



The Buzz

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Volume 31, Issue 2

February 28, 2018

Duncan McGrath

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March 28, 2018

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April to September

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Our featured speaker this month is Duncan McGrath, who will discuss pre-spawn techniques, lures, and his guiding service.

Duncan McGrath has been guiding the rivers of the Appalachians and Mid-Atlantic since age 17. He is based out of Fayetteville, West Virginia and is an expert on the New and Gualey rivers. Raised on the Potomac he started smallmouth fishing as a child and still guides the same waters.

Duncan fishes from large Maravia rafts and is an expert white water oarsman and class 5 kayaker. He has worked with the white water rafting industry for over a decade as a safety specialist and guide. Duncan is a trained Wilderness First Responder and has received extensive training in white water safety. He is a Certified IFFF Fly Casting Instructor and prides himself on teaching anglers to Fly-fish for smallmouth bass and giant musky.



Duncan specializes in finding his customers trophy smallmouth, and many avid fishermen have caught their personal best in his boat. He fishes a wide swath of some of the best smallmouth, striper, and musky fishing water in the country. Depending on the season, Duncan can be found using a variety of tackle from heavy tubes and jigs on spinning rods to large cork bugs on fly rods. He chases large striped bass on tidal rivers and coastal fisheries as well as traveling to the Rockies to guide the upper North Platte River in southern Wyoming.

Club Executive Board

President

Steve Kimm
president@prsc.org

Vice-President

Craig Bishop
vp@prsc.org

Secretary

Dave Lockard
 H (301) 656-1964
secretary@prsc.org

Treasurer

Jamie Gold
 C (571) 213-4699
treasure@prsc.org

Trip Coordinator

Marty Burkard
trip_coordinator@prsc.org

Program Chair

Leon Kates
Programs@prsc.org

Conservation Chair

Herschel Finch
 H (540) 635-7636
Conservation@prsc.org

Librarian

Aaron Otte
Librarian@prsc.org

Additional Programs

Fishing Contest

Rick Mrstik
 C (703) 380-7992

The Buzz

Rick Mrstik
 C (703) 380-7992
Buzz_Editor@prsc.org

Merchandise

John Lipetz
Merchandise@prsc.org

Publicity

Ernie Rojas
 H (703) 729-0128
Publicity@prsc.org

Webmaster

Kris Andersen
Webmaster@prsc.org

Past President

Steve Moore

Upcoming Events

Join us Wednesday, March 28th, for our monthly meeting. Our featured speaker will be Scott Johnson, who will speak about seasonal patterns on the Susquehanna River. 7:30-9:00 PM at the Vienna Firehouse, 400 Center St. S, Vienna, VA 22180.

DMV Bronzeback Yak Challenge. PRSC member Chun Rhee is helping to organize this smallmouth kayak tournament series from April through September. See the event description on the next page. For more information speak with Chun or visit the event web-site here: <https://www.phatbasstard.net/>

FAMILY AND YOUTH

CASTING CALL

A FREE FISHING EVENT

SATURDAY, April 28, 2018
 10am to 3pm

ANACOSTIA PARK
 outside of the Aquatic Resources Education Center
 1900 Anacostia Drive SE
 (north end of Anacostia Park)

RAIN OR SHINE

LEARN TO FISH!
 Participate in angler education activities and explore displays about watersheds and conservation of our aquatic resources. All equipment, bait, and angling instruction provided for youth participants.

REGISTER ONLINE
 Register online at DOEE.DC.GOV/AREC to secure your spot!

★ ★ ★ DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Upcoming Events



The **DMV Bronzeback Yak Challenge (DMVBYC)** is Kayak Smallmouth Bass Fishing Tournament Series (online only) for residents of the **DMV** (D.C. Maryland and Virginia...West VA too). We are a Kayak Bass Fishing (**KBF**) Partner with six (month long) online kayak **smallmouth bass** fishing tournaments through [TourneyX](#) from April through September leading to a 6 week long Main Event Championship in October/November.

The purpose of the DMVBYC was to create a kayak bass fishing circuit for those of us in the DMV who live in highly pressured Largemouth Bass waters. For those of us who primarily fish for smallmouth bass, its hard to compete an 18 inch smallmouth against 20+ inch largemouth bass. All DMVBYC events are a month long (vs. live at a specific venue.) We offer the flexibility of fishing an entire month in waters close to you versus a specific date that you may not be available for or a venue that is too far to drive to.

Why the Potomac, Rappahannock, and Shenandoah only?

- a. Proximity of the rivers to our area (DMV)
- b. The smallmouth populations in these rivers are similar. The New, James and Susquehanna are not in the permissible fishing area because we don't have immediate access to these rivers (proximity) and I think we can all agree the smallmouth bass populations in these rivers (and the average size of the smallies) would give an overwhelming advantage to those who can fish there regularly.

Here are the basics:

1. You **must** be a resident of the DMV (West Va included).
2. Competition is limited to the following rivers only (and tributaries): **Potomac, Shenandoah, and Rappahannock**.
3. Best 5 fish (measured by length) for each month-long event. Catch, Photo and Release using [KBF Rules Standards](#).
4. **NO DINKS RULE!** Smallmouth must measure a **minimum of 14 inches**.

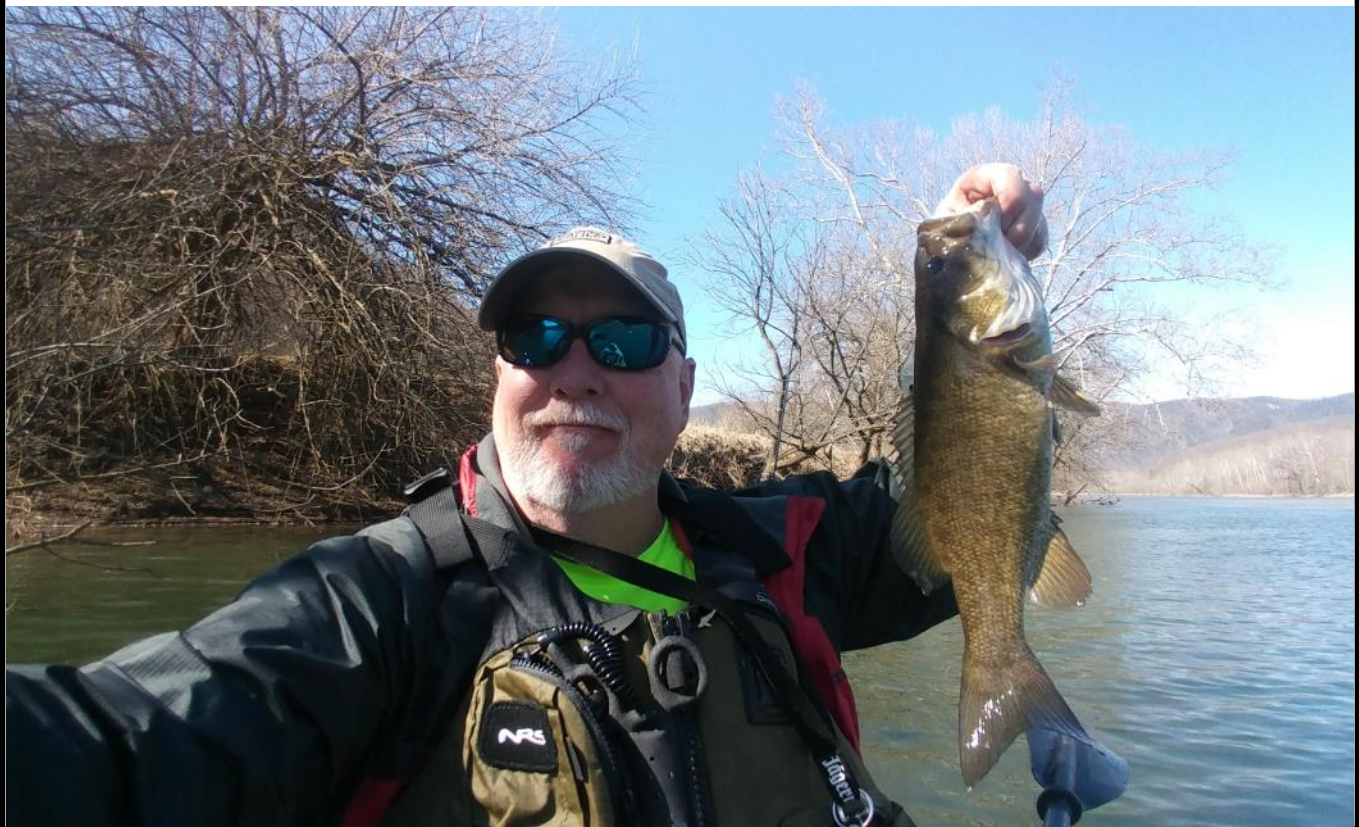
February on the 'Doah

By Mike McDade

It was a beautiful February day with temperatures in the 70s. I got down to the river and on the water around 11:00 A.M. One thing I didn't expect was the wind, and there was a lot of it. While the forecast was for 8 to 10 miles per hour, I can assure you it was easily twice that at times. I wasn't expecting to have to battle the wind, as my biggest concern was the water condition. After all the rain we've had, I was just hoping for some fishable conditions. The water had about 5 to 7 feet of visibility with a slight greenish stain. It was certainly fishable, and I was hoping for the best.

I loaded three rods on my kayak. One with a Ned rig, one with a Texas-rigged KVD floating elastic worm, and the third Rod was loaded up with a Keitech swing impact "fat" swimbait. I hooked up on the First cast! Fought the fish for a good 30 seconds or so and lost it 5 feet from my yak, it was definitely a "toad," probably 18 inches. I figure if you're going to lose one it might as well be on the first cast, knowing that you have the whole rest of the day to make up for it. I fished for just under six hours and ended up catching four decent smallmouths. A 15-incher, two 14s and a 12. I caught two on the Ned rigs and the others were on the Keitech. All in all a great way to spend a beautiful day!

Tight Lines, Mike



Striper Fishing in February

By Jamie Gold

On Monday, February 19, four members of PRSC went fishing for striped bass on the Chesapeake Bay with Captain Dennis Fleming of Fishamajig Guide Service. Captain Fleming has spoken to the club several times, and I have fished with him before. On the trip were Jamie Gold, John Lipetz and his son Quin and Bill Owensby. This was a last minute trip. I had reached out to Capt. Fleming about two weeks ago to see if he had any days open. He said the fishing had been good, but that the fish had disappeared. So I asked him to get in touch with me if the fish came back. On Saturday, while I was working at the PRSC booth at the Rapidan TU fly fishing show, Dennis called me and uttered the magic words, "The fish are back. Can you go on Monday?" I said yes, sure that I could find three people to go with me. And if I couldn't, I would go on my own. Fortunately, the others quickly agreed to go.

We met Capt. Fleming at the boat ramp on Solomon's Island, then motored up to the Calvert Cliffs Power Plant. There is a very large warm water discharge from the plant that flows into the Bay like a river. During the cold months, the stripers like to school up there. This is not a secret spot, as there were already five boats there when we arrived. The air temperature was in the mid 40s, with light rain and cloud covered skies. Perfect strip-er fishing weather for February.

To put it simply and succinctly, the fishing was on fire. In about four hours, the four of us combined caught 184 stripers. Most were in the 20" range, but we caught a few over 30". John Lipetz had the big fish of the day at 34". Bill Owensby had the second biggest at about 32".

I don't know that Quin had any over 30", but he may well have caught the most fish as he was on fire during the whole trip. I had neither the most fish, nor the biggest fish, but I had a real thrill that I'll explain later.



To give you a sense of how thick the fish were, here is a picture we took at one point of the fish finder on the boat. Yes, all of those marks represent fish.



Striper Fishing in February



The other guys were using light spinning gear with large soft plastic jigs in chartreuse and others in a light blue/purple color. The technique was to cast out the jig, leave the bail open for a slow count of 4, close the bail, let the current pull the bend out of the line, then start to jig it back. The key was to maintain a tight line the entire time to feel the bite . . . since the bite was quite light and would often come on the fall after popping it.

I spent most of the day using my fly rod. My gear consisted of an 8wt rod with a heavy sink tip line. I needed that type of line to get the fly down to where the fish were. I used a short leader of 4' using a combo of a 30lbs butt section and a 20 lbs tippet. The stripers were not line shy, and I wanted the fly down to the depth of the line, hence the short leader. The thrill for me was that I was using Clouser deep minnows on saltwater hooks that I tied myself. Mostly I used one that was chartreuse and white, but also cast a light blue/purple Clouser deep minnow. I've just recently started tying flies so the first one that I caught was my first ever striper on a fly that I tied. That was a very cool experience.

Overall this was a fantastic trip and a great way to spend a day fishing in February. Dennis is a terrific guide, and I urge you to book a trip with him if you want to go striper fishing. As I sit here typing up this article, my arms and shoulders are really sore . . . and I'm loving it!



Conservation Corner

By Herschel Finch

After finally getting healed up and back on my feet after two bouts with the flu and bronchitis/sinus infections, I am back on the conservation beat . . . So to speak. Hope everyone is getting out to the fishing shows that are going on this year. There seems to be a lot of them and they're pretty good this year. I was at Beau Beasley's Virginia Fly Fishing and Wine Festival in Doswell helping to provide a kayaking/fly-fishing presence along with Cory Routh. I missed the Fishing Expo which was the following weekend there at the main exhibition hall at the state fairgrounds. But I thought a 2-day show one weekend and then a 3-day show the next . . . was just a bridge too far to expect the child-bride to put up with. But I heard it was a pretty good show, was well-attended, and at least as good as last year.

The Rapidan TU Chapter show moved to the Highland School gym in Warrenton from its old venue at the Fauquier County Fairgrounds. The room is smaller and a little cramped, but we made it work. Lots of folks stopped by the booth and hopefully we get to bring a few new members into the PRSC as a result. I'm off for Lefty Kreh's Tie Fest in Annapolis this coming weekend (24-25 Feb) but strictly as a "civilian." No pro-staffing or club officer duties this time. I'll be doing one more show down in Waynesboro at the South River Flyfishing Expo that's put on by the South River Flyshop on the 21st and 22nd of April. The South River Fly Shop is one of two retail outlets that Walt Cary still makes bugs for, and Walt will be there on Saturday giving demos, telling stories, and just being Walt. He's worth the price of admission all by himself. I'll be doing flyfishing kayak seminars both days on the South River right there at the venue. Come on down and paddle my Jackson Mayfly or CoosaHD.

Back on the 8th of this month, I heard our old friend Steve Reeser speak to the Northern Shenandoah Valley TU chapter at Joe's Steak House in Front Royal. So along with a good steak dinner (yes, I took Charlene with me) we got to hear Steve speak on the state of the trout fisheries in the Shenandoah Valley and the distribution and plans for the \$52 million settlement with Dupont for the decades of mercury pollution they caused from their Waynesboro plant (now shutdown for several years). The remediation of the mercury pollution, where they find it on the banks of streams and the rivers, is ongoing and a lot of it has been cleaned up in Waynesboro and along the South River. There are other locations that have yet to be started, but remediation plans are being finalized. There are other plans to help out with the new Seven Bends State Park outside of Woodstock on the north fork of the Shenandoah, which is exciting news, and we're supposed to get a "soft opening" this year. There will be an option to do some kayaking and fishing along that part of the river that borders the park. Not sure if there will be road access and parking ready by that time but we may be able to do some wading.

The other good news is that the fish hatchery in Warren County is going to be renovated and put back into full service to raise trout, and two of the larger hatchery ponds will be used to raise smallmouth. That particular portion is seen as kind of "bank" for the future. It will be placed into service if we see large scale die-offs as we did in the early 2000s. All the buildings and laboratories are going to see complete remodels and modernization, and the ponds and gates are all going to be repaired. We are still hoping to see visitor and education centers established at the hatchery, but those plans are on the back burner for now. They're planning to spend as much as \$10 million on the hatchery. There are other plans to improve access along the south fork of the Shenandoah. The basic idea is to have a public VDGIF access point every 5-6 miles from Port Republic all the way to the West Virginia state line. There are only a few stretches where this is not the case already, but there are several areas where the floats are still 9-10 miles between landings, dams are present with no easy portages (like Warren Co. Dam), and one access point off of Page Valley Road that is virtually unusable because of the length of the shuttle and lack of bridges between Bentonville and Luray.

So the next 2 to 5 years is going to be interesting to watch on the Shenandoah and see what transpires. And as usual . . . the ole' DoahRat will keep you posted.

PRSC
P.O. Box 685
Vienna, VA 22183

Amy Mrstik proudly displays a 15-inch rainbow trout she caught all on her own (just don't ask her to touch it). I love pictures of my wife having success at fishing. I may be bi-ased, but I think that's when she is happiest.



2018 Fishing Contest

Fishing Contest

Visit our contest page to check out the complete rules or to submit an entry for the 2018 contest that is under way. <http://prsc.org/fishing-contest/>

2018 Reports

Section 1, Biggest Fish:	No Report
Section 1, Best 5 Fish:	No Report
Section 2, Biggest Fish:	No Report
Section 2, Best 5 Fish:	No Report
Section 3, Biggest Fish:	No Report
Section 3, Best 5 Fish:	No Report
Largest on Fly:	No Report
Best 5 Fish on Fly:	No Report
New Member Big Fish:	No Report
New Member Best 5:	No Report

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, Virginia Fire Station. 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.