



The Buzz

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Volume 27, Issue 7

July 30, 2014

Bruce Ingram on Virginia Smallmouth Fishing

Upcoming Items

PRSC Meeting
August 27, 2014

PRSC Raffle
Summer 2014

Shenandoah Fest
August 9, 2014

Northern VA TU - Vicki Blazer
August 7, 2014

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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 30.

Bruce will speak specifically about his two new books -- *The South Branch and Upper Potomac Rivers Guide* and *The Shenandoah and Rappahannock Rivers Guide*, 2nd edition. *The South Branch & Upper Potomac Guide* covers water from West Virginia's scenic Smoke Hole Canyon to just upstream of Washington, D.C., before the Great Falls. It includes access areas, descriptions of water hazards, fishing, history, and more. It also features information on trout fishing in the upper South Branch and tributaries. The *Shenandoah and Rappahannock Rivers Guide* is completely revised and updated, covering the South Fork of the Shenandoah, the Main Stem, and the upper Rappahannock Rivers with detailed information on access areas, rapids, history, fishing, and birding. And both books also include numerous maps.

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 *The James River Guide*, *The New River Guide*, and *The Shenandoah/Rappahannock Rivers Guide*. One of Bruce's recent books, *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 Rivers 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 signed 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*, *Whitetail 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. Hope you can attend the July meeting, which promises to be very informative. The last time Bruce spoke to our Club a year ago, Bruce posited that the color of your lure has no impact on the fish you catch. Well, after the meeting he went home and wrote an article titled "Confessions of a Color Heretic" that was published by *American Angler*. Bruce told me he has never received so many e-mails in response to a fishing story. He commented, "To my great surprise, most of the letters have been positive...I was not expecting that."

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Upcoming Items

Potomac River Smallmouth Club - See You in August

August 27, 2014, 7:30pm. Join us in August for what should be a terrific presentation. Our speaker will be Woodie Walker of the Friends of the Rappahannock. He will be talking about the past, present, and future of the FOR. Please join us for an informative and entertaining 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.



Shenandoah Riverkeeper

Shenandoah Riverfest

Saturday, August 9 - 10:00am. Come out and play with the Shenandoah Riverkeeper down at Shenandoah River State Park for canoeing, tubing, swimming, food, music, wild animal displays, and the 2nd Annual Cardboard Boat Race! Entrants will receive a free trial membership to Shenandoah Riverkeeper and get a chance to win a brand new kayak! For more information visit their website at www.potomacriverkeeper.org.

Northern Virginia Trout Unlimited

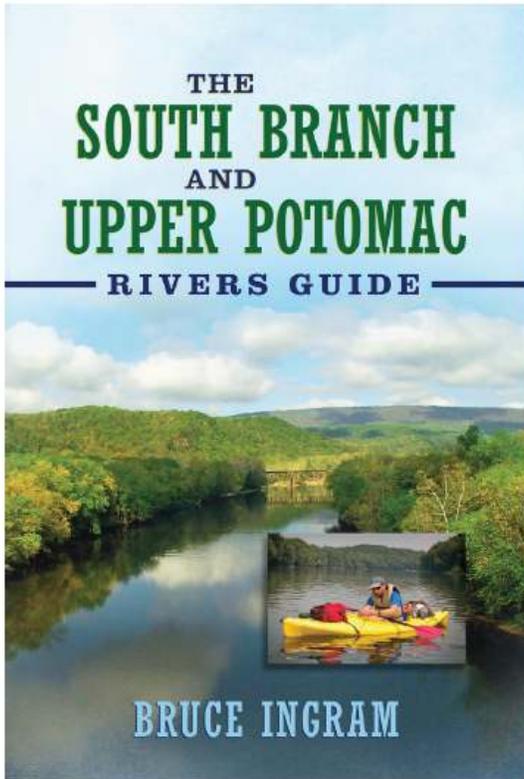
Vicki Blazer of USGS will be their August Speaker

Thursday, August 7 - 7:30pm-9:30pm. Dr. Vickie Blazer, PhD U.S. Geological Survey is our Guest Speaker at our Thursday August 7th 2014 NVATU meeting. The topic will be "Update on fish health issues in the Chesapeake Bay drainage". All are invited to meeting at the Vienna Fire Station which starts at 7:30.



NEW RELEASES

from BRUCE INGRAM



The South Branch and Upper Potomac Rivers Guide

Bruce Ingram

Headwater Books, distributed by Stackpole Books

tmanney@stackpolebooks.com

ISBN: 978-1-934753-27-9

\$16.95, 176 pages, softcover, 12 maps

Covers water from West Virginia's scenic Smoke Hole Canyon to just upstream of Washington, D.C., before the Great Falls. Includes access areas, description of water hazards, fishing, history, and more. Also features information on trout fishing in the upper South Branch and tributaries.

Bruce Ingram is an outdoor writer and lifelong resident of Virginia whose award-winning writing has appeared in over 2,000 magazine articles and three other river guides. He lives in Troutville, Virginia.

The Shenandoah and Rappahannock Rivers Guide

2nd edition, completely revised and updated

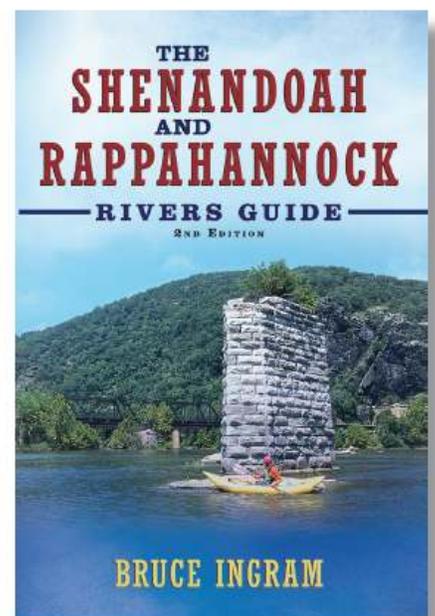
Bruce Ingram

Headwater Books, distributed by Stackpole Books

ISBN: 978-1-934753-25-5

\$16.95, 168 pages, softcover, 12 maps

This completely revised and updated guide covers the South Fork of the Shenandoah, Main Stem, and upper Rappahannock Rivers with detailed information on access areas, rapids, history, fishing, and birding. A must-have guide!



For more information, or to arrange an author interview or appearance, contact Headwater Books at (717) 609 4981, or sales@headwaterbooks.com

Quetico Provincial

Article and Photos by Robert Gazzola

For our 16th consecutive annual trip, the fishing around Quetico Provincial Park in Western Ontario this year was different and good. We now fly Air Canada into Thunder Bay because of all the changes to flights to International Falls made by Delta after its merger with Northwest. The Camp sends a driver to pick us up and it is a little less than a two hour drive to the Camp. Thanks to climate change we now go in mid-June starting last year and try to catch the spawn. Previously any trip before July 1 was dicey with prospects of cold and nasty weather. Last year was our first early trip and the fishing was great and the weather mild and warm.

Wacky worms were the lure of the day, something we barely if ever threw before and which were not effective this year. This year the weather was comfortable and cooler than last year, averaging around 70. The distinct feature of this year's fishing was an incredible top water bite on just about every variety of popper that our group of seven threw, and all quality fish up to four and a bit pounds, adding a bit of a thrill to our daily fishing. We had some rain and one day were driven off the lake in early afternoon by lightning and thunder after hunkering down on an island for a while in our rain suits, but made up for it with some evening fishing. Full dark in mid-June isn't until 10:30pm. We didn't experience any of the occasional spectacular weather the area is noted for and which we saw in prior years.

Since we started going to Quetico, we have been staying at Camp Quetico run by Barry Giles, which offers a great American Plan. Full breakfast is at 7am, then final arguments about which lake to fish and we are off with packed lunches, a camp supplied pickup with a trailored 16 foot boat and a 30 or 40 horse power motor. Let the games begin! The trucks have been around for a while but are dependable. The remark of the trip was a comment by one of our group from Hawaii at the end of the first day of fishing that it was nice to know that all of the truck warning lights work. You can also haul a 15 horse motor to numerous lakes where Barry has prepositioned boats for a lesser cost. Dinner is at 6:30 and if the fishing is good we sometimes decide to stay out later and the folks at the camp leave our meals in the cabin. After dinner activities include cigars on the deck of the cabin with blended and single malt scotch, war stories followed by tackle sorting, re-spooling and a well earned night's sleep. Sunrise is around 4am so we sleep with the drapes drawn but we are all



Rob Gazzola holding a nice Quetico Provincial Park smallmouth bass.

cial Park - 2014

all up by 6:30am, some earlier.

The highlight of the trip was right out of “A River Runs Through It.” We were fishing a section of a lake which we had never fished before (see photo to the right) and spotted a reef in the middle of the lake with waves washing over it driving bait into it. It was my good fortune that it was my son Rob’s turn on the motor so I got to make the first cast in front of the reef with a Zoom double tailed grub (the most consistently



effective lure) and a 5 1/8 pound smallie took it (See photo on the back page of this issue of *The Buzz*). Made my day! Unfortunately Frank Elam tied me on the same day on the same lake so I had to split the largest fish pool with him (northern pike don’t count). Rob hooked a good one too (see the photo the prior page).

An alternative for the venturesome outdoor lovers is a canoe camping trip into Quetico Provincial Park (requires preregistration) with super guide Bob Burns, a retired Park Ranger with great war stories. What he does not know about the outdoors is not worth knowing and the trip is a great learning experience. Bob provides all the food and gear. Depending on the length of the trip there will be one or more camp sites. The further you travel to the interior the better the already good fishing gets. There are also sturgeon in the Park. Travel is by kevlar canoe. You quickly learn the discipline of the command “Hut” for switching paddles from one side to the other. You also learn to eat for fuel. The Park prohibits motors and fly-ins except for a couple of lakes reserved for native guides. It is physically demanding but great fun. Bob does the cooking (very well) and he specifies the number and kind of fish to be kept for dinner - all others are catch and release. He also cooks a full breakfast and provides trailmix, cheese and salami for lunch. We usually insist on walleye for at least an appetizer each night. Lake trout, smallmouth and occasionally northern complete the menu options. Can’t wait for next year.

Potomac River Mark Kovach Fishing Service

Article and Photos by Chris Schaupp

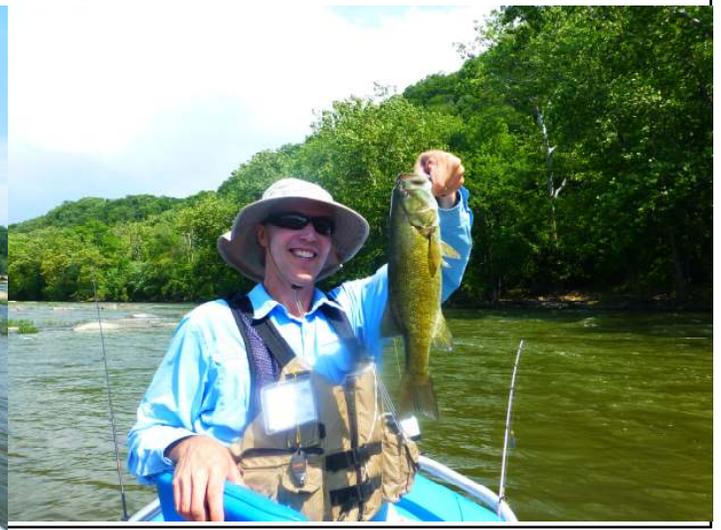
Since his presentation was going to be about smallmouth on water that I have actually fished, I went to the April PRSC Meeting and was interested in hearing the presentation by Mark Kovach. I decided that it would be nice to book a trip to see how an experienced guide fishes the same water that I have fished, the 340 Bridge to Brunswick. I was also interested in learning more about the water above the 340 Bridge that I had not seen before.

I originally booked the trip for the June 30th, but had to reschedule due to our changing family schedule. Mark Kovach was not easy to reach and didn't always return my calls, but when I finally got ahold of him, he gladly rescheduled for June 24th, and he told me that our guide would be former PRSC President, Mark Frondorf.



I invited a co-worker and fishing friend of mine, Bruce Anderson, to join us and we all met at the Brunswick Boat ramp, at 8am on the 24th. Mark Frondorf arrived at the boat ramp with a blue three man raft in tow. Also arriving at the ramp was a driver from River & Trail Outfitters, who drove with us up the river to the put in at Harpers Ferry Camp Ground, just above dam #3. Once the boat was in the water, the driver proceeded to drive Mark's vehicle back down to the Brunswick boat ramp as we launched off into the still water above the dam.

It was a warm sunny day and despite all the direct sunlight, I was hopeful that the fishing would be good. The Potomac River Level Point of Rocks gauge was hovering around the 2.7 foot mark and water fairly stained with clarity about 1.5ft. With Bruce in the back, me in the front, and Mark rowing the boat from the middle, we inched our way to the top of the dam. Throughout the trip I was impressed with Mark's ability to position and maneuver the boat with oars through various conditions. Mark rowed us across the still waters above the dam and we started fishing the rock structures on the dam's edge.



Over Float Trip es (Guided by Mark Frondorf)



The fishing started off painfully slow, I don't think we got a bite for the first 20-30 minutes. Bruce finally caught one eight inch dink before we started drifting down the faster waters below the dam.

Mark often recommended a zoom fluke (in white or pink), which is a lure I have tried in the past, but have not used often, preferring other types of soft plastics. Using one of Mark's rods, I followed Mark's instructions and cast the fluke in the calm grassy areas along the edges as we drifted down some fast flowing water in the main current. If we didn't get a bite in about the first five seconds, Mark recommended reeling it in again and casting to another position. Using this technique, my lure was slammed by

a nice 15 inch smallie lurking in the grass, but that is about all the action we saw until getting to the 340 bridge.

It was fun to go through the class III rapids and then just under the 340 bridge. Bruce caught the lunker of the day. A beautiful smallie about 19 inches that took a zoom fluke and put up a great fight. Mark and I had fun trying to show Bruce how to present the fish for a photo without covering it up with his hands. As you can see, we had moderate success :)

The fishing picked up a bit past the 340 bridge as we intermittently pulled a few into the boat. The raft was a comfortable platform to fish from. Next time I might want to have a bucket of water next to me so I can wet my hands before handling a fish and hopefully not damage its protective slime coating. I was not able to reach the river water with my hands sitting on the boat before handling a fish. Fishing with another adult (I usually have kids) in the boat was nice because it gave me chance to be experimental and try different techniques while gauging my action level against the lure being cast next to me. I enjoy trying drop shot techniques for small-mouth when given the chance, but there wasn't much appropriate water for that type of vertical technique. I experimented by trying a tube on a jig tied to the terminal end of the line and another weightless tube tied on nine inches above. The ultimate would have been to get a double hook up, but the technique only produced one small one that hit the bottom tube. While Bruce was fishing the fluke, I often used a weightless green pumpkin gold flake "Jack's Worm" from Case Plastics. It worked reasonably well, as it usually does for me.

About a mile past the 340 Bridge we anchored the boat on shore and stopped for lunch. Mark pulled out a portable table with three chairs and then proceeded to lay out an impressive spread of food and drink. Bruce and I felt like we were in a high class restaurant overlooking the Potomac. We wondered if Mark was going to break out a guitar or violin for our musical entertainment, but he didn't go quite that far. None the less, it was the most impressive meal I have ever had on a fishing trip.



Potomac River Float Trip (cont'd)

We intermittently caught fish through the rest of the float. It didn't seem much like a day for surface fishing to me, but Mark would occasionally cast a buzzbait when not rowing or steering the boat. He got a few slaps, but didn't get any solid hook sets with the technique. Late summer last year on a PRSC float was the last time I had fished the 340 - Brunswick stretch. At that time the water was gin clear and I had pulled in over 50 smallmouth out of my Kayak by the end of the trip. This time I think we were only able to pull in a little over 20, total for the boat.

As we went over the last set of rapids I decided to give a quick shot at some surface fishing so I went to my go to technique, a weightless white "Jack's Worm" twitched over the surface. As if choreographed, a game little smallmouth came up to the top and slammed it on my first try. Knowing that the water ahead is the least productive of the stretch I decided that was probably a good note to end on and I put down my rod.



Mark had offered to stay out on the water until 7pm, which was impressive to me, but with the kids and family waiting, Bruce and I decided that 5pm would be sufficient. Mark put a small 2 HP motor on the back of the boat and we motored through the slow water leading up to the Route 17 bridge / Brunswick boat ramp.

Steve Kimm is planning on leading a similar PRSC float (Dam 3 to Rout 17) later in the summer. I think it will be interesting to see how the experience of the PRSC members who do that trip compares to our experience in late June

Once we got to the ramp it was nice not to have to deal with anything, but saying goodbye to Mark and getting in the car for the drive home. We didn't kill em, but my friend Bruce did catch the biggest smallmouth of his life (so far) and I did get introduced to some techniques that were new to me and I got to experiment with some of my own. I look forward to floating the stretch again later in the season, hopefully the water will be a little clearer and if I'm lucky, perhaps it will be cloudy day :).



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.

Cape Cod Largemouth Bass.



Chip Comstock.

A Very Nice Potomac River Smallmouth Bass.



Chris Schaupp. Photo by Mark Frondorf.

Fly fishing the James River. Is Jack Cook right?



Jamie Gold.

Relaxing by the River's Edge.



Steve Copps. Photo by Steve Adams.

Upper James River Trip - June 2014

By Jamie Gold

From Wednesday, June 18 through Saturday, June 21 of this year a group of PRSC members took a trip down to the Upper James river for several days of fishing. On the trip were Randy Chandler, David Lockard, George Thurston, Steve Copps, Steve Adams, Leon Kates and me. We stayed at the James River House, which is located in Buchanan, VA and is run by Twin River Outfitters (www.canoevirginia.net). This is a beautiful old house which has been restored and is a great place to stay for a weekend or longer trip.

Overall the fishing on the trip was very difficult. We worked hard over several days for relatively few fish, and none of any really large size. The water level and clarity for the trip were quite good....we just didn't find fish. And given the ability of the fishermen in the group, we suspect that the fish are not there. Our concern is that the Upper James has not yet recovered from the fish kills earlier in the 2000s. In fact, it felt like the Shenandoah did a couple of years ago.

During the trip we covered several stretches of beautiful looking water. On the first day Steve Adams and Steve Kopps hired guide Richard Furman from Twin River Outfitters and fished the Glasgow to Snowden stretch, which includes Balcony Falls. They did ok, as evidenced by the accompanying pictures. The rest of us fished from Glen Wilton to Gala. Other stretches that we hit during the week were Springwood to Buchanan and Buchanan to Arcadia. One day, a few folks, frustrated with the lack of fish, bailed on the James and went over to the Maury River. Under Steve Adams knowledgeable leadership they managed to catch plenty of smallmouth, although most were on the small side. But at least they were catching fish.

My most enjoyable day of fishing was on Friday, when I had the pleasure of having Bruce Ingram fish with me in the front of my canoe. Bruce did a great job of guiding me to good fishing spots on the river.



He is also an excellent raconteur, and he regaled me with stories the entire trip. Also, early in the trip we came to a big eddy of slack water between two islands. While I was retrieving a buzzbait across the pool, a huge musky blew up on and grabbed the bait. Bruce was standing up, and the fish hit close to the boat, so he got a good view of the fish and estimated it to be at least 40" long. Unfortunately the fish got away, but it was great excitement.

So the house, the company, and the food were all excellent, making for a very fun trip. Unfortunately the fishing was not good, so we'll be looking for another destination next year.

Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

Well, I don't know how busy June and July have been at YOUR house, but it has been up against the wall the last two months at Casa Finch. Between ramping up for the Shenandoah Riverfest, and having relatives in and out and a visit from Bruce Ingram the first part of July to speak at my Izaak Walton Chapter, not to mention becoming Grandparents again and my wife taking over the head honcho slot at the trucking firm where she was managing the office....fishing?...What's that?

Once again, the Finch family is taking up another wee bit of space on the face of this planet of ours. We've been blessed with a girl this time; Sophia Elizabeth was born on the 6th of July. She was a tad early and had to spend a couple of extra days in the hospital so her lungs could catch up to the rest of her. But she's happy and healthy now and depriving my son and daughter-in-law of sleep... as any good newborn should. Photos are available, all you have to do is ask.

The Shenandoah Riverfest is quickly falling into place. We have nearly two dozen entries into the cardboard boat race already and there are still slots open if anyone in the club would like submit an entry into this splendid regatta. Our large, over-the-street banner is now hung across Rte 55 as you come into Front Royal and posters are up at the various landings up and down the river and in local businesses. Donations for the raffle are coming in, including two boats this year, and the paddle art auction is shaping up nicely. The volunteer list is now OPEN!! And of course I'll be looking to the PRSC to help out in a big way this year. We'll have our PRSC display of course, as we always do, so we'll need folks to support that, and I need people to help out as volunteers for the event at large. We need parking help, traffic direction, help launching and retrieving tubes and canoes, running the "in the water" kid games with Brent Walls...and even emptying trash and recycle barrels. You get to ride with the park staff in a 'gator' on that last one! Who wouldn't want to run around in a golf cart on steroids?!?! I will be circulating a signup sheet during the meeting. All I need is a name, the hours you want to be there, what job you're up for, and a firm promise to show up! Seriously, nothing would serve as a better recruiting tool than our membership being seen in the hats and shirts we've been selling helping out as volunteers at this educational event celebrating a river we all love and the efforts of our Riverkeepers. People like to belong to organizations that do things that are needed, that are worth their time, and serve as a benefit to the community at large. Come on out and help us make this happen.

Last but certainly not least, an announcement that gives me great pleasure:

Some of you already know this, but for those who do not: Our own Jeff Kelble, is now the President of the entire Potomac/Shenandoah Riverkeeper organization. This all started coming about back in the very early Spring, with the departure of Matt Logan for personal reasons. The organization has only recently "officially" announced Jeff's elevation to the Presidency, after getting the vote of confidence of the full board of director of the Potomac / Shenandoah Riverkeeper organization. So I had to wait until now to put this in *The Buzz*. You and I both know the kind of job Jeff has been doing for the Shenandoah River and if he can apply the almost 10 years of knowledge and expertise he's amassed to the issues facing both rivers and the Chesapeake Bay cleanup at large... well let's just say I have high hopes for the future of our watershed.

Well done Mr. Kelble, well done indeed. The PRSC stands four square behind you and your efforts.

PRSC
P.O. Box 1240
Vienna, VA 22183

This is my favorite picture that I received this past month. This is PRSC member Robert Gazzola with a 5 1/8 lbs. small-mouth he caught in Quetico Provincial Park in Canada while on a trip up there earlier this year. Please see his article in this issue of *The Buzz* for a description of his adventures and more pictures.



2014 Contest Results

July 2014 Report By Wallace Harvey

First, I owe an apology to one of our best fishermen in the Club. Wayne Tate had a marvelous day on Section III. It enters him in our contest in multiple levels. First, he is the only entry in the Fly Division. He got a 20-inch smallmouth on a fly in Section III. Second, he is now the leader in the Big Fish Division for Section III with a 20-inch smallmouth. Third, he got a 92-inch total for Best Five Division on Section III. Do the math, that is an average of almost 18.5 inches per fish. Good Show Wayne! Oh, what I'd give for a day like that on the water?!

Wayne has shown us that the fish are there, if we work to get them. I am happy to announce I have seen 3 new trips planned for our Club on the Potomac. It is great to see our members step up and lead a trip. Last I checked, this is what our Club is all about getting out there on the water. I would like to hear of more trips planned for our members. Will you stand up and be counted?

I have seen a couple of emails of new members that do not have a boat for our waters. I know that very few of us have a two-man boat to take them down the river. I am hopeful that those that do, will show a hearty welcome to the new members by inviting them to join you on Club trip. Hopefully, they joined us on Boat Night last month to see what is available in boats. It has been a long time since we have had this problem, but I know our members are up to the task to help. If no one else will say it, Thank You!

2014 Results

- Section 1, Biggest Fish:** Dave Lockard, 19"
- Section 1, Best 5 Fish:** Dave Lockard, 84"
- Section 2, Biggest Fish:** Bill Pearl, 19"
- Section 2, Best 5 Fish:** Bill Pearl, 84.5"
- Section 3, Biggest Fish:** Wayne Tate, 20"
- Section 3, Best 5 Fish:** Wayne Tate, 92"
- Largest on Fly:** Wayne Tate, 20"
- Best 5 Fish on Fly:**
- New Member:** Andrew Jennings, 11"
- Grover Cleveland Contest:** Jack Cook, 19.5"
- William Shriver Award:** Jack Cook, 92"

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.