



# The Buzz

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## NOAA's Steve Leathery To Speak About Walleye

### Upcoming Items

**PRSC Meeting**  
February 18, 2016

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Steve Leathery became the NOAA National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Coordinator in 2007. He advises NMFS leadership and works on numerous NEPA and environmental compliance issues, including work with the fishery management councils to revise and update agency NEPA procedures under the Magnuson-Stevens Act, updating the NOAA NEPA Administrative Order, and working on a wide range of NEPA actions in support of fishery management, habitat conservation and restoration, and conservation and management of marine mammals and species listed under the Endangered Species Act.



Steve has worked in several positions for the NOAA Fisheries Service the past 18 years. He was the Chief of the Protected Resources Permitting Division that issues scientific research permits under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act, and incidental take authorizations under the MMPA. Steve also served on a 15-month detail from NOAA to the US House of Representatives on the Natural Resources Committee during 2001-02 to work on Magnuson Act reauthorization, and a 3-month detail in late 2002 working in the NOAA Office of Legislative Affairs. Prior to working at NOAA, Steve worked for the US Fish and Wildlife Service at Patuxent Wildlife Research Center in Laurel, MD, from 1977-85 and the Smithsonian Institution National Zoo Conservation and Research Center in Front Royal, VA, from 1985-97. In both positions he worked hands-on as an aviculturist, animal keeper and bio-technician with numerous native bird, mammal and other exotic wildlife species, including whooping cranes, bald eagles, Andean condors, many types of parrots and waterfowl, Pacific Island birds, black-footed ferrets, and clouded leopards.

Steve lives with his family in Jefferson, MD, and frequently paddles white-water kayaks on the Potomac near Great Falls and the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers near Harpers Ferry. Steve has fished the Potomac for smallmouth since he was a child and has fished for Potomac walleye ever since he caught his first one in the early 1980s. He is also an avid light tackle tidewater angler and recreational crabber.

During his presentation at our January meeting, Steve will discuss seasonal timing of spawning and availability of fish, gear, techniques, and shoreline fishing locations. Some of the best walleye spots are only a few miles from our meeting place in Vienna, and Steve will be happy to tell us where and when to fish. According to Steve, walleye are a very interesting and mysterious fish, and he has only ever caught them or seen them caught in certain places under certain conditions.

Club Executive Board	<h1>Upcoming Items</h1>
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# PRSC On the Water

By: Rick Mrstik

PRSC members were busy this fall, catching some nice fish. With nearly 3 feet of snow blanketing the area before our January meeting, many of us are dreaming of spring fishing weather. If you get out fishing, send me some pictures for *The Buzz*.



Nice smallie caught by John Lippetz in October.



Ernie Rojas with an October Smallmouth.



Jed Woodill is eager to try out his new kayak.



A striper Jed caught in December.

# Fall Potomac River Fishing Trip

By Ernie Rojas

Herschel Finch and John Lipetz invited me to join them on an Upper Potomac float . . . Brunswick to Lander. This was to be my first cold-water kayak float. Of course, 65 degree temps made it easy to make that decision. These guys are smallie river rats so I was in good but intimidating company.

The boys wanted to meet at Penny's Diner at 8:00 AM . . . I was good with that. They were in no rush to get on the water when it was cold.

Penny's Diner gets a thumbs up!

We went on down to the ramp and got all set up . . .

No hurry . . . all is good.



When I had my OK 13 footer, I always put 1/2 of it in the water, sat in the yak and scooted myself in the water. No big deal, did it often with no issues.

So now I have a Jackson Cruise 12. I put 1/2 the yak in the water, sat down and asked John to give me a bump. Oops . . . this yak has a higher rear end keel and in a few seconds, I am in the water. Now I am wet and thinking of calling it off. And I have a stogie in my hand (it was the 1st thing that came out of the water)!

Once we determined I was OK (very wet but we retrieved all my gear safely), John lent me a shirt and ready to roll again once I dried off. The first thing John said was, "This is a good sign, you will catch a pig today."

And I saved my stogie while I dried off! All is good again.

So we are now on the water and start fishing. Nothing for the first hour or so and then I find a deep pool and yell at John to tell him so . . . and then I get nailed . . . with this nice 18-19 incher!

John was nice enough to come down and take this picture!



# Fall Potomac River Fishing Trip Continued

I caught it with a HookUp (George Thurston) home made jig in green with a Z-Man BatwingZ as a trailer. That felt soooooo good!

My next fish was this 13-incher. You can see the home made jig I was using.

John then hooked up, as did Herschel, but they were not close to me.

John and I each caught another one later as well. I had maybe two to three more bites but that was it for the day.

I ended up taking out before they did as I needed to get back to get ready for striper fishing on Saturday. John and Herschel went on to the Brunswick Grill for some chow!!

I saw lots of nice channel cats and was hoping to hook into one but no dice. Also saw some carp.

What a beautiful day to be out on the water!!!!



John Lippetz with a beautiful smallmouth caught during this trip.

# January

By Bill Amshey

Continuing my stroll down memory lane, back on 31 October 2001 Richard Furman, a retired Vocational Agriculture teacher from James River High School, spoke to the Club about the merits of fishing the New and Upper James Rivers. Richard is a lifelong fisherman who has been wetting a line for 60 years.

Over the years he has fished the James, the New, the Shenandoah, the Staunton, the Maury, the Jackson, the Cowpasture, the Rappahannock, and the Rapidan Rivers. He has concentrated most of his river fishing for the past 20 years on the James and New Rivers. Conservation and protection of Virginia's river fisheries is a primary concern of Richard's, along with the philosophy that all fish he has caught in the last 30 years have been catch and release. Richard is a guide for Twin River Outfitters and can be reached at [www.canoevirginia.net](http://www.canoevirginia.net) or 540-261-7334.

Richard spoke first about the New River. He said there is good fishing in the Pepper's Ferry area, but he warned that the Arsenal Rapids are pretty bad. He said the Whitehorne area has good fishing, including muskies for those of us who like toothy critters. He said there are no rapids for 3 miles down river and 1 mile up river. He noted there is a deep trench through this area. Speaking about McCoy Falls, Richard suggested putting in downstream of the rapids, which can be pretty intense.

He said there are two "serious" ledges on the Eggleston run, which he described as "beautiful, with cliffs and caves." He said the Pembroke put-in is good, but that there are six major rapids on this part of the river, which has deep holes at the start, and also has muskies. Ripplemeade, with five "serious" rapids, sounds like it is for professionals.



Bruce Ingram Photo

For the waders in the crowd, Richard said there is good wading at McCoy Falls and Parrot Falls. Richard then quickly ran through the put-ins on the James River, but there's no sense reviewing their status now, as I am sure a lot has changed since 2001.

Before ending his presentation, Richard talked about his favorite lures. He said he likes spinnerbaits with trailers and that he shortens the spinner blades. He likes Jitterbugs at dark, Rebel crawdads, Phantom Brown Wigglewarts, and Norman crankbaits, particularly the Little "N," the Deep Tiny "N," and the Hot-N-Tot in muddy water.

At our February 2002 meeting, Jack Cook and Jeff Little spoke as an experts panel. Jack described how in winter he fishes a jig & pig using a Zoom pig with lots of smelly jelly and a weedless hook. He said it is necessary to fish very *slowly*. Jeff said that on the Susky he uses purple tubes because it looks like crawdads after they molt. He also likes motor oil with gold fleck tubes and Fat Ass tubes, which make smallies think are big crawdads. He uses Arkie's 1/8 ounce jighead. In the winter he fishes the bottom "dead slow" and lets the current bounce the tube along the bottom. In the summer, Jeff said it is best to fish near moving water and close to deep holes.



# Pro Tips

I have no idea who our March 2002 speaker was, simply did not put his name in my notes, but it seems he said some interesting stuff. His favorite lures included the Norman Little "N" and the medium-sized Big "O" in firetiger. He liked tubes in avocado, motor oil, and Kentucky watermelon with purple fleck, which he described as "very productive." He said he loved Senkos in watermelon and green pumpkin, and especially the two-color Senkos that came out that year. (Wow, that was a long time ago!) He also used 1/4, 3/8, and 1/2 ounce spinnerbaits in chartreuse, white, and chartreuse/white. One trick that he mentioned I had never heard, and that is to put Smelly Jelly on the line above hair jigs, which he preferred in black and blue.

In April 2002, Jeff Kelbe swamped me with information. Jeff began his presentation by talking about fishing all three water columns: top, middle, and bottom. He said it is very important to do this to determine where the fish are and after locating them, to catch a big one. He added that boat positioning is very important; in other words, don't run your boat, canoe, or kayak through the good spots.

Jeff advised that it is important to get comfortable with three lures, and then proceeded to list ALL his favorite lures, including:

**Tubes:** he uses a 1/8 or 1/4 ounce jig. He said 3" tubes are too small, preferring 4" tubes.

**Jig & Pig:** Likes, but keeps it small. **Super Fluke:** Likes, but not on highly pressured rivers.

**Spinnerbaits:** He said this is a spring bait. **Buzzbaits:** Likes.

**Grubs:** He doesn't use 2" to 3" grubs, but said that 5" grubs catch fish.

**Mepps Spinners:** A good bait, but not for catching big smallies.

**Plastic Jerkbaits:** Prefers 4" inch Senkos to 5" and 6" ones for catching big fish.

**Tiny Torpedoes:** He described this lure as a late afternoon summer bait. He uses yellow.

Regarding flies, Jeff commented:

**Micro Poppers:** No.

**Cup-Faced Poppers:** Good.

**Cicada imitations:** Great!

**Leeches:** Yes, in black.

**Dahlberg Divers:** Great!

**Woolybuggers:** Great in sizes 10, 8, and 6.

**Murray's and Clouser Mad Toms:** Yes.

**Clouser Minnow and Floating Minnow:** Great, and the latter especially in clear water.



Walt Carry's Fire Tiger Popper

Commenting on colors, Jeff said:

White, black, green, smoke, pumpkin, and watermelon are his favorites.

Black can be used in muddy waters, at night, and even on a sunny day.

White he fishes in the middle water column and swims it in fast water.

Smoke with purple fleck he likes to use in muddy water in the spring and in clear water in the fall.

# Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

Even during the holidays, the business of making sure our environment is protected doesn't take a break. We've had a couple of small victories, one BIG one, and one not so good. Yet we press on . . .

I'm sure everyone has heard by now that Dominion Power's request to de-water their coal ash ponds at Possum Point was approved. That means water that stands in the coal ash ponds will be pumped directly into the Potomac at Possum Point with little or no additional treatment to remove the lead, selenium, arsenic and a whole host of other toxins prior to dumping it into the river. This will also set the stage for approval of the discharge permit to do the exact same thing at the Bremo Power station down on the James River. You can be sure that injunctions and lawsuits are being prepared in a number of offices, including the Potomac Riverkeeper Network and Earthjustice among others. And even the very conservative Prince William County Commissioner's Office is preparing their own injunction.

The last three months of 2015 was occupied with making sure the Clean Water Rule didn't get gutted or stripped out completely from the continuing budget resolution up on Capitol Hill. My column about the October trip up to the hill was all about that effort. It seemed like one day it was protected and the next it was in danger of being removed or so watered down as to be meaningless, and this yo-yo'd back and forth all the way to Christmas. Well finally, it made it through, intact, to the President's desk and President Obama signed the Continuing Budget Resolution for 2016-17 about a week and a half ago. This was a big victory for us and will go a long way toward making sure all those small feeder streams like Gooney Creek, The Monocacy River, Flint, Overall Runs, and literally thousands of other streams and tributaries across the nation will now be protected under the Clean Water Act for at least two years once the 6<sup>th</sup> District Federal Court releases it from judicial review.

And probably the best news on the environmental front for protecting our local waters and fisheries is the United States Forest Service has DENIED permission for a special permit requested by Atlantic Coast Pipeline to run a pipeline directly through the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests!! This will ensure the headwaters up in those protected lands will continue to be kept free from possible leaks and blowouts from a high-pressure pipeline that would have been moving crude oil to ports in Baltimore, Norfolk, and on the James River. Theodore Roosevelt personally established these forests to protect the headwaters and springs that directly feed the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers that are located in these forests from development. He expressly wanted to protect the drinking water for the nation's capital in perpetuity. The vision that man had for this country's vast untracked lands and how precious this legacy would be for the citizens has been unmatched for the last 100 years.

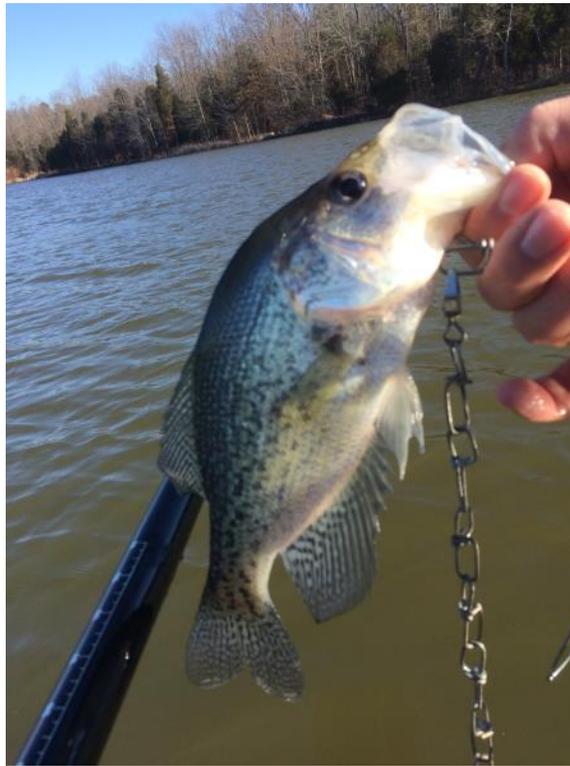
If you're so inclined, I highly recommend the book: *The Wilderness Warrior* by Douglas Brinkley.

This book covers Theodore's early life and how he came to be such a champion for wild and unspoiled lands, and later, his efforts to preserve them when he served as our President.

Finally, I want to thank each and every member of the club that participated in these efforts, in whatever form your help took. If you wrote a letter to a congressman, or called a representative's office, signed a petition, joined the Riverkeeper organizations or passed on some of my Facebook postings and rants . . . you had a hand in making some of this happen, and I truly appreciate it.

Here's looking forward to more success in 2016.

**PRSC**  
**P.O. Box 1240**  
**Vienna, VA 22183**



This is my favorite picture for January. I fished Beaver Dam Reservoir in Ashburn on January 2nd, hoping to catch some crappie for the frying pan and was successful doing so. It was a lovely day, reaching nearly 50 degrees, and the water temperature was 48 at the surface.

# 2015 Contest Results

## 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

<b>Section 1, Biggest Fish:</b>	Jay Eiche	20.5"
<b>Section 1, Best 5 Fish:</b>	Randy Chandler	86.5"
<b>Section 2, Biggest Fish:</b>	Randy Chandler	21.5"
<b>Section 2, Best 5 Fish:</b>	Marcel Counterbelt	81"
<b>Section 3, Biggest Fish:</b>	Randy Chandler	20"
<b>Section 3, Best 5 Fish:</b>	Bill Pearl	87"
<b>Largest on Fly:</b>	Wayne Tate	19.5"
<b>Best 5 Fish on Fly:</b>	Randy Chandler	60.0"
<b>New Member:</b>	Marcel Counterbelt	
<b>Grover Cleveland Contest:</b>	Randy Chandler	21.5"
<b>William Shriver Award:</b>	Randy Chandler	221.5"

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.