.

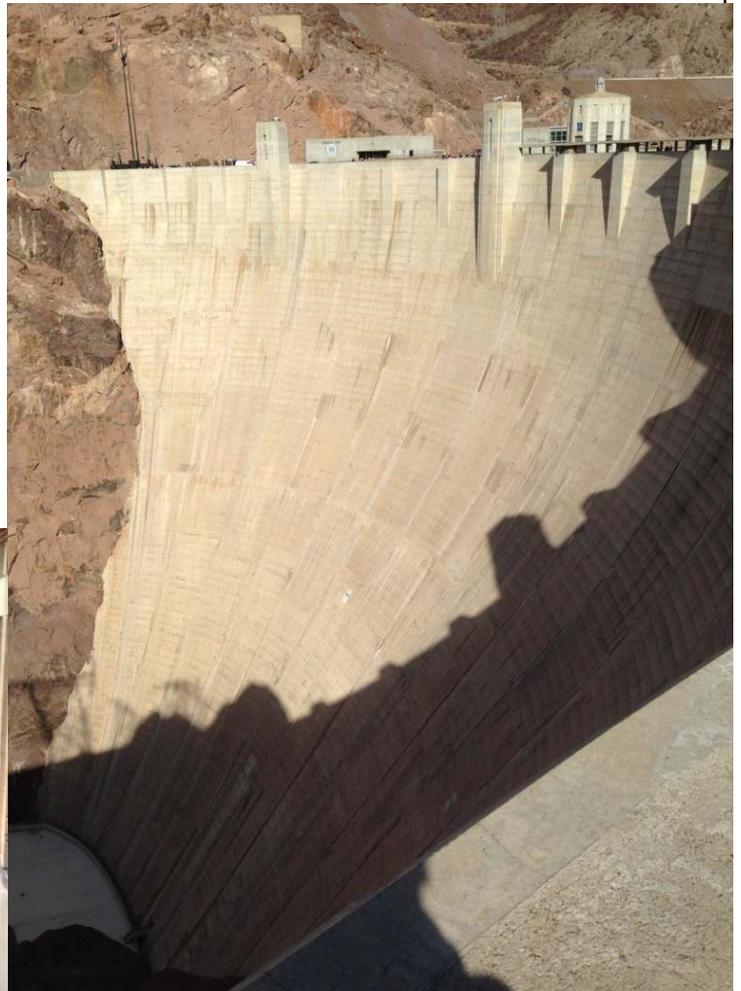
The above is just a brief guide, but will help you prepare properly for the upcoming fishing season. Tight lines and safe fishing.

Las Vegas Fishing

Article and Photos by Jamie Gold

Relax, I was chasing stripers, not..... In early February the company I work for flew me out to Las Vegas to attend a conference (I know, tough life). The conference was scheduled to end on Friday, so I decided to stay through the weekend on my own dime. After all, why rush back to the snow and cold of Northern Virginia this winter? So what does a young (young feeling anyway) single guy do in Las Vegas? Go fishing, of course.

So I booked a guided fishing trip for the afternoon of Saturday, February 8th with Captain John R. Wood, owner of Angler's Edge Guide Service, on Lake Mead (www.fish-anglersedge.com). When I contacted Capt. John he said that we would be chasing fresh water stripers using live bait. Normally he likes to use artificial swimbaits, but with the cold weather (cold for Vegas, anyway) the fish are not feeding aggressively, so live bait is the way to go. To his credit, he also warned me that the fishing in the morning is better than in the afternoon. But he was already booked that morning, and Saturday was the only day that I could go



fishing, so we went Saturday afternoon.

But that arrangement had an added bonus as I decided to take advantage of the morning to visit Hoover Dam and take a tour of the facility. I'm really glad that I did, as it is an amazing feat of human engineering and construction. Standing athwart the Colorado River at 726.4 feet tall and 1,244 ft from side to side, it is a concrete behemoth. Built between 1931 and 1935, its primary purpose was for flood control on the Colorado River and to provide fresh water to the American Southwest, especially Southern California. It also has water driven generators to produce hydroelectric power.

- Chasing Stripers



Another fortuitous byproduct of the dam is Lake Mead. At 120 miles long, covering 247 square miles, with a maximum depth of 532 feet, it is the largest reservoir in the United States in maximum water capacity. However, since the year 2000 the water level has been steadily dropping due to a prolonged drought. One can get a sense of the magnitude of the drop in the accompanying picture. The dividing line between light and dark on the canyon walls shows where the water height was at the start of the drought.

By prearrangement, I met the Captain at a public boat launch at 1pm. After the usual greetings with him and his first mate, who also turned out to be his brother, we set off in his 22ft center console boat. The first stop was in a back cove area to net some bait; in this case freshwater shad. The captain and mate started tossing out throw nets to catch

the bait. I offered to help, as I like to get involved in all aspects of the fishing adventure, but with only two nets, the captain thought it would be faster for them to do it. After netting a good number of shad, including a surprising proportion of large bait (big gizzard shad), we headed out after our main prey – the stripers.

There were a good number of boats fishing a nearby drop-off area, but none of them seemed to be catching any fish. So the captain decided to go to another spot that he knows.

When we arrived there were no other boats there. This is why I hire a guide, to take me to spots that he knows on water that I don't know...especially spots that others tend not to fish.



Las Vegas Fishing cont'd

Here's how the technique worked. The fishing line had a hook and a 3/4oz weight. After hooking the bait through the mouth, we would drop the bait straight down off the boat, no casting, to a certain depth using the counter on the reel. Then we waited and watched the rod tip. First the tip would start to dance as the bait fish got nervous with the approach of the striper. We would wait for the tip to take a big dip, which meant that the striper had grabbed the bait. Then we wound down on the line to take in the slack and set the hook. If we managed to set the hook properly in the fish, we proceeded to reel in our catch.

At first the fishing was slow, but as the afternoon wore on and the sun began to go down, the fishing picked up. Soon we were getting some decent action and started landing fish. Except for the captain, who had trouble with his hook setting that afternoon. As can be seen in the accompanying picture, we were catching schoolie sized stripers. I'd had a faint hope that we might catch



one of the really big stripers that inhabit Lake Mead, but they can be hard to find at this time of year. For the afternoon we ended up with around 15 stripers.

All-in-all it was a fun afternoon of fishing with a very good guide. The captain and his brother and I got along pretty well, and we had a fun time swapping stories (lies?) and talking fishing. While live bait is not my favorite way to catch fish, the captain told me ahead of time that this is the technique for this time of year. So I understood the situation going into the afternoon. We did catch fish (which is critical to me) and did so at a spot that no one else was fishing. During the afternoon we discussed prime times to fish Lake Mead and according to Capt. John I should go out to Lake Mead in September-October. At that time there tends to be more topwater action with breaking bait fish and working birds...just how I like to pursue stripers on the Chesapeake Bay. So if you find yourself in Vegas and you are not a gambler, or are not into the casino scene, get out to Lake Mead with Captain John for a fun fishing adventure chasing striped bass.

Reflecting on Fall 2013 Fishing

Article and Photos by John Lipetz

It has been too long since I last wrote a fishing report or article for the Buzz. I plan on changing that this year, but poor habits are hard to break. Fishing was good to me last year and the Fall was a very good one indeed.



The conditions in the Fall are ideal for catching big fish on our local rivers. Dropping temperatures and shorter days indicate summers end and fish react by eating more to prepare for the coming winter. In the Fall, I usually float and fish the Shenandoah or Upper Potomac. This year I was also able to concentrate more on wade fishing the Potomac. The Potomac River was as clear as I have seen it in the last four years with visibility of thirty-six inches or better and the river gauges continually showed low water levels. Additionally, the air temperatures



were mild all the way through the end of October. As a result, I spent many days wading the river and was rewarded with many fish over 15 inches and few monsters. I always have solid results throwing tubes and jigs in deep water pools. This tactic still worked well while on float trips, but other baits were producing better results while wading. The fish were interested in large suspending jerk baits, flukes, and Case senko style baits. The fish were also pursuing baits in open water or behind small ledges. This was not what I expected, but after spending fifteen to thirty minutes identifying a feeding pattern, the results were great.



While wade fishing on the Potomac with my son Quinn last October we had a surprise encounter with a snake... inside of a giant smallmouth! The air temps were in the mid 70's and the water temp was 64 degrees with good clarity. We covered about a 1/2 mile stretch of the Potomac above Riverbend and fished for 3 hours before it was time to go. The fish were feeding aggressively and we were rewarded with seventeen fish between us. About half of them were between 16 and 20 inches and all of them healthy. On my last cast, yes it sounds cliché, I hooked into a 19.5" pig and after a ten minute bout was able to land this beauty. She was taken on a large hand poured Case Magic Stick (you can ask Ernie to order some for you). As I picked her up, she spit out two of the biggest crayfish I've ever seen. Then as I hoisted her out of the water I noticed that she had also eaten a two foot long northern water snake! Quinn grabbed a few choice photos of the fish with the snake's head sticking out of her mouth, while the majority of it was down her gullet (photos below). What a cool surprise to end a great day of fishing the Potomac. Fall fishing is awesome, but as I sit here watching it snow, I'm wondering when the Spring bite will turn on. (For more pictures, please see the back page of this issue of the Buzz).

Member Night 2013

By Jamie Gold. Photos by Herschel Finch

On Wednesday, November 20, 2013 PRSC held its annual Member Night Celebration. With a full house of members, excellent BBQ, and tables full of prizes, we all had a great time. As a special treat, Shawn Kimbro did a great job providing live musical entertainment (please thank Ernie Rojas for setting that up). MC duties were ably handled by John Lipetz and Ernie Rojas, while Jack Cook handed out the awards for the fishing contest, and all of us enjoyed some good fellowship. Below are some pictures from the happy event. Let's hope winter ends soon and we'll be back out on the water.



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 formally 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(s) that I received this past month. John Lipetz sent these to me of a smallmouth he caught this past fall. Yes, that is a snake in that fish's mouth. Keep in mind that the fish had the snake in its mouth, and still bit on John's lure. Talk about a glutton...no wonder we love these fish so much!



2013 Contest Results

February 2014 Report By Wallace Harvey

As I sit and look my window as the white that has covered the ground and everything else outside, I wonder if it will ever be spring. This winter has been one for the books. Even if you go south for the winter, you won't have much luck finding warm weather. Yep, this has been one for the books. Let's get it behind us and go fishing. I am more than ready to tackle a nice smallie on any river I can get to fish on.

Since we have had one of the coldest, snowiest winters in a long time, no one has submitted a single fish for our contest. Somehow I'm not really surprised this year. Traveling local roads crossing local rivers I have seen ice on the edges that suggest the water may be a bit cold. The good news is that the river never fully frozen over. When that happens, I'm going more south than ever. I hate the cold.

When the weather breaks, and it always does, who wants to go fishing with me? I am pondering a trip or two to lead this year. How many of you are dreaming of going? Leading a trip is a wonderful thing. You get to meet more of your club members and learn from them. You have the safety of numbers on the river should any accident happen. Best of all, I'll bet you even catch a fish or two. If you have a favorite stretch of river, share with your friends the enjoyment of floating down the river. Now is a great time to plan on your trips this spring, summer and fall. I don't know about you, but planning to go fishing are the best day dreams I have. Put those day dreams to action and be ready to have some of the best people in the world join you on a day on the river. See you there!

2013 Final Results

Section 1, Biggest Fish:	No winner
Section 1, Best 5 Fish:	John Lipetz, 87"
Section 2, Biggest Fish:	George Moran, 19"
Section 2, Best 5 Fish:	Randy Chandler, 87"
Section 3, Biggest Fish:	Bill Pearl, 20.5"
Section 3, Best 5 Fish:	Bill Pearl, 92.5"
Largest on Fly:	Wayne Tate, 20"
New Member:	Herman Yam, 16"
Grover Cleveland Contest:	Jack Cook, 21.5"
	Jay Eiche, 21.5"
William Shriver Award:	Randy Chandler, 249"

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.