



# The Buzz

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Volume 27, Issue 4

April 30, 2014

## Mark Kovach on Structure Fishing Flowing Water

### Upcoming Items

**PRSC Meeting**  
May 28, 2014

**PRSC Raffle**  
Summer 2014

**Case Plastics Sale**  
April Meeting

**Family and Youth Casting Call**  
May 2014

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When you think about well-known fishermen, you usually picture them being born on the banks of their favorite river with a fishing rod in hand. But not noted Potomac River guide Mark Kovach. It was not until Mark was in his twenties that he started, and fell in love with, fly fishing. About this time, he and his wife, Izzy, moved from MoTown to Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, where Mark “fell in love with the river” and started up his guide service – Mark Kovach Fishing Services (MKFS) 301-588-8742, [www.mkfs.com](http://www.mkfs.com).

Mark started his guide service in 1979 teaching people how to fly fish. He often says that he teaches the basic class as the "one I would have loved to have had when I first started." His Basic and Intermediate Class is for beginners looking to learn the basics of fly fishing or for those who have tried it a few times but need to improve their knowledge and skills. The Advanced Class is designed for experienced fly anglers and can help improve your skills through video analysis of your casting style.

MKFS offers fishing schools for both trout and smallmouth bass. Trout schools are held in the spring in Thurmont, Maryland, on Big Hunting Creek. Bass schools are held in the summer and fall in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, on the Potomac River.

Mark enjoys fishing and loves sharing his skills and knowledge with other anglers. A storyteller at heart, he is always full of smallmouth tales and techniques. Mark’s at home in a seminar room, on the casting field, and while rowing through rapids. There are four other guides who work with Mark:

- **John Hayes**, who in the past has shared his love of smallmouth fishing with the Club.
- **Butch Murphy**, who picked up his first fly rod at age 7 and has been fly and spin fishing for smallmouth bass ever since.
- **Mark Frondorf**, who stays current on new techniques, flies, and lures and loves sharing the secrets of the beautiful Potomac River bronzebacks. He’s also a past PRSC president.
- **Mike Telemeco**, who started spin fishing local trout streams shortly after he started to walk.

When Mark isn’t fishing, he returns to his MoTown roots and teaches mechanics at Montgomery College. He has also taught at General Motors and Northern Virginia Community College. He and Izzy have a son who is a “computer nerd” and a daughter who is a successful artist.

At the April meeting, Mark will share his knowledge of fishing structure in flowing water. According to Mark, “River fish take up residence in holding spots near flowing food lanes. ... Being able to identify these locations is the key to unlocking the door to successful river and stream fishing.” Come and hear Mark explain his fish-catching techniques and improve your chances of catching fish.

MKFS is booking float trips for the 2014 season. They fish both spin and fly tackle on their float trips. Give them a call to schedule a trip and put Mark’s advice to work for you.

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# Upcoming Items

## Potomac River Smallmouth Club - Next Meeting - See You in May

**May 28, 2014, 7:30pm.** Join us in May at the Vienna Firehouse for another great meeting. Guide Jared Harker of Confluence Outfitters will be speaking about James River smallmouth (details at [www.PRSC.org](http://www.PRSC.org)). Be sure to join us for what should be a great evening.

## PRSC Picture Raffle - Mark Susinno Print

As a fund raiser, PRSC is raffling off a Mark Susinno print. It is signed by the artist, and numbered 309/400. 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. Here is a photo of the print.



## Case Plastics Sale

**PRSC Meeting, April 30.** For the April meeting, Ernie will be having a sale on Case Plastic lures. Buy 3 bags and get the 4th bag free. Plus selected bags will be sold for \$1 and \$2. So bring your money to stock up on some great lures for the upcoming fishing season.

## Potomac Riverkeeper

### 12th Annual Potomac and Shenandoah Riverkeeper Benefit

**Sunday, May 18 - 3:00pm-7:00pm.** Their 12th Annual Benefit will be held on May 18th on the Georgetown waterfront. Come hear about exciting changes they have in store, and enjoy delicious food and drinks provided by Clyde's Restaurant, live entertainment, and silent auction featuring relaxing getaways and special trips with your favorite Riverkeeper. Tickets are going fast! For more information, visit their website at [www.potomacriverkeeper.org/benefit2014](http://www.potomacriverkeeper.org/benefit2014).

## Friends of the North Fork

### Family River and Fun Day and Annual Meeting

**Saturday, May 3 - 11:30am-3:30pm.** Friends of the North Fork invites YOU to spend an afternoon with them getting to know the river. Discover the wildlife and insects that live underneath the river's surface, in the water and under the rocks. Learn how wildlife and fish and, us humans, depend upon healthy water for our survival and livelihood. Come and see for yourself what Friends and their partners are doing to help improve the health of the North Fork. This will be held at Strasburg Town Park - 295 Park Road in Strasburg VA 22657. This is a FREE event with lunch provided BUT they need a headcount, so please register for the event online or call our office at [540-459-8550](tel:540-459-8550).

# Family and Youth Casting Call

John Lipetz

## HELP FISH AND EXPLORE – AT THE FAMILY AND YOUTH CASTING CALL

This is the biggest youth event of the area. Last year we worked with over 500 kids. Many of them caught the first fish of their lives.

We are less than *one month away* from the best youth fishing and environmental education event in the DC area and we need your help to make the 2014 event a success! Please log on to [www.familyandyouthcastingcall.com](http://www.familyandyouthcastingcall.com) and register to volunteer again!

Remember to state that you are with Fish and Explore and PRSC and I will give you a Fish and Explore shirt as a gift.

**Date:** May 2 and 3 from 9 am-4 pm.

**Location:** Fletchers Cove on the C & O Canal. For directions visit: [Fletchers Boathouse](#)

**Event Description:** FYCC is an annual event connecting youth to nature through angling and environmental education activities. Staff and volunteers from the District Department of the Environment, Coastal Conservation Association of MD, Orvis, Trout Unlimited, Potomac and Anacostia Riverkeepers, and DC Water will share information and educational activities that teach respect and conservation of our natural resources.

**Volunteers** will receive an authentic F&YCC t-shirt, meals and on-the-job training on how to teach safe, ethical angling to youth. You will also receive the satisfaction for a job well done when you see the faces of the kids when they catch their first fish. It's priceless.

## FAMILY & YOUTH CASTING CALL

### A FREE FISHING EVENT *at* FLETCHER'S COVE ON THE C&O CANAL\*

**Saturday, May 3, 2014 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM**

- Learn to fish! All equipment and instruction provided!**
- Learn how to tie common knots**
- Create beautiful fish prints!**
- Learn about watersheds and conservation of our aquatic resources**
- See live native and invasive species of fish from the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers**
- Learn about trout in the classroom hatching program**
- Explore the park and play outside!**



**Open to the Public - rain or shine!**

\*For more information & directions, visit [www.familyandyouthcastingcall.com](http://www.familyandyouthcastingcall.com)



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TROUT UNLIMITED

Artwork by dotprocter.com

# Potomac River Shad Fishing

Article and Photos by Chris Schaupp

I have a tendency to opt for taking other people fishing, rather than fishing myself. So everything I say should be taken from that perspective. This is especially true for Shad fishing and I find the Shad fishing at Fletcher's an excellent opportunity to introduce people to fishing. Kids and newbies may have little to no casting experience, therefore I prefer to take or rent a boat if possible to enable folks to get closer to the fish without the need for experienced spin casting abilities.

I seem to find the Shad (mostly Hickory Shad) in the seams between strong current and no current. Therefore, casting at a 45 degree angle downstream into the current and allowing the lure (dart) to swing into the seam naturally before retrieving at a slow/medium pace increases the time the lure is in the strike zone and thereby increases strike frequency per cast, while decreasing the chance of getting snagged on the bottom. Parking a boat right in the seam is a great way for a newcomer with little casting experience to be able to experience catching fish right away



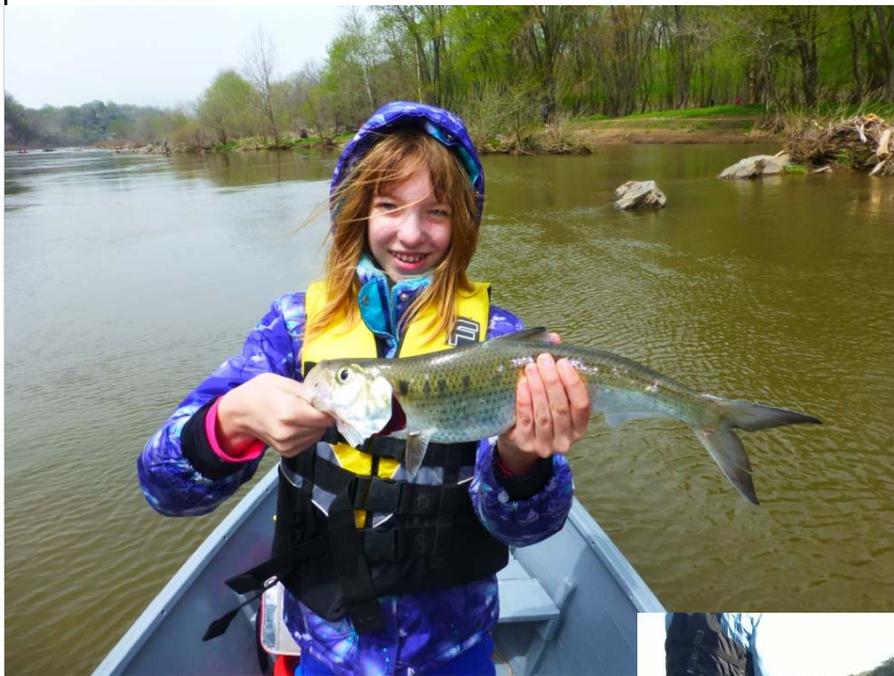
and decreases their chances of getting hung up in shallow water. Shad fishing from shore eliminates the hassle of having/renting a boat, but when teaching a person/child with little casting experience, Fletcher's Cove shore fishing is not a good choice, because the student will ultimately retrieve too slowly close to the shore and get stuck on the bottom. Also, the lure will not remain in the strike zone for as long a period of time as

it would if cast from a boat already sitting just above the strike zone seam. It

seems that the shad prefer a moving target and if casting and retrieving is an issue for someone, I have also found that trolling for shad can also be an extremely simple but effect technique. Just cast the lure directly into the seam, hand the rod off to the person you are taking, and then move the boat slowly up the river in the current seam and wait for the person to say, "I got one!"



# Potomac River Shad Fishing cont'd



As for rigging and lures, for myself - I prefer a three way swivel that allows me to tie my main line to one end, and two darts off the the other two ends. The heavier dart on a line that is about a foot shorter than than the lighter dart. However, I feel that fishing and casting with two two hooks is a "no no" with kids and newcomer adults, so my rods are generally rigged with just one hook/ lure. So far, my preference has been to tie a 1/2 ounce trolling weight onto my my line and a "Shad Killer" lure about 2.5 to 3 foot below the weight. Jamie Gold introduced me to this technique a couple of years ago on a after work Shad trip to Walker's Point. It is much simpler and safer for a newcomer to cast than two darts and it is highly effective. I like to use a slightly lighter line when

tying the Shad Killer to the trolling sinker, so if the line does get hung up and eventually breaks, I only loose my lure instead of "hook, line, and sinker." The hot color this year seems to be fluorescent green.

Well that's about it as far as my shad fishing experience so far this year. I know each year the shad



fishing will be short lived and we will probably be past the peak in the next couple of weeks, so I'm making the most of it for now and hoping a big rain/river flood doesn't end the season prematurely. After that I'll be turning my attention to bass fishing for the rest of the year.

Yesterday, Easter, my wife, three kids, and I introduced five new adults to shad fishing at Fletcher's. We said hello to Dave Lockhard fishing from the same place we previously saw you and him as we proceeded up the river in my bass boat and a rented Fletcher's row boat with electric trolling motor. I'm attaching a few more pictures of yesterday's and this year's shad fishing experience so far.



# 1st Annual Vienna Family Fishing Day

Article and Photos by John Lipetz and Roger Brown

Saturday, March 29 was a very wet and rainy day, but that did not stop the Vienna Park Service from holding their first family fishing rodeo. The event was held on Wolftrap Creek in Wildwood Park, Vienna Va. The town had recently restored a stretch of Wolftrap Creek and to celebrate they stocked nine pools with trout provided by the DNR and Navy Federal Credit Un-



ion. The plan was to allow up to 60 children and their parents fish for an hour at one of the select pools.

The rain came down steady all day, but the event was well attended with close to 200 children. Most of the kids caught fish, and more than a few caught solid numbers. Two even caught native fish, a nice creek chub and a small bullhead catfish. Fish and Explore was represented by a good team of five and was happy to help put the kids on fish. PRSC was represented handsomely by Mr. Roger Brown and marginally by John Lipetz as well. Roger was even involved in the stock program assisting the day before the event. This was a great opportunity to help get kids connected with nature and our sport.

# Smallmouth Fishing on the Susquehanna

Article and Photos by John Lipetz



On a cool spring day my son Quinn and I were treated to a day on the water with Dan Grulke. Dan took us to the Susquehanna and Juniata confluence for some pre-spawn smallmouth fishing. The first part of the day was slow with only two fish caught on tube baits. By 1pm the weather warmed a little and the river temp rose to 49 degrees. Next thing we knew the dinner bell rang and the fish responded accordingly. Quinn



caught two nice fish off of a Salty Sinking Shad and Dan and I started catching them on tubes and few other baits. We ended up with a total of 36 fish on the day. The largest was just shy of 19" and most of our fish were north of 16." They were all fat and healthy. If you are ever asked to fish with Dan, it would be a good idea to just reply with - "When do I need to be ready!"



# Spring Smallmouth Fishing

Article by Jamie Gold and Photos by Herschel Finch

On Saturday, April 12, PRSC'ers Herschel Finch, Randy Chandler, Dave Lockard, Luke Frazza and Jamie Gold went fishing on the South Fork of the Shenandoah River. Normally I do not go fishing for smallmouth this early in the season because I don't like being on the water in a canoe when the water is still cold. But after the long, cold, snowy winter, and the unseasonably warm weather forecasted for that day....I just had to get out.

We decided to do the float from Andy Guest State Park to Karo. The day started with slightly overcast skies early, but then cleared up and we had bright sunshine for much of the afternoon. At first the air temperature was in the low 50's, but rose during the day to the upper 70's. The water level was at 2.85' at Front Royal, which was a good water level with clarity to about 3'. The water temp was quite cool in the morning, and several checks on a thermometer showed a temp of about 55 degrees late in the morning, and 61 degrees later in the afternoon. We did see other fishermen on the water, and as the day wore on we were passed by several groups of kayakers and canoeists.



# g on the Shenandoah River



While we did not catch a lot of fish, the fish we caught tended to be big...and fat. And we caught them in an order that would have made a nice poker hand. Dave Lockard led the pack with five fish, including a gorgeous 18" beauty. Herschel caught four fish, one 17.5 incher (the one pictured) two 15s and a single 13. Randy caught three fish, one that went 15.5", one at 15" and a 14" fish. Jamie had two fish, one that measured 16" and one at 14". Luke had one fish that measured 15".

We never found a consistent pattern in the fish for either location or bait. Several of us caught fish on spinnerbaits.

But we also caught fish on a plastic worm, a crankbait, and even a buzzbait. Most of us caught fish in slower water, but Jamie caught his fish in faster water by letting a spinnerbait fall over a ledge into deeper water. I don't think that any fish were caught on tubes or jig-n-pigs.



While the fish were few and far between, the weather was great, the company was even better, and we were all just happy to be back out on a river fishing for smallmouth bass. After the trip, several of us had a tasty dinner at Jalisco, a rather good Mexican restaurant on the north end of Front Royal.



# 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.

Beautiful Shenandoah Smallmouth.



Shad Fishing at Fletcher's on the Potomac.



Herschel Finch. Photo by ???.

Dave Lockard, photo by Chris Schaupp.

5 lbs. American Shad



Spring Shad on the Potomac River.



John Lipetz. Photo by ???

Steve Adams. Photo by Jamie Gold.

Shenandoah River Largemouth.



George Thurston. Photo by Mark Myers.

Chesapeake Bay Early Spring Striper.



Ernie Rojas. Photo by Dennis Flemming.

Largemouth Bass.



Ernie Rojas.

Another Potomac River Shad.



Andrew Jennings. Photo by John Lipetz.

A Potomac River White Perch.



Toivo Taylor. Photo by Chris Schaupp.

One More Potomac Shad.



Steve Adams. Photo by Jamie Gold.

# Paddle Green Event

Celebrate the Rapp!  
&

The 34<sup>th</sup> Great Rappahannock Whitewater Race

All Day Festival  
Canoe, Kayak, & SUP Races  
Reel Paddling Film Festival

@ Old Mill Park

Saturday, June 7, 8am-9pm

Visit [americancanoe.org/celebraterapp](http://americancanoe.org/celebraterapp)  
for a full schedule of events.



# Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

\*This month is kind of a hodge-podge of things I've read, seen or found out about:

I saw a figure the other day that totally astounded me. If you are 50 years old, give or take a year or two, the Earth's population has doubled in size, to 7.1 billion people, in your lifetime. Stop and think about that figure for a minute. That is a tremendous load on a planet of finite dimensions, with only so much suitable land to grow food and fresh water to sustain us. Scientists estimate that our planet can only sustain a maximum population of about 9 billion people.

And it doesn't take much to make a difference. Let's start with a font called 'Garamond'. (if Jamie didn't have to change it for the Buzz, you're reading it right now). A middle school student calculated that if this font is used in his school system for all letters, memos, tests, etc., they would save tens of thousands of dollars in printer ink per year! The lesson - it doesn't take a lot to make a difference.

I read an editorial on *Forbes* Magazine's website I found interesting. Some of us environmental activists have been giving Ethanol the 'fish eye' the last few years. It was originally touted as an environmental savior, reducing emissions from gasoline powered engines that burned the 90/10 blend of ethanol and gasoline. As it turns out...maybe not so much. Although it was definitely a boon for "Big Ag", and Washington agricultural and energy lobbyists, no less an economic authority than *Forbes* is now saying ethanol is not such a good investment. Why? There's a still a lot of money to be made producing and using it to be sure, but *Forbes* now is saying the same thing us tree and river-huggers have been saying almost since day one. The production of ethanol causes more environmental damage during its production, from field to refining, than it ever saves in emissions by being blended with gasoline. In addition, those early investors were sold a bill of goods on the production of ethanol if their original intent was to invest in 'green' energy sources. The spread of additional acres of corn being grown is damaging the bio-diversity of the planet and in the long run, is damaging other agricultural investments. I definitely know my vehicle runs better on straight gasoline than it does the ethanol. But I would love to see a study comparing engine performance/efficiency over time comparing ethanol blends to straight gasoline. I think that it may show some interesting results. But what I definitely like more than this finding is that more and more, conservative voices found in influential publications like *Forbes* are starting to question the direction our legislators have taken on agricultural and environmental matters and policy. They may be coming at it from a financial and investment angle, but all seem to arrive at the same place when conclusions are drawn. Bio-diversity is better for all of us in the long run.

If you read last month's column, you read about the problems that drilling companies are having with radioactive waste in the form of bag filters and the fracking slurry up in the Dakotas. Not a pleasant column to write, let me tell you. I suspected at the time that the same issues were probably present in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. I had not read or heard anything that would back up my suspicions so I didn't include it in the column. But now, just a couple of weeks ago, I read that independent researchers have tested some streams in western PA and found them to contain radioactive runoff from fracking operations. Big surprise huh? Does anybody else need a better reason to oppose fracking in the George Washington National Forest? I don't know about you, but I prefer the drinking water I'm consuming in my house not give me Leukemia or Thyroid Cancer.

**PRSC**  
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**Vienna, VA 22183**

This is my favorite picture(s) that I received this past month. This is Mark Myers holding an awesome 20.5" smallmouth that he caught on the Shenandoah River this Spring. The photo was taken by George Thurston. Mark has set the bar high, so we need to get out there and catch some fish.



# 2014 Contest Results

**April 2014 Report** By Wallace Harvey

The good news is that the weather is warming up. The bad news is that I'm itching to go fishing. Apparently, I am not alone as we already have two Club sponsored trips ready to go. As you can guess, I've signed up for one. I got my pontoons out and inflated to test and to be sure I won't have a problem on the river. So far, so good. Are you ready?

Well, Bill Pearl is not only ready, but he has been out twice that I know of. His latest adventure on Section II netted a big fish of 19 inches and a Best Five of 92 inches. No holding back Bill. This time of year usually nets the best big fishing for the year. Therefore, I am surprised more have not been out yet. Hopefully, you will let us know at the meeting.

It is easy to let us know you want to participate in our Fishing Contest. All you need to do is call Jack Cook at 703-573-4403. Please let him know where you were, what you caught it on, and how big your fish is. We also have the Best Five Fish you catch in one day. So each time you go fishing you have two chances to win. If you lost your phone, you can email me to register your catch. I can be reached at [wwharvey@comcat.net](mailto:wwharvey@comcat.net). Either way, you are in the run for the great prizes we give out each year. Good Luck!

## 2014 Results

**Section 1, Biggest Fish:**

**Section 1, Best 5 Fish:**

**Section 2, Biggest Fish:** Bill Pearl, 19"

**Section 2, Best 5 Fish:** Bill Pearl, 92"

**Section 3, Biggest Fish:** Jack Cook, 19.5"

**Section 3, Best 5 Fish:** Bill Pearl, 84.5"

**Largest on Fly:**

**Best 5 Fish on Fly:**

**New Member:**

**Grover Cleveland Contest:**

**William Shriver Award:**

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 \$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.