



The Buzz

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September 27, 2017

Bill Amshey on Ontario, Erie

Upcoming Events

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September 30, 2017

PRSC Meeting
October 25, 2017

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Bill has been a member of the Potomac River Smallmouth Club since the mid-90s. He says it's the only organization of any kind that he has joined in his adult life. He was enticed to attend a PRSC meeting during a fishing show at the Chantilly convention center. "They were real friendly fellas, so I figured I'd give it a try," he explained. In all those years, Bill contends he hasn't missed even a dozen meetings. Bill was our long-time Program Chair.

Northern Ontario Smallie

Bill started fishing with his father and grandfather Pete Amshey when he was a youngster. Pete had a wooden rowboat he had built himself tied up on Lake Cochichewick that he'd walk about two miles to get to. Bill thinks this was his grandfather's way of weeding out the non-fishermen from among his many cousins. "My two brothers and I always had Grampy to ourselves," he said. "Our Father would come along, too." Bill's grandfather fished to put food on the table for family events, and there was always a big bucket of white perch to carry home.



When living on the Island of Saipan in the early '50s, Bill learned other forms of fishing from the native Chamorro life guard, Rikki, who taught him to catch fish with his hands, a spear, and a spear gun. Rikki even took him out fishing once with the villagers in a dugout canoe.

Bill returned to more conventional forms of fishing when he joined the PRSC. Over the years, Bill says he has been lucky to meet, fish with, and learn from some real fishing pros, like Jeff Little, Jeff Kelbe, Kenny Langston, Jamie Gold, Herschel Finch, Steve Kimm, and Ernie Rojas, among many others. He says that the first time he fished with Jeff Little, Jeff showed up in a kayak for a float on the Juniata River. All of the old guys thought he was nuts, but he was way ahead of the curve.

At our September meeting, Bill will talk about his quest to catch a six-pound Smallmouth that took him this summer to the Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge in northern Ontario. You can read more about the Lodge inside the newsletter. Bill will also talk about trips the past couple of years to Buffalo to fish Lake Erie, a real destination for big Smallies.

Lake Erie Smallie



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Upcoming Events

Join us Wednesday, October 25th, for our monthly meeting, 7:30-9:00 PM at the McLean Governmental Center, 1437 Balls Hill Road, McLean, VA 22101.

Club Float Trip, Saturday, September 30th. Jamie Gold will lead a club float trip on the upper Potomac starting at 7:30 from Brunswick to Lander or Point of Rocks, depending on river conditions. Sign up via Meetup.com or in person at the monthly meeting.

PRSC on the Water



Chun Rhee hit the water at Riverbend Park on the morning of 28 August with great success on topwater. The Heddon Tiny Torpedo was his ticket to success on three nice smallies that each taped 17 inches.

PRSC on the Water



David Brenningmeyer caught this largemouth bass on a "pond" (New England for "lake") near Sangerville, Maine, in mid-August 2017. It measured 20.5 inches and weighed just under 5 lbs. He was fishing in shallow water, near the shoreline, with a 3-inch white Mr. Twister grub on a lead jig head when the fish hit the bait. David commented, "It broke my ultralight rod in half; but somehow I didn't mind too much at the time!"

Phil Puzick was out on the water on 30 August when he met up with this Smallie, who asked to be photographed for *The Buzz*. Phil said, "Just thought I'd share this one. My best to date on the Potomac. Wednesday evening on a tube."



Fishing Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge

By Bill Amshey

Several years ago when Joe Bruce spoke to the Club, he hooked me with the idea of fishing at Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge in northern Ontario, approximately 400 miles north-northwest of Toronto. Fishing “way out in the middle of nowhere” in Canada had been on my bucket list for many years, and Joe’s animated description of the place convinced me that I wanted to go. So on June 9th my high school friend Bill Rogers, neighborhood buddy Mike Carpenter, and I set out on this fishing adventure.

It’s about 800 miles from my home in Herndon to Lost Lake, so we planned on a two-day trip. On the way up, we stayed in Hamilton, just south of Toronto; on the way back, we stayed in Buffalo. Some younger guys we met up there drove straight through both ways from/to the Metro area. But, respectfully, they are beasts who fished from 8:00 in the morning until the Sun went down at 10:00. Yes, Canada has a sunshine advantage, with dawn at 4:30 and nightfall at 10:00. That took some getting used to!

Just before we arrived at Lost Lake, we stopped in the small town of Elk Lake, to pick up last-minute essentials, like beer, wine, booze, and snacks. We were immediately received by the local welcoming committee – black flies that savaged us with numerous bites before we even knew what hit us. It seems they were having the worst outbreak of these critters in years, and we were just in time to feed them.

When we arrived at Lost Lake, we were met by our hosts, Tony and Melissa Thomas. Tony and Melissa are American ex-pats who several years ago escaped the motor company grind of Detroit and moved their family up north. We were assigned the “best” cabin right on Lost Lake and told the breakfast and dinner schedules. Hearty breakfasts and dinners were served, respectively, at 8AM and 5PM. Lunch food and drinks were available at breakfast to prepare along with soft coolers and ice packs.



Fishing from the lodge gave us access to 10 lakes: Lost Lake, Bloom Lake, Wigwam Lake, Calcite Lake, Everette Lake (smallies, walleye, northern pike); Leta Lake, Sigs Lake (speckled trout); Flatstone Lake (rainbow trout); Leroy Lake (smallies); Miller Lake (lake trout). Obviously, since we were located right on Lost Lake, it received the most pressure. The best producing lakes, in order, were Wigwam, Bloom, Lost, Everette, and Calcite. I am not aware of anyone going to the smaller lakes while we were there.

Our first day out, we fished Lost Lake with moderate success. Bill and I are both river fishermen, and it took most of the week to adjust to fishing lakes. Mike is a novice fisherman who used to fish Canadian lakes with his Father.

On the following days, we fished Everette, Lost, Calcite, and Wigwam two days in a row. Everette is a long, narrow lake with lots of rocks. I have to admit that we threw everything, except dynamite, with little success. Calcite is the smallest lake we fished. It, too, is long and narrow with some deep holes and hemmed in by beautiful tall cliff faces. If you’re looking for a beauty of a lake, this is it. One of the guys we met from Pittsburgh caught a monster northern pike here.

Fishing Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge

Continued



We caught the most fish on Wigwam with chartreuse crankbaits and plastic Senkos and Keitech swimbaits. The most fun on Wigwam was fishing the reed beds at the top of the lake. My friend Bill and I both played for brief seconds with some big pike here, and this is where I caught my largest smallie at 3.02 pounds. Mike also caught his largest smallie on Wigwam with a vintage popper from his Father's tackle box dating back to the '40s. The "Plunker" was manufactured by Creek Chubb of Garrett, Indiana, starting in 1927 for some 50 years.

On Thursday we went out with the Lodge guide, Jay Crate, who showed us some of his top spots on Wigwam. We could not come up with any walleyes that day, but we did catch several northern pike that Jay cooked up for a shore lunch of pike, home fries, and baked beans. It was the best shore lunch I have ever had or provided the main course for!



Other Americans

While we were at Lost Lake, there were several other Americans from the Metro area and Pittsburgh. Ken Butts, of Warrenton, was there with three of his buddies: Joe Gigler and his two sons Jesse and Joe Jr. This was Ken's second trip in 2 years, explaining that he likes the size of the Canadian smallmouth. "These northern smallies just seem chunkier," he said. Ken spends a lot of time fishing for smallies on the Shenandoah River and the South Branch of the Potomac.

Fishing Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge

Continued

What attracts him to Lost Lake is the lack of fishing pressure. Essentially, the Lodge manages the number of fisherman on each lake daily with a reservation board entry required to reserve one of the two or three boats on each lake. There are some days when you don't see anyone other than the guys you're fishing with. Ken and his crew fished long days, often returning to the cabin next to mine around 10:00 at night. He reported catching 20 or so smallies daily, with the occasional walleye. His favorite lakes are Bloom, because of the remoteness (getting to Bloom requires a hike that my knees would not allow), and Wigwam, because of the size of the smallies. He added that rubber worms were his most effective lure.



Ken concluded that he plans to keep coming back because, "Tony and Melissa are great hosts and know how to provide customer satisfaction. The food is fantastic, the boats and motors are very good, the fishing is tough and requires significant know-how to find them."



Russ and Dick Ward, from the Pittsburgh area, have been going to Lost Lake for six years and seven years, respectively. They enjoy fishing the different lakes and camaraderie at meal times in the Lodge. They reported catching at least a dozen fish each a day, sometimes more, mostly Northern Pike. Dick caught his 43" Northern Pike on Wigwam Lake with a J11 chartreuse Rapala, their favorite lure. Their favorite lakes are Bloom and Calcite. They plan to be back next year with two friends.

Fishing Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge

Continued

Canadians Show How It's Done!

Hank and Anneliese Bochenek, from Hamilton, Ontario, impressed me the first time they walked into the dining room. Anneliese was wearing a T-shirt with the slogan, "Dry flies are for Sissies – throw Junk." That slogan said it all, she was out to catch big fish! And she did. Check out the monster pike she caught.



They told me they pick a week in mid-June to avoid major bugs, noting that this year they were bumped to one week earlier than normal and that, coupled with the late spring and heavy rains, made for a perfect Black Fly Storm. Part of the attraction of Lost Lake is the number of lakes to fish, each one with different characteristics and dominant fish.

Hank and Anneliese said they, "found fishing much harder than last year, but you have to factor in the weather —ice out for the area this year was May 1st, so that only gave the water and fish about five weeks to warm up and get spawning." This year they started out slowly with a few bass each. Hank fishes exclusively with plastic worms, and Anneliese always starts with lures, but had no luck with them until later in the week. She did manage a couple bass (one 20"+) on flies, but that was it for the bass fly fishing since she found the pike were more willing to take flies.

Anneliese said, "Last year we were hauling in countless fish as we prowled the shoreline, and there were aggressive fish every 20 feet or so. This year we were having more difficulty making them move to the bait, and so we're happy with a half dozen or so fish each. I found pike on the main lakes were very happy with my fly selection, and I stuck with smaller 4"-6" sized minnow patterns, as that's what got the pike moving to the fly most often. Pike on fly ranged from 17" thru lots of 22"-25" sized to 32" and 34" and topping out at 39-1/2".



I also got bit off through 50 lb braid by a nice heavy fish. Hank caught a wide range of bass on Senkos. The best day out was probably the last, Friday, as the weather and wind settled down, and we caught probably a dozen bass each, a couple smaller pike in 22"+ range, and even a nice eating-sized walleye all up in Bloom Lake. The fish in that lake are quite big, and we each had a couple fish over 20" and others ranging 18"+. The size clearly is due to catch and release, but last year we caught a ton of 18"+ in Wigwam. This year we only caught about six in Wigwam total in two tries but blame the weather again to take the focus off what may be lacking in our skill."

Fishing Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge

Continued

Their favorite lures/baits are: Senkos (she likes Sweet Potato Pie and Bumble Bee colors and he swears by the black with blue fleck). Rapala Flat Raps and Original Floating in the gold color. J-9 and J-11 in gold or fire tiger. Also X-Raps in clown color. Favorite topwaters are X-Walk in Size 11 and sub-walks, both in clown color. Anneliese has discovered that in the tannin-colored, northern lakes the go-to lure color will always be fire tiger or clown. She is primarily a fly-fisher and uses woolly buggler flies with legs for smallmouth and for the pike she sticks with hollow flies in 4" to 6" size, as this time of year they tend to be slower and want smaller size. Her main color is white with redhead, although she also is successful with Electric Chicken colors (light pink and chartreuse).

For more information on Lost Lake Wilderness Lodge, check out their Website at:

www.lostlakelodge@xplornet.ca. Their rate this year for seven nights is \$1,099.00 per person, which we thought was a deal.



Fishing the Day River in Central Oregon

By Jack Turner

I got lucky—real lucky—on August 24, 2017. Legendary John Day River fishing and hunting guide Webb Hammond decided to take the day off to go fishing for himself. And he invited me along. Yeah! I couldn't believe my good fortune. More on that later.

In August, the John Day River in central Oregon is low and slow, with gentle rapids. Farmers use the John Day for irrigation during the dry summer months. Smallmouth bass tend to concentrate in deeper holes and at the bottom of rapids due to the low water conditions. Casting into deep pools next to the rocks and grass beds is often successful. There are virtually no trees to snag your bait on—just bushes and rocks.



(left) Low and lazy, the John Day River in August at about 150 CFS. (above) The John Day River in May at about 5,000 CFS.

Webb and I caught a couple of fish each after 20 minutes on the water. Then we each caught a 9-inch smallie simultaneously. Webb's fish had a belly full of crawfish – a typical fat and sassy John Day smallmouth. We had barely moved from our put-in on a quiet 150-foot-long pool, so things were looking good for the rest of our 3-mile float.

It's not unusual to slow down our techniques and presentation of baits for smallmouth in the hot summer months here in Virginia. According to Webb, you can fish successfully that way all year round on the John Day River. Even when the river swells 5 feet higher during the spring runoff, and the current is running at 5,000 CFS, you don't necessarily want to set your hook on the first bite. From 4 inches to 20 inches, the bite is the same, says Webb. "The smallmouth will pick up your bait and move it. It's really slow fishing here." So the trick is to control that urge to set the hook on that first, or even second or third bite. I know this is true, because I did not catch one fish when I jerked too soon.



Fishing Guide Webb Hammond

Webb says, "I tell all my clients not to watch their rod tips for bites—watch your line instead. When your line starts moving, you know a smallmouth has picked up your bait. Then you wait a while longer to set the hook." I followed Webb's guidance, and the results were outstanding, as well as perplexing. I've never hooked so many smallmouth without feeling a hard bite. Sure, once they were on they battled as hard as any other smallmouth. Without Webb's directions to wait patiently and watch that line, I doubt that I would have been very successful.

Fishing the Day River in Central Oregon

Continued

Here's how I caught John Day smallmouth: I'd feel a nibble, another nibble, a fairly hard bite—and then my line would start moving here and there, circling back, and so on. This could go on for a few minutes. When I felt confident, I'd set the hook, or just pull in the line, and then the battle was on. You literally have no idea how big the fish is until you see them. Those mighty smallmouth have some serious fight in them, no matter their size! Eight inches or 16? Only until they pop out of the water will you know. It's actually suspenseful.

So, I was catching fish of all sizes up to 10 inches, a pretty typical day according to Webb. I watched Webb, who really knows his river, pull in 12-inch, 14-inch, and 15-inch fish. I was only a little jealous, I swear, because I was enjoying a lot of fight from the fish I was catching. Then everything changed. I got the big one,

Nothing about the next fish was different from the others I caught until my rod bent, and then *really* bent, if you know what I mean. Still, who knows? I had seen 10 inch smallmouth fool me time and again. I finally pulled it up to the surface for a momentary look before it dove again. “[BLEEP]!”, I yelled. That fish was bigger than anything I'd seen that day. Forty feet away, Webb yelled, “Did you lose it?” “No,” I yelled back, “I caught a big [BLEEP] fish! Webb paddled over and watched me pull in a big, fat 16 inch smallmouth. It had to weigh at least two and half pounds, and I'd brag hard for more.



The sweetest part? Webb, who even scuba dives the river to see how the fish are doing, said, “Jack, you caught the fish of the day. Welcome to the John Day River!” Webb caught more, naturally, and caught a 14 inch and 15 inch respectively. But I got to pull in the lunker, and it was grand.

After we pulled in our pontoon boats, I realized that I had lost the keys to my rental car in the river. Yep, real stupid. Should have left them under the car (nobody takes your stuff in this area). My only defense is that I was having so much fun that I just forgot. By the way, it cost \$250.00 to replace those car keys. No rip off either, that's what those electronic keys cost (and I lost two of them, fool that I am). Webb's regular charge for a day of fishing? That's right, \$250.00. I figure I broke even.

Baits on the John Day

I caught most of my fish on a watermelon flake Strike King KVD Fat Baby Finesse Worm or something that looks a lot like it (sorry, I can't keep up with all the different soft baits). Just as good, but not as indestructible, was a black neon Case Jack's Worm. The smallmouth swallowed the Jack's Worm whole, or tore it up so much it could only be used to catch two or three fish. I believe Webb retired the Jack's Worm I gave him after three fish gnawed it to shreds. Webb had never used a Case bait before, so he was pretty impressed when he caught a smallie on his first cast with a Jack's Worm. I already mailed him some more as a gesture of gratitude.

A significantly different bait that caught many smallmouth up to nine inches on the John Day River was a bright colored, two-inch, curly-tailed swimbait fished on a 1/16 ounce jig head. Yes, a pink and purple head and a bright yellow tail caught a lot of smallmouth. Webb says the store in Service Creek ordered a bunch of them

Fishing the Day River in Central Oregon

Continued

by accident, but they worked so well that the packet I bought was the last one! I've tried it a few times here in Virginia and haven't got a bite yet. Go figure.

What did *not* work that day was dark green three inch tubes, hula skirted or not, and almost anything that was not a worm of some kind. Crayfish imitations in the right color are usually productive, according to Webb, but my red one did not stimulate one bite. Interestingly, one fish Webb caught had a bright orange crayfish claw still in its gullet.

Fly fishing: Not worth trying, according to Webb. The fish just don't come up for top water baits that much. I should note that mosquitos were remarkably absent from the John Day. I'll let the entomologists explain that one.



The little bait that catches them all on the John Day (at least this year)—pink, purple, and yellow 2 inch curly tail. Weird, huh?



The Strike King KVD Fat Baby Finesse Worm (right) outlasted the Case Jack Worm (left) by many fish. Both were effective on the John Day River.

You Tube: Videos

Fishing John Day River <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAH4bopZUew>

Service Creek https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=43_43tm6ZU

Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

The last couple weeks has been up against the wall for me. I had to reintroduce myself to the wife this past Saturday by taking her down to Harrisonburg for a big quilt show. Coincidentally, that was also the grand reopening of the Mossy Creek Fly Shop in the new location (imagine that!!) Met up with Brian and Colby Trow, the owners of course, but also Beau Beasley was in attendance along with Chuck Craft, L.E. Rhodes and a host of others including Mark Forndorf, our Shenandoah Riverkeeper. The barbeque and 3 Notches Brewery were first rate as was the music from Shenandoah Alley. I actually was able to get away with no damage to my credit either.

But my bear of a month all began two weeks ago up to Capitol Hill again with the National Wildlife Foundation and the Virginia Conservation Network in support of access to and preservation of our public lands and the clean water they support. This was almost a carbon copy of the trip I did back in April with the VCN and again with the National Wildlife Foundation. Visiting Senators Kaine and Warner's offices is always a pleasure. We sat with Senator Kaine's legislative aides for nearly a half hour explaining our position and answering more questions from them by way of gathering information for the Senator. Sen. Warner's office has relocated to the Hart Building while his own spacious and classical offices in the Russel Office building is undergoing renovation. So we kept it short there due to lack of space for everyone who was waiting to get time with the legislative aides or the Senator himself.

Our "non-visit" with Bob Goodlatte (my own representative out here in the Valley) was almost infuriating. The National Wildlife Foundation tried to get a scheduled meeting with Representative Goodlatte but they refused to even grant them a meeting. We decided to "crash" the office hoping the presence of an actual constituent might sway them into granting us five minutes with an aide. Nope, didn't even get us in the door. Nice huh? You can bet my letters to the local papers on this visit will reflect the fact that our representative on Capitol Hill can't seem to give a constituent with a contradictory opinion the time of day. Of course dinner at the Old Ebbitt Grill in the Atrium with my fellow lobbyists was a nice treat at the end of a long and very exhausting day.

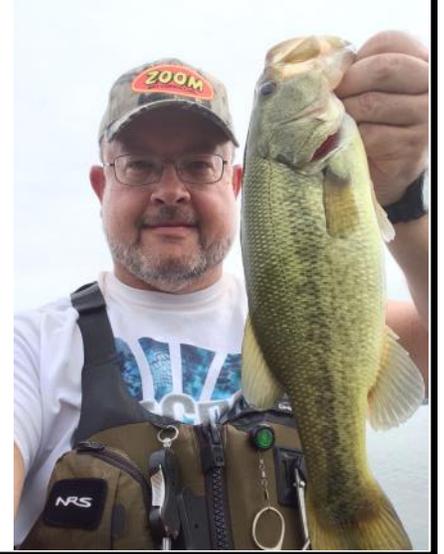
Last week, was a trip to Ashland and the Bass Pro Shop to attend the Virginia Outdoorsmen's Conservation Roundtable. Personally, I would have put a shorter name change at the top of the agenda but we had bigger fish to fry.

This was a group gathered together by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation of all outdoor and sportsmen's group in Virginia (Fur, Fin and Feather organizations that are doing anything having to do with conservation in the state). The idea is to see where we may have common ground and then see if we can work together in those areas to effect change. There is a surprising amount of overlap in what a lot us are doing, from the Virginia Dog Hunters Association to the Ruffed Grouse Coalition of Virginia. As far as I can tell we are the only fishing-oriented club represented in this group. So from time to time, as this group meets, I'll be letting you know what's coming up on the agenda at the next meeting and I'll be soliciting your input going forward.

So after a very busy September, I'm looking forward to some nice, relaxing fall fishing. Give me a call.

PRSC
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September has been a busy month. Over Labor Day I went to NY to chase smallies again and found a pike hidden among them. Back home I had a birthday bass in lieu of a birthday bash.



2017 Fishing Contest

Fishing Contest

The 2017 Fishing Contest began on 1 January. Visit our contest page for rules or to submit an entry.

<http://prsc.org/fishing-contest/>

2017 Leaders

Section 1, Biggest Fish:	George Moran	21"
Section 1, Best 5 Fish:	Marcel Courtillet	79.5"
Section 2, Biggest Fish:	Rick Mrstik	18"
Section 2, Best 5 Fish:	Rick Mrstik	82"
Section 3, Biggest Fish:	Ernie Rojas	21.5"
Section 3, Best 5 Fish:	Chun Rhee	86"
Largest on Fly:	Jamie Gold	15"
Best 5 Fish on Fly:	No Report	
New Member Big Fish:	Marcel Courtillet	16"
	Randy Hall	16"
New Member Best 5:	Marcel Courtillet	74.5"

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 McLean Governmental Center. 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. 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.