



The Buzz

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PRSC Annual Member Night

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January 27, 2016

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November 18, 2015

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This month marks the return of Member Night. This is PRSC's annual get together for food and fun to say thanks to the membership for making this such a great organization. Because there is so much to do, we will be starting the meeting at 6:30pm. Be sure to get there on time because this is a hungry group of fishermen and women, so the food will go fast.

The main event, as always, will be the raffling off of contributions made to the club from guides, tackle dealers, rod companies and PRSC members themselves. Each member of the club who attends the meeting and their membership is up-to-date for 2015 will get one raffle ticket. Members can then renew at Member Night to get a second raffle ticket. New members can join PRSC by paying the dues for 2016 and receive a raffle ticket. Former members whose membership has lapsed can renew to get one ticket. Dues for next year will remain at \$40 for the year.

We have a few other activities going on as well. Jack Cook will be handing out awards for the PRSC fishing contest in a variety of categories, including the coveted Biggest Fish of the Year. We will also be welcoming a new folks to leadership positions in the Club.



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Upcoming Items

Potomac River Smallmouth Club - See you Next Year

Join Us Wednesday, January 27 for PRSC's First Meeting of 2016. Please join us to kick off the new year. We will be meeting at the Vienna Firehouse in Vienna, VA at 7:30pm. Our speaker will be Steve Leathery, NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Coordinator. Steve will discuss seasonal timing of spawning and availability of fish to fishermen, gear, techniques, and shoreline fishing locations. Please join us for what should be a very informative presentation. **Please note there will not be a meeting in December.**

Picture Raffle - Smallmouth Bass Print

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



Potomac Riverkeeper

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

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.

Great Fish and a Big Smile.



Craig Bishop.

Nice Smallmouth Bass.



Fish caught and photographed by Marcel Courtillet.

Great September Smallmouth.



Fish caught and photographed by Marcel Courtillet.

Nice Shenandoah Smallmouth Bass.



Fish caught and photographed by Chip Comstock.

Novembe

By Bill Amshey

Our speaker at the June 27, 2001 meeting was Tom McFillen, who owned and operated River Hawk Tours out of Berryville, Virginia. My fishing partner way back then was Bobby Ward, who wore the nickname “Bluegill Bobby.” We met Tom at a fishing show in the Chantilly convention center and got him invited to speak to the Club. Bobby loved catching and eating slab bluegills, which then were very bountiful in the Shenandoah River system.

The Shenandoah River just above Harpers Ferry.



Tom told us that he primarily floated the Shenandoah from the Rt. 7 bridge downstream. He advised fishing mid-river during the summer and to fish slow, saying “that you cannot fish too slow.” When using a fly rod, his favorite lures were wooly buggers and fur leaches. His range of lures broadened with a spinning rod, and he would use black, grape, and red tubes; spinner baits with gold Colorado blades; and Yamamoto Senkos and Zoom flukes in chartreuse, white, and purple.

My notes of the July 25, 2001 meeting indicate that we had 189 paid members. We’re down to around 100. Where have all the fishermen gone?!? Chris McCotter spoke at that meeting. I always looked

forward to meetings that Chris addressed, as he was very generous with his fishing tips, and even better he always passed out lure samples, and I am a sucker for free fishing gear. Thanks, Chris!



Chris is the founder of McCotter’s Lake Anna Guide Service. He has fished Lake Anna for the past 30 years and began guiding 20 years ago. The night he visited with us, he opened by telling us “there are no small-mouth bass in Lake Anna.” After that revelation, I have to admit that I shut down until the gifts were passed out. It seems that Lake Anna is well known for that other bass and really big stripers. I have fished Lake Anna

r Pro Tips

several times and found it difficult fishing. My recommendation if you plan to fish the lake, contact Chris, as he is the most experienced fishing guide on the lake. He boasts that customers have caught that other bass up to 10 pounds. But be careful, they have large mouths.

Blaine Mengel spoke to our meeting on 29 August about fishing the Delaware River. Blaine gave a great presentation and really got me excited about fishing the Delaware, but I am still trying to get there. Blaine primarily fishes the upper Delaware, about 1 hour to 1 and a half hours above Philly, where there are mostly trout, some smallmouth bass, and growing numbers of stripers. He said there is a lot of fast, deep water and lots of bluff ledges, but not much chunk rock.

Blaine advised fishing the weed beds and rocky areas where shad fry would hold, explaining this would be where to find bass. He said that in the summer bass tend to hold suspended in mid-river. He said there is a lot of man-made structure and ledges with current worth fishing. The spring time flows, Blaine said, could be murky but not muddy and that the best fishing would be along the banks at this time. He said “don’t bother” if the river is low and muddy.

Among Blaine’s favorite lures are buzz baits, tubes, and jerkbaits. He Texas-rigs Senkos on a 3/0 weedless hook, and reels down before setting the hook. He fishes out of a jet boat with a very strong trolling motor because of the heavy currents. The best time of year to go fishing is April and May and August to November.



The Delaware River.

Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

I had a unique opportunity back in October to get down in the trenches and do some real lobbying on Capitol Hill in Washington DC for our personal pet issue: Clean Water. I'm still in kind of a fog about it all, but it was very cool, and exciting to be a part of the effort. I guess it goes to show what happens when you really get involved in working for something you care about.

A little over a year ago, we had the National Director of Conservation for the Izaak Walton League of America, Mike Lehey, come out to our local chapter and speak to us at one of our monthly meetings. We're not that far from the National Headquarters in Gaithersburg, MD., so I got an opportunity to speak at some length with Mr. Lehey during our evening meal and at the end of the evening. As he was leaving, I handed him my card and gave him the usual "If there's anything I can ever do to help..." and the off he went.

Well, apparently he took me seriously.

About the first week of October, I got a call from Mr. Lehey asking me if I would like to be part of something called a "Conservationists and Sportsmen 'Fly-In'" to lobby our Congressmen and Senators on behalf of the Clean Water Rule. This was a joint effort organized by the National Wildlife Fund, The Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Society, Izaak Walton League and Trout Unlimited. Each organization was responsible for providing four or five lobbyists for particular politicians (I was working Virginia's of course) and a matching number of 'assistants' to accompany us to the hill. I was very humbled, excited and yeah... a little bit freaked out by the idea. I said, "Of course!" a little too quickly and with more confidence than I was feeling at the moment.

I had to be at the Trout Unlimited Headquarters in Rosslyn, VA directly across the Potomac River from the Key Bridge on a Wednesday afternoon at 5:00pm. Mind you, ordinarily that's just an hour and 15 minute drive from my house...but I was going to be driving in from the middle of Tennessee from a Jackson Kayak event at the factory! I arrived with 45 minutes to spare. This gave me time to check into the hotel and then walk the three blocks down to the Trout Unlimited HQ to get our agenda and assignments, sit through a 90 minute training session, then dinner up the street at a very nice seafood restaurant. Needless to say...sleep came very easily that night.

On Wednesday morning, after meeting up at TU HQ, our first stop was the headquarters of the EPA on Constitution Ave., just across the street and catty corner from the Washington Monument. There we were briefed on the new Clean Water Rule by the two gentlemen most responsible for its wording and implementation. Basically this new rule, whose implementation is currently under a court ordered stay, clarifies what the Clean Water Act covers, and more importantly, does NOT cover. This has been kind of a gray area for a number of years and has been seized upon by opponents of the Act as a means to undermine the work of the EPA and the Clean Water Act in particular. The new rule, simply states what is covered and what is *not* covered. Its makes no new rules, nor adds any new bodies or water or types of streams or wetlands...it just states clearly and specifically what the Act covers. It is not a new federal over reach or land grab as some would have you believe. No birdbaths, nor backyard koi ponds or water features, farm ponds or the ditch in your front yard will be covered...period.



Three Days on the Hill

The Congress members and Senators who were chosen to receive visits by us citizen sports-persons and activist-constituents were either strong supporters of the Act and the Clean Water rule, are members of key committees, or were staunch opponents of it. Virginia has one staunch supporter in Sen. Tim Kaine, one staunch opponent in Congressman Bob Goodlatte of the 6th District (mine) and Senator Mark Warner who is on the fence about the new rule but supports it in principle.

We never talked directly to our legislators. Instead, we spoke to their individual legislative aides who specialize in environmental issues. This is generally the case with these kinds of lobbying events. This one day blitz of lobbying was timed to celebrate the Clean Water Act's anniversary and bolster support for the Clean Water Rule currently under litigation by 30 states. They didn't turn us loose alone, but gave us each a seasoned "handler" to coach us, guide us around the Russell Senate Office Building and Dirksen Legislator Office building. Both of these buildings are just as grand as the Capitol Building in their own right. I was thankful to have someone who knew their way around these buildings. I was lucky to get Scott Kovorovics as my handler. Scott is the Executive Director of the Izaak Walton League of America. Scott insisted that I was to be the lead in these meetings since I was the constituent. That kind of sent a few butterflies moving around, but I seemed to manage and even reined in my tendency to get off on tangents. Yes, I am aware that I do that...first step in solving a problem and all that....

The meetings with the aides for Senators Kaine and Warner went smoothly and ran for some length - almost 20 minutes each. Both aides were well informed on the Act and the Rule and assured us that the respective Senators supported the Act and the Rule (in Sen. Kaine's case anyway). But Sen Warner has some issues with procedure in the drafting of the new Clean Water Rule, but in the end, he did vote to defeat the rider that would have killed the Clean Water Rule itself a week later.

The meeting with my Congressman's staff was less successful. We were told that they had only heard from people who were opposed to the new Clean Water Rule, which I found very hard to believe with petitions circulating in his and other legislative offices with over a million signatures in support on them. I wanted so badly to ask just how many of the folks who were opposed were significant campaign donors of the Congressman...but I behaved myself, thanked them for their time and we left...after only about five or six minutes. After the meetings, a reception was held in the Russell Senate office building to celebrate the Clean Water Act's anniversary. We had Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland speak to us as well as Congressman Conti from New York. Both were well received and gave excellent short speeches thanking us for our involvement in the effort. Senator Cardin was especially passionate and was very effective in getting us fired up.

Dinner that night was on the Potomac waterfront at Farmers-Fishers-Bakers, which was a very appropriate location given what we were all doing there. I made a LOT of good contacts and the business cards flew back and forth. I have four new Facebook Friends, numerous new email addresses and more ideas about new program activities for our local IWLA chapter than I can use in two lifetimes. All-in-all, the two days were worth the effort just for the networking opportunity to meet with like-minded activists and conservationists from around the country and exchange ideas and information.



Conservation Corner

We had one last meeting the following morning at TU headquarters to discuss media contacts and writing letters in our local papers that would wrap up the three day effort.

A few items of note and lessons learned:

-It is a LOT further walk from the EPA headquarters to Capitol Hill than you think...and it is NOT level. You really are going “up on the Hill.” Word to the wise.

-Most congressional staffers and non-profit managers of legislative affairs tend to be young, in shape...and in a hurry. A good 50% by my observation, are young women. They all tend to be highly intelligent, VERY motivated, and in the case of the non-profit organizations, dedicated to the effort for a better environment. If these young people are any indication of what the new ‘millennials’ are like that everyone seems to be wringing their hands over...you can relax. The future is in **very** good hands.

-The food in the Russell Senate Office Building cafeteria is actually VERY good.

-When you are walking back and forth across the capital plaza in a full suit and tie...74 degrees is NOT pleasant...it's HOT.

-A lot of business gets conducted in the halls of congressional office buildings. Bring lots of business cards, I probably passed out fifty or more.



-The closer you are when you exit the cab to an entrance to a federal office building, the more likely it is that particular entrance is closed.

-Security in the Federal Triangle, and on the Hill, is as tight as any airport and very similar in procedure. Wear clean, new socks (no holes), slip-on shoes, and keep stuff in your pockets and jewelry to a minimum. Consider a pair of pants that doesn't require a belt.



Three Days on the Hill



Wildlife Federation, but they all wanted to know if they cost less than 10 dollars. Sarbanes-Oxley rules everyone these days and it really kills the “awwww” moment.

-Nothing brings out young congressional staffers to a Clean Water Act celebration/reception like free hand-crafted micro-brews and heavy hors d'oeuvres.



-The passing of business cards is a ritual, and gets done during the introductions, sort of like passing cards back and forth in a game of Bridge. You need three at each Congressional office, one for the receptionist, one for the staffer, and one inside any materials you leave behind for the legislator to read later.

-You may be able to name every prominent legislator and Senator you see on MSNBC or CNN before the commentator says their name, but you never recognize that person you just passed as being that well-known politician ...until you are well past them in the hallway.

-The female staffers love little stuffed plushy River Otters from the National

Wildlife Federation, but they all wanted to know if they cost less than 10 dollars. Sarbanes-Oxley rules everyone these days and it really kills the “awwww” moment.

All in all, this was a great experience for me. I stand up on my soapbox way too often, much to the dismay of my long suffering child-bride and my son's family as well. (“Daaaad...it's just the evening news fer Chrisakes!!”). But with this, that soapbox came in real handy. And I suspect this is going to be a regular occurrence with these organizations and other “Fly-Ins” will be organized to address other legislation coming down the pipe in the future.

And apparently I said something right. Scott Kovorovics sent me an email the following week asking me to “tag-team” with him on some radio interviews here in Northern Virginia and our nation's Capital. Wish me luck.

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This is my favorite picture for November. PRSC Vice President Craig Bishop caught this great smallmouth on a recent fishing trip this Fall. The Fall is a terrific time to catch big smallmouth bass.



2015 Contest Results

November 2015 Report By Jack Cook

The contest is over. The results are in. There were some late entries so you should come to Member Night and see who wins the Grover Cleveland Award, the William Shriver Award, and the other fishing contest awards.

There were a few late entries that affected some of the standings, so don't count on getting a trophy based on the results published in the October issue of The Buzz. We don't publish the final standings of the contest in the November issue. So you have to come to Member Night to see who the winners are!

2015 Results

- Section 1, Biggest Fish: ?????
- Section 1, Best 5 Fish: ?????
- Section 2, Biggest Fish: ?????
- Section 2, Best 5 Fish: ?????
- Section 3, Biggest Fish: ?????
- Section 3, Best 5 Fish: ?????
- 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 \$40/year. Monthly meetings are held at 7:30 PM on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) at the Vienna Volunteer Firehouse. Club by-laws and member rosters are published once a year and available during meetings or upon request. The Club newsletter, "The Buzz", is emailed to all members prior to each month's meeting and is available at local fishing/tackle shops. Articles, photographs and general information relating to smallmouth bass fishing are solicited. The Buzz reserves the right to edit all materials submitted for publication. Observations, conclusions and opinions expressed in The Buzz are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the club, its officers, or the editor. All materials submitted become the property of the club. Every effort will be made to return photographs at the monthly meetings, however the printing process occasionally results in the destruction of a photograph. Send copies and make sure YOU have the negative.