



SENECA VALLEY ANGLER

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OFFICERS

President: Noel Gollehon
Vice President: Joe Walther
Secretary: Bruno Beca
Treasurer: Nate Wallace

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HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The content of this Newsletter was prepared just as the Omicron COVID variant was emerging. Based on current conditions, SVTU may need to rethink our plans for fly tying and other events. Check our website for the latest information.

President’s Note

Another year dawns despite the predictions of many, yet the COVID pandemic continues. In my last column I referenced the DELTA variant and now we are moving to OMICRON. But life goes on.

Despite the COVID-related restrictions, SVTU had one of our very best years. We held very successful Fly Fishing 101 and Fly Fishing 102 educational classes, conducted a fly-tying series with the highest participation yet, had interesting and educational speakers at our meetings, hosted a fishing outing, and a Beaver Creek workday with close to 50 volunteers attending to stream and riparian maintenance.

We did all this with a small core of dedicated volunteers that could use your help to make 2022 an even better year. We have plans in the works for a great program to kick off 2022. Our first presenter in 2022 is Tim Flagler. I will not recount his credentials here as they are on the website, but when I need to see how to try a new fly or refresh my memory on a fly pattern, I search out a Tim Flagler video. They are always well done, organized and clear. He is a master fly tyer in my opinion. His presentation on *What Trout Like to Eat & What to Feed Them* will no doubt be as high quality as his fly tying videos. This is a virtual meeting you do not want to miss. (There will be no recording of this session posted to our website, so don’t miss it!)

We are also planning on a revamped and reimagined fly-tying series starting in February. We are going to

try a hybrid model with both in-person and instruction via Zoom options. It is easy to see what someone else is doing online but nothing replaces a little hands-on instruction when you cannot make what looks “so easy” on the screen work for you. We all get frustrated and turn to more pleasurable options for our time. [Continued](#)

2022 SVTU Meeting & Event Schedule

- January 10 SVTU Chapter Meeting – Tim Flagler: “What Trout Like to Eat & What to Feed Them”
 - January 26 SVTU Board meeting
 - February 7 Fly tying Sessions Commence (see details that follow)
 - February 14 Valentines Day **NO Chapter meeting** (take your sweetie to dinner)
 - February 21 Fly Tying (check website)
 - February 23 SVTU Board Meeting
 - March 14 Chapter Meeting & Elections
 - March 23 SVTU Board Meeting
 - April 11 Chapter Meeting
 - April 27 SVTU Board Meeting
 - May 9 SVTU Chapter Meeting
 - May 25 SVTU Board Meeting
 - June – Aug “Summer break” no Chapter Meetings
- Updates to our schedule will be provided via Chapter emails and posted on our website and social media presence in Facebook and Instagram.

Upcoming 2022 Chapter Meetings and Events

Special Speaker for our January Chapter Meeting (Zoom meeting)

When: Monday, January 10, 2022
Sign-in: 7:15 to 7:30 p.m.
Program Start: 7:30 p.m.
Speaker: Tim Flagler of Tightline Production
Program: **What Trout Like to Eat & What to Feed Them**

For those of you who tie flies and use youtube and the internet as a resource, the name Tim Flagler needs no introduction. Tim and Tightline Production produces some of the most informative and useful fly-tying videos currently on-line. However, even if you do not tie, you do not want to miss this program. If you like to catch fish, information on the flies to match the food chain for trout is always useful information.

This presentation will include video of aquatic insects, bait fish & crustaceans trout eat to survive and the fly patterns we use to imitate them.

Tim Flagler is the owner of Tightline Productions, L.L.C., a video production company located in Califon, NJ. Although he produces video programs over a wide range of topics, his specialty is fly fishing. Tim is a well-known fly tying instructor. His YouTube videos are some of the best in the business and his YouTube channel, practicalpatterns.com currently has over 98,000 subscribers and 30 million views. Almost every week he produces a new fly tying or “how to” video which appear not only on his YouTube channel but on Midcurrent and the Orvis fly fishing blog as well. They’re also featured on Trout Unlimited’s national website and in the Orvis Learning Center.

In addition, he has a regular column “Beginner’s Masterclass with Tim Flagler” in Fly Tyer magazine. Many of his tying videos take the viewer well beyond just the tying of the fly and show what it looks like underwater, what natural it represents and how it can be fished. Tim’s a fixture at the Fly Fishing Shows—giving presentations, teaching classes and often as a Featured Tier.

He enjoys guiding year round for [Shannon’s Fly & Tackle](#) in Califon, NJ and hosts annual trips to

Patagonia in the spring and to the Kootenai River in MT in the summer.

Mark your calendar now for this special program. (This program will not be recorded, so if you miss it, you miss the opportunity).

[Join Zoom Call](#)

Charles August Memorial Fly Tying Sessions

[Check Website for Details](#)

February 7 thru April 18, 2022

When: Various Mondays
Where: Live Meetings: Izaak Walton League of America Chapter House
12057 Clopper Road, Germantown, MD
Time: Zoom Sign-in: 7:15 p.m.
Classes: 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.
Who: Joe Walther, SVTU Chapter VP and Other Chapter Tyers
What: Fly Tying

Summary by Joe Walther, SVTU VP

Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited is excited to announce some changes for the 2022 fly tying sessions that will kick off on Monday, February 7, 2022.

After more than a year and a half of virtual fly tying classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, SVTU plans on returning to in-person instruction for the 2022 season. For those that are interested, SVTU also plans on broadcasting a live feed of the fly tying classes via ZOOM for any of our members who prefer that format.

Further, we plan on holding beginner fly tying instruction on the *first session of the month*, and advanced fly tying on the *second session of each month* that will cover more complicated techniques and move at a faster pace.

The specific fly patterns to be tied at each session will be influenced by SVTU’s January 10th Chapter Meeting guest speaker Tim Flagler. Tim is presenting a session on “**What Trout Like to Eat & What to Feed**

Them” which is the perfect prelude to our fly tying classes.

Both the beginner and advanced fly tying sessions each month will be modeled around information from Tim’s presentation as well as relevant hatches and patterns from some of Maryland’s famous trout streams. The details of the fly tying classes along with material lists will be announced in mid-January.

At this time, unless COVID becomes an issue, the 2022 fly tying sessions will be held in-person at the Izaak Walton League of America Rockville (IWLAR) Chapter House in Germantown, MD.

The classes will be held on Monday nights at 7:30 p.m. on the following dates:

February 7: Beginners Fly Tying, Topic TBA
February 21: Advanced Fly Tying, Topic TBA

March 7: Beginners Fly Tying, Topic TBA
March 21: Advanced Fly Tying, Topic TBA

April 4: Beginners Fly Tying, Topic TBA
April 18: Advanced Fly Tying, Topic TBA

The first class of each month will focus on fundamentals and basic fly tying technique. The second class of each month will incorporate more complicated tying techniques, move at a faster pace, and possibly include more tying steps or fly patterns.

Regardless of experience or skill, everyone is welcome to come out for all tying sessions to meet, converse, and learn from other chapter members.

SVTU also plans on broadcasting a live feed of the in-person fly tying sessions via the ZOOM platform for any members interested. Attendees will be required to register for the Zoom event through a link on the chapter’s website.

Stay tuned for updates regarding SVTU’s 2022 fly tying sessions. Fly patterns and materials will be announced on our website, and via our Facebook and Instagram pages @senecavalleytu. We hope to see a lot of new as well as familiar faces for another round of fly tying in 2022!

March-June Chapter Meetings

The Chapter is finalizing Programs for these meetings. As a reminder, meetings are scheduled to be held the second Monday of each month. Updates will be posted on the website, and notifications will be

provided via email to those who have opted-in to our Constant Contact email service.

We will not have a February Chapter meeting because of Valentines Day. Officer and Board elections will be in March

March Chapter Meeting (Zoom Mtg.)

When: Monday, March 14, 2022

Sign-in: 7:15 to 7:30 p.m.

Program Start: 7:30 p.m.

Speaker: TBD

Program: TBD

The Chapter is finalizing the Program for this meeting. We will be having officer and board member elections during this meeting.

Other Happenings

Maryland Fly Fishing & Collectible Tackle Show—March 19, 2022

When: Saturday, March 19, 2022

Where: West Commons Bldg. 4th Floor
Towson University

One of the east coast’s premier shows, the Maryland Fly Fishing and Collectible Tackle Show brings together fishing enthusiasts throughout the mid-Atlantic region with high quality fishing dealers for a day of tackle review, sales, demonstrations, seminars, clinics and conversation.

Dozens of independent retailers, fly shops, guides and artists all on display to view and purchase. From a learning and entertainment perspective, we will have professional seminars (free) throughout the day, casting demonstrations and a few surprises.

The Show takes place in an outstanding venue with over 10,000 sq. ft. of exhibition space, the West Commons Building, located on Towson University’s 356-acre campus.

Easy access from all major highways. Minutes off I-83 at Baltimore’s beltway 695 and easy access from I-95. [Check out the show details and updates.](#)

Recap of Fall Chapter Meetings & Events

Following, is a brief description of some of the recent 2021 SVTU Chapter activities. Despite the impact of COVID-19 some of these activities were able to be held “live” following the applicable guidelines. The Chapter meetings were all held via ZOOM. Attendance was excellent.

September Chapter Meeting

When: Monday, September 13, 2021
Speaker: **Phil Gay of Trout & About**
Program: Gunpowder—Down the river, through the seasons.

Phil Gay of Trout & About in Monkton, gave us a great talk about the Gunpowder's different stretches with some advice on how to fish them throughout the year. He gave us the advantage of his mastery of approach and presentation casting and provided some common sense tips for rigging and fly selection gathered from decades of fishing, guiding, and instruction. [Watch Phil's talk on Vimeo.](#)

To learn more about Phil and links to his site and instruction go to: [SVTU website/Past Speakers/2021.](#)

IWLA-R Hunting & Fishing Day

When: Saturday, September 25, 2021
What: IWLA-R hunting and Fishing Day

SVTU assisted the Izaak Walton League Rockville Chapter during the IWLA Hunting and Fishing Day. Joe Walther, SVTU Chapter VP and a member of IWLA-R, coordinated the SVTU volunteers.

Volunteers assisted with the kids fishing at the Lake. While it was not fly fishing, it was a lot of fun. The excitement of a child catching their first fish is hard to beat! The grounds were open to the public this one day a year. This year over 50+ kids cycled through the fishing experience. A great day was had by all!

Fly Fishing 102, Intermediate Fly Fishing

When: Saturday, October 21, 2021
What: **Fly-Fishing 102, Intermediate Fly Fishing**

In lieu of a Chapter meeting in October, SVTU continued its annual Fly Fishing educational session. SVTU hosted the program in partnership with IWLA Rockville Chapter at the Jim Berrier Memorial Lake.

This half-day instructional course offered participants the opportunity to choose the element of fly fishing they wanted more instruction on. Participants worked one-on-one with experts on casting problems and methods; stream fishing techniques; lake fishing techniques as well as rigging, i.e., examples of where to place lead shot on your nymph rig. We had experts to help whether you wanted to learn how to throw a curve cast to put your fly behind a rock, or when and how to mend to extend your drift, or the best stripping technique for still water fishing.

There was a fly-casting challenge course that several participants participated in after learning more about casting and passed the Bronze level. It was a beautiful day; all enjoyed the apples from Kingsbury Orchard. Everyone left with more knowledge and had a great time. If you have an element of fly fishing that you want to improve, look for Fly Fishing 102 in 2022.

Fall Beaver Creek Workday

When: Saturday, November 6, 2021
Where: Beaver Creek, Hagerstown MD

SVTU continued to support work on Beaver Creek with a fall workday.

Seneca Valley TU (SVTU) sponsored a workday on Beaver Creek on Saturday, November 6, 2021. We had a glorious day with a fantastic turnout that combined for a very productive day. We had crews working on:

- Trash patrol, covering 2.5 miles of stream on Black Rock and Beaver Creek and collecting 10 bags of trash
- Pruning overgrown fishing and walking trails
- Tree maintenance (pruning limbs, removing and installing protection from beavers and deer), and
- Maintaining recently planted shrubs and trees near the parking lot by clearing away the grass, mulching and fertilizing.

Seneca Valley Angler—January 2022

The reason we were able to accomplish so much was the enthusiastic support from students at Saint James School in Hagerstown. This Episcopal boarding school participated with over 30 students who worked very hard and enabled much to be accomplished to help maintain Beaver Creek. Those students were assisted by 15 volunteers from SVTU, Beaver Creek Watershed Association, Antietam-Conococheague Watershed Alliance, and Antietam Fly Anglers, who both guided the students, staffed the work crews and worked on cleaning up invasives, pruning trees and checking tree guards.

Lunch was provided by the Beaver Creek Watershed Association and SVTU, with a real boost from the big pot of chili provided by Anna Hutzell. It was a fantastic effort and much was accomplished! The trail by Beaver Creek is now walkable because of the hard work of everyone.



Doug Hutzell provides information about healthy streams to Saint James students.



Trash patrol working on Black Rock



St. James students working on the mulch pile. It was all spread by day's end.



Thanks to all our volunteers!



*And a **very special thanks** to the participating students from the Saint James School in Hagerstown.*

November 2021 Chapter Meeting

Who: Noel Gollehon, SVTU Chapter President, and Doug Hutzell, Board Member

What: Tailwater Trifecta

By: Noel Gollehon, President, SVTU

I have fished the San Juan tailwater in New Mexico almost annually for the past 25 years or so. Doug Hutzell has joined me in this annual fall pilgrimage in the past five years. This year, since we had no pressing job requirements, we decided to make it a fantastic road trip. And we did! We fished two tailwaters on our way to the San Juan in New Mexico, the Holston in Tennessee and the White in Arkansas. Since these were all tailwaters they shared several characteristics, the waters were cold, there were provisions for minimum flow below the dams, and midge fly patterns were utilized on all three rivers.

The Holston tailwater is below a TVA dam built for flood control and some power generation. The dam releases water twice a day into a pool created by a weir dam that is designed to let water flow through to create a stable minimum flow.

When we were there in September 2021, the fishing was much better when the dam was releasing water at greater than minimum flow. The Holston has limited wading access and is best fished by drift boat. It is a moderate sized stream similar in size to the North Branch of the Potomac below Jennings Randolph dam. We caught fish on Sulphur dries and emergers during a one-afternoon sulphur hatch and on midge pupas while nymphing.

The White River tailwater is below Bull Shoals Dam a Corps of Engineers structure built for flood control and power generation. Minimum flow is provided by continuous operation of one of the eight power



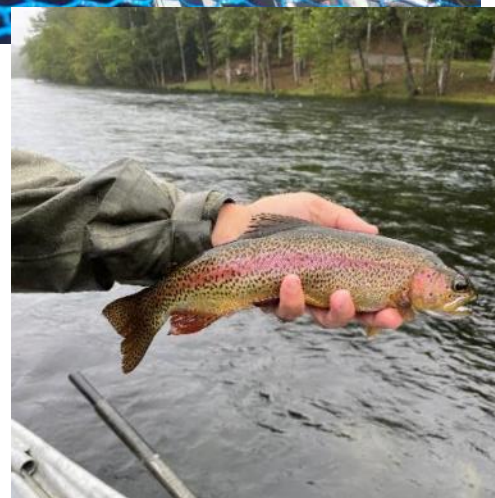
turbines. Flow out of Bull Shoals can vary greatly and can go from minimum flow to 10x that flow very quickly. It is very large river the size of the Potomac

below Washington DC. Given the large river, variable flows, and limited wading access it is also best fished by boat.

The common boat is a square-front john boat about 17 foot long with an outboard to motor to areas with better fishing conditions. The boats are also equipped with oars to control the downstream drift while fly fishing.



These boats are not as maneuverable as a drift boat, but they are very stable and have the advantage of being able to move upstream with the outboard motor. When we were there in September 2021, we fished with both size 12 grasshoppers that resulted in some very nice brown trout on the surface. We also fished a nymph rig with a caddis pupa above a midge pupa.



Then finally we arrive at our original destinations, the **San Juan in New Mexico**. The San Juan tailwater is created below Navajo Dam. Navajo Dam is a Bureau of Reclamation dam built for irrigation water supplies and flood control. There is a continual release of water to create a minimum flow that is closely controlled and linked to environmental conditions about 60 miles downstream. If there are irrigation water demands and low flow by tributaries, flow from Navajo goes up



and if demands are low and tributary flow is high, releases go down. The core tailwater area below the dam is in a state park, so wadable access is available at several locations. There are also many guides that provide drift-boat float trips on several sections of the river. The flies on the San Juan were the smallest of any of the tailwaters. We fished a BWO pattern in size 18-22 and midge patterns in size 22-26.

Doug and I fished tailwaters a total of 10 days; 2 on the Holston, 2 on the White and 6 on the San Juan. We caught fish every day and on every tailwater. It was a BLAST! But it was a long drive almost 5,000 miles. We saw a lot of country.

If you would like to see more, check out our slides from the trip located on the SVTU website under past speakers for November 2021. For a more in-depth look at the San Juan, check out past speakers for December 2020.

[Get the PDF of the Tailwater Trifecta presentation.](#)

December 2021 Chapter Meeting

Who: Ben John, Manager, Precision Fly and Tackle—Beaver Creek Fly Shop
What: **How to Fish for Erie Steelhead**



Ben provided a very informative presentation about fishing Lake Erie Steelhead, especially the streams in Pennsylvania. He fishes there and guides on the PA tributaries making the information both fresh and knowledgeable.

He provided great insight into the right water conditions for successful fishing and where the fish lie in the stream. Anyone that attended the presentation has a new appreciation for where fish might be holding as they move upstream. There were also some great ideas for flies to try in the presentation.

SVTU & Conservation

Trout In The Classroom – (TIC)

By Warren C. Junium, Jr. SVTU Newsletter and Email Editor & Chapter Board Member

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) offers students of all ages a chance to raise Salmonids in a classroom setting and then release them into a nearby stream or river. Caring for the fish fosters a conservation ethic in the students, and the act of walking to a streambank and directly releasing the fingerlings into the water

makes a concrete connection between caring for the fish and caring for the water.

TU is one of the many organizations facilitating the program across the country. A mix of NGO and government agency support brings this environmental education program into schools in around 35 states. Over 5,000 classrooms participate annually. For more information visit: www.troutintheclassroom.org.

For the local effort George Opryszko, of PPTU, was the Montgomery County TIC Coordinator. Seven local Chapter members participated including: Dale Thatcher, Sonny Bell, and Leonard Keifer from SVTU.

The team distributed eggs to a total of twenty schools including four elementary, fourteen middle and two high schools. These schools have set up a total of thirty-two tanks.

Those delivering eggs met at a specified location to pick up the eggs, set the eggs in a cooler, and then proceeded to deliver them to the schools and then helped place the live eggs to the tank in participating classrooms.

If you want to engage with the kids and talk about the eggs, most teachers like that. Lots of teachers video the delivery.

Stories From SVTU Members

“And it goes like this”

By Jack Higgins, DDS & SVTU Chapter Board member

It all began at a time when the middle class had good paying factory jobs in NJ. A time when there were four party telephone lines and my uncle had a converted storage space in his apartment to tie flies. It wasn't much to look at. Two by four framing that was held up by scrap lumber and topped off with wire screening to let light in. A porcelain light hung from the ceiling with a shade that diffused enough light to see him wrap thread, feathers, and a variety of other materials that I have yet to understand. Although his hands showed all the signs of years of hard use, his fingers were nimble and his technique was precise. He explained that he used these flies to catch fish. Another thing that was not in my world of bait fishing. My world was Lionel trains, Revell model kits, and an erector set. I had enough difficulty trying to keep Tester's cement off of the fuselage of a model airplane and using small nuts and bolts to put girders together. Fly tying was a

skill set that could take a life to master. I was fascinated by what he was doing but I lacked the attention required to pursue this as a hobby or a passion.

Dial this experience up about 10 years and we are in his car on a warm day in August on our way to a small stream off of NJ Route 206. The road was familiar because it was on the way to a Boy Scout Camp on the Delaware River. We pulled into the lot of a Stewart's Root Beer Stand and parked along a small stream. He liked to fish this in August because the water levels were low and the bait fishermen ignored this stretch of water. Uncle Al liked a good challenge and fishing when it wasn't particularly easy was most enjoyable for him.

After he had rigged both rods, given me the fly-casting lesson of about three minutes, told me to stay out of the water or you'll spook the fish, I was off on a very frustrating and challenging trek. We went in opposite directions and over his shoulder he says, "trout like to hide where they are hard to catch." Look under low lying branches and shady pools. Great advice for a seasoned fly fisherman, but my day was spent untangling the line on the reel and getting flies out of the low-lying branches covering the deep pools.

The fact was that I was probably not going to land a fish and not because I misplaced the net while pulling flies out of trees. The skill set was lacking to produce a great result on the water. The bonus was that I was out on a stream and all I could hear was the sound of water rippling over the rocks and the birds chirping and it was a warm sunny day and I wasn't home painting a fence or cutting the lawn. The sound of an occasional passing car muffled the sound of the water. My uncle fetched me about 2 hours later because the fish had stopped feeding but not until he had caught 4 very nice trout. He practiced catch and eat and these would be for dinner as he placed them under ice in the chest that he had brought. The reward for tying flies has to be for more than catching fish. All the way home he talked about to how he would cook them and since my aunt didn't eat trout. Well, all the more for Al.

Dial this story up about 25 years and we are talking about his week-long trips into the Adirondacks. Living in a rented camper near a trout stream was heaven for him and he did that until his legs wouldn't take it anymore. He told me that it was a shame that I had a

profession that would keep from fishing as much as I wanted. In a way he was right but I never lost the joy of being out on the water and the challenge of trying to catch in August. Being introduced to something that was challenging and relaxing at the same time, that's the payoff. During these times having an outlet like this is nothing short of a blessing. Well, Al is not here anymore but I have a couple of his fly boxes. Some of these hooks have a bit of rust on them, but they are trophies of another time. They are a part of my travel bag and are with me on the water where ever I am fishing. He has tied some pretty impressive flies and I use them as the gold standard when I'm at the bench. And it goes like this... I'm a work in progress. Thank You, Uncle AL

From Tricos on the Gunpowder to Midges on Beaver Creek

By Dale Thatcher, SVTU Board member

I was lucky enough to experience a decent trico hatch on the Gunpowder river below Falls road in early October. To make it extra special, the leaves were just starting to change but few were on the water to hinder fishing. As a bonus, there were very few other fishermen in sight. I used a pattern I had purchased at the *Backwater Angler fly shop* near the river several years ago. I had success in the past with this pattern, both on the Gunpowder and on the Little Lehigh in eastern Pennsylvania. It proved to be a great choice again. I managed to land six plus fish and missed at least that many more. The fish were mostly 7 to 9 inches and included one 5 inch rainbow. I guess DNR was still stocking some fingerling rainbows.

Years ago I tried to tie imitations for the tricos on my favorite eastern Pennsylvania limestone trout streams, and had some moderate successes. I was lucky enough to be experimenting with very heavy hatches that lasted daily from July to the first frost. The hatches I have encountered on the Gunpowder have not been near as heavy but the fish seem to be just as selective. I think, like other dry fly fishing, drag has a lot to do with success in trico fishing. This raises the question of tip material. Given the flies are never bigger than a size 20, the tippet must be at least 6x and mostly 7x or even 8x. For strike detection, I mostly rely on casting to specific rise and then setting the hook on any sign of a take in that area. Easier said than done!

This proved especially true during an October trip to Big Hunting creek. I searched and finally found some rising fish but was only able to get a few takes and no hook ups. Some of what I thought were takes may have been last second refusals which is often the case on Big Hunting.

Turning the calendar to November, SVTU had a workday on Beaver creek on the first Saturday of the month. We were lucky to have a great turnout and beautiful weather. Some of us were even able to observe some Brown trout doing their spawning thing on an active Redd. I admit that the size of those fish makes most of my typical fish caught on the creek seem small.

After most of the work was over, I decided to try some fishing. Besides, I was already in my hip boots and my rod was still in the Jeep rigged for trico fishing at the Gunpowder. I decided to search for rising fish. At first I only saw a random sip here and there so I switched to nymphs—a scud and sow bug. I managed to hook but lose one trout. As I walked along the stream, I noticed more surface activity and I noticed heavy midge activity in the air above the stream. So, I decided to try dry flies again. I figured they were eating these tiny midges so even my trico might be to big for them. I have had some past successes during hatches of tiny midges by using a small Griffith's Gnat pattern. To me it does not appear to match the hatch as a single tiny midge, but some anglers think it represents a cluster of midges. I did manage to land three small fish and missed at least as many.

Besides my success with my midge fishing, I was able to watch another workday participant catch his first Beaver Creek wild brown trout. He used a hopper with a copper john dropper and the fish took the dropper. He told me he previously had a take on the Hopper. Good to know that these picky Beaver Creek fish will sometimes take more "normal" flies.

So keep an eye out for a good weather day and maybe go "hunting" for rising fish!

The Adaptive Caster

Destination Casting—Planning and Practice for Fly Fishing Trips

Here is another installment in the series of Casting Tips and Instruction by Dave Cleaves, FFI Certified Fly Casting Instructor and SVTU Chapter Board member.

Many of us have a fly fishing bucket list—places we would love to fish and different species to pursue. Too rarely and maybe magically we have an opportunity to make one of those dream trips happen. In all the excitement and details of planning the trip, we should not forget to brush up and perhaps adjust our casting skills for the new experience.

Fishing in new places can be fun—and frustrating. Nature did not arrange trees, channels, currents, and rocks to make casting easier for you, just because you are on vacation. It can be disappointing to rudely discover casting challenges and conditions you had not bargained for.

If you want all your surprises on the dream trip to be positive, do a little research on the kinds of situations you will be casting in and get in some casting practice focused on meeting those conditions. The time spent in working through unfamiliar moves can give you more appreciation for what it takes and more confidence in your ability to handle it. That is better than trying to learn a new casting stroke in real time—combat casting – which can detract from the enjoyment of the trip and instill bad habits that carry over into future fishing. For example, it is better to have confronted a hard wind pounding you erratically from multiple directions by practicing in windy conditions. It can help you rediscover and reinforce the reality that success is not about casting harder – which usually leads to tangles and tired arms – but about adjusting your form to maintain efficient loops and keeping slack out of the casting stroke.

I try to practice meeting expected situations before every fishing trip. One reason is that I have the athletic ability of a downed log and muscle memory that is fleeting at best. The other is that unless I force myself to try new things, I'll revert to the same familiar moves which often don't work in new situations.

New destinations offer many opportunities for fly-casting freak outs:

- Heavy flies, awkward multiple fly rigs, and sinking lines.
- **Moving water** – fast, uneven, and intersecting currents, tidal flows, wind-driven waves.
- **Uncooperative fish** – always moving, hiding in hard-to reach places, spooky, generally not playing fairly.
- **Obstacles** – zombie vegetation that surrounds and closes in, fly-hungry trees,
- Boats that pivot and pitch or cluttered with gear, beloved fishing partners, protrusions that tangle lines.
- Slippery, uneven wading.
- **Wind** – not just straight-on resistance but also that annoying shuffling of loose line on the boat deck or in your hand or nasty ruffling of your casting loops as they try to unroll.
- Others? I have a list of my own bad surprises and mistakes. It is very long and full of regrets.

Depending on the kind of fishing you are headed to, here are some casting skills you may want to work on:

- **Trout:** Accuracy at different distances, roll casts to help you deal with obstructions behind you or quickly pick up line from the water, and reach mends to position your line in faster current between you and the fish to allow the fly to drift unhampered by the current.
- **Bass:** Hauling - pulling the line with the opposite hand - to speed it up against resistance (big buoyant flies) or meet distance challenges, and oval or elliptical back casts to keep weighted lines and flies from banging the back of your head or tangling on the forward stroke.
- **Saltwater:** Hauling and making longer strokes to cast bigger flies longer distances; dealing with wind from all angles including minimizing false casting; picking line off the water quickly and stripping line back faster to attract moving fish.

You know how to cast, right? If the answer is no, don't be afraid to get some instructions. Look at the range of different casting movements and skills in the [Fly Fishers International \(FFI\) Casting Challenge and Learning Center](#) and on the [Casting Challenge Overview and Practice Guide](#) on the SVTU website for how-to text and video references.

There are many great casting skills books available including those from Orvis, LL Bean, and other sources that describe these casts and line handling moves and how to apply them on the water. The FFI has [a network of certified instructors](#) who can give you preparation advice and in-person help in tuning up for the trip. These instructors—located all over the world—stay connected with each other and may be able to help you find another instructor or other contact in the area you are headed. As an FFI instructor, I have many times worked with colleagues to help a person prepare for an upcoming trip to their area. And there are several recurring casting clinics available locally to help work through issues or try new casts. Fly casting clinics are regularly offered by [Antietam Fly Anglers](#) (MD), [Tidal Potomac Fly Rodders](#) (DC metro), [Goose Creek Casting Club](#) (VA), [Potomac Valley Fly Fishers](#) (MD), and our own Seneca Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

If you are an experienced caster, you may think that worrying about casting might somehow spoil the thrill of anticipating the trip for a lifetime. Could it really be that different from the casting situations you have already encountered? Don't take a chance. A long cast on your home water may not be long enough in your destination waters. The wind you avoided by choosing days and places at home may not be avoidable on a trip that lasts a couple of days or even a week.

Even if your trip involves the tutelage of a good guide, don't expect him or her to correct your casting in real time. You have to do your own preparation and learn when and how to ask for help. You don't want to waste precious time correcting casting flaws or pawing out line tangles when the fish of a lifetime glides into your casting vision.

Surprise your guide and your fellow travelers. Practice before hand. The heart of the grumpiest guides can be softened by a client who casts well and can respond to their advice on presentation. Practice helps you prepare in privacy and allows you to get in touch with a variety of casting moves and the feedback you get from the line and loop. You may not have the time to master different casts, but you'll be better able to ask for help as you work through the challenges of a new place.

You can borrow the experiences of others to help set up your practices and start to wrap you mind and body into what it feels like to cast in those settings.

Both brain and body may be less inclined to waste time being surprised and ready to make needed adjustments when new challenges arise.

Call ahead. Ask your guide or someone else who has fished there to describe the conditions you are likely to encounter. Ask about the types of water, flies and rigging to be used, casting distances, boats or wading situations, maybe even specific casts or line-handling that might be important. You can translate this information into casting drills and get a feel for what you will be experiencing.

Watch online videos about your destination or places like it. Watch them twice, once for the dazzling big fish sequences, and again to note the conditions and techniques being portrayed and how the participants are casting.

Use local waters as training environments. Moving water in local creeks offer opportunities to improve presentation casts and mends even though it may be for bass and sunfish rather than trout in the Rockies. Local ponds and lakes offer plenty of targets for sharpening accuracy at all distances with a realistic array of obstructions and conditions. Casting to our local carp or smallmouth bass in low, clear water can provide great preparation in positioning, stealth, accuracy at longer distances, and coping with wind.

Mix it up. Casting in unfamiliar conditions may demand constantly changing line lengths, positions, fly sizes and weights. The need for adjustments in casting change come unexpectedly as weather, current, casting barriers, and other combinations of factors remix. The flexibility to adjust from one set of casting moves to another a skill that can be improved through practice. Sports performance research has shown that practice that varies the context – e.g. casting to targets at different distances in different orders – improves overall accuracy and helps retain the skill longer. So don't be afraid to mix it up in your practice; you can bet that the water of your dream trip is not going to hand you targets the size of hula hoops at a predictable 30 feet out.

Some preparation can prime you to recognize those lessons in the making and extend the value of that dream trip beyond the photos and memories of beautiful settings and exciting fishing. Once you have had to recenter your casting principles and skills in a new situation, you have gained confidence to handle

“new” places back home, waters you may have passed up in the past. It never hurts to be able to handle the wind – a gift from your first bone fishing trip. Or to be able to change tempo and shoot moving and varied targets from a drift boat – a takeaway from that trip on fast moving Western rivers that can only help you back home with smallmouth on local float trips.

So, try prepping your casting for the next trip. Do the research. Anticipate the kinds of situations. Start early. And work through the unfamiliar casting demands. You will have more fun on your trip and probably return with some lessons in casting and new confidence that you can apply to your fishing in local waters—or the next trip in your bucket list.

Have fun. Write to make me jealous. Dave

Dave Cleaves of North Potomac is a Fly Fishers International (FFI) certified fly-casting instructor (CI, MCI), who teaches fly casting and guides in Maryland. Dave is retired from the US Forest Service and has worked for Trout & About (Phil Gay) and the LL Bean Outdoor Discovery Schools. He is a member of the Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter. Dave welcomes questions from readers and opportunities to help fly fishers improve their casting.

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Chapter has been the benefactor of excellent casting instruction and tips throughout the years thanks to Dave.

He has provided live instruction at various Chapter meetings and events, often with assistance from other instructors

In addition to live instruction, Dave has authored many great articles on “the cast” that are posted on the Chapter website. Here is a list of his gems.

- Small Streams—Headwaters of the Fly Fishing Experience
- Weighty Adjustments
- Casting: Practice With Purpose
- Loops
- Tips and Techniques—Teaching and Practicing
- Good Starts for a Good Cast—Low, Slow, and Slackless Pickups
- Accuracy—Tips for Spot-on Casting
- Don't Forget the Line Hand
- Backcasts—Improving the Hidden Half of Your Cast

Here is the link to the articles on the Chapter website in the section [THE ADAPTIVE CASTER](#).

Make sure to keep an eye out for notifications of future casting instruction and/or more articles.

Other News

REMINDER: Beaver Creek Fly Shop Has a New Ownership Team & Manager

The shop was purchased by **Precision Fly and Tackle** out of Lancaster PA. This is their third store with another in Mt. Holly Springs PA.

The Beaver Creek store is open and carries Orvis, Sage, and Scott rods (for those that wish to spend more) as well as other more moderately priced rods.

They also maintain a full fly shop complete with a full selection of fly-tying materials. The new manager is Ben John, who was our speaker for the December meeting. Stop in and see him and let him know you are a member of Seneca Valley TU.

Maryland DNR News Trout Stocking has Commenced!

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced plans to stock 300,000 trout in Maryland waters. Preseason trout stocking begins this week.

The annual stocking will be completed in three bursts, preseason from now through February and spring stocking March 14 –25 and April 18 – 29. Updates will be provided for all open locations once stocking is complete.

All stocked locations that fall under a closure period will be announced prior to opening day on March 26, 2022. For updates, please visit the DNR [website](#) or [sign up](#) to get daily stocking notifications via email. Anglers may also call 800-688-3467 and press option #1 to get a recorded weekly update when stocking is in process (usually updated on Fridays). As COVID continues, the department encourages anglers to practice social distancing while enjoying Maryland's recreational fishing opportunities.

Trout anglers are reminded that [regulations for brook trout](#) are now in effect requiring catch-and-release in all put-and-take trout areas and all waters east of Interstate 81. Anglers should take time to

properly [identify brook trout](#)—which are not stocked by the department—when fishing in catch-and-release waters.

President's Note—*continued*

Our other major revision to fly tying is going to be the structure of the classes. Instead of covering many different patterns we are going to focus the classes on a specific topic each month. We are still working to determine the specific topics for February, March and April, but the first class of the month will be a basic pattern or two with fundamental techniques (much like the sessions in past years). The second week of the month will be devoted to the same topic, but will cover patterns using (perhaps) more advanced techniques and move at a faster pace. We hope this new structure will both introduce new tyers and challenge some of our more advanced tyers.

With spring coming on we will look to offer our Fly Fishing 101 course again, so keep an eye out for this class on instruction on how to use that new fly-fishing outfit you acquired over the Holidays. This course is your one stop class for casting, rigging, and techniques.

You can tell we have a lot already in the works for 2022, and the year is just starting! We may have more work to do on Beaver Creek in 2022. There are plans for stream restoration on a section of the fly-fishing only water. If the effort finds support and our partner organizations can secure construction funding, we may have a huge need for volunteers to assist with riparian plantings to protect new newly restored area. There will be plenty of notice if this happens, but I just wanted to start the year with an optimistic forecast that we will need you in 2022 for restoration work. However the year proceeds, SVTU will be flexible and respond to changing COVID restrictions and requirements. But based on last year's success, I see no reason this year will not be even better. Our website has all the latest information.

SVTU operates on the skills of our volunteer leaders. We have need for new ideas and approaches on our leadership team. This is a great opportunity to give back to the organization and join this group of leaders. SVTU will be conducting elections at its **March 2022** meeting and we need you to join the Chapter leadership team. (We normally do elections in January, but we do not want to take time from Tim

Flagler's presentation.) We will have open positions on the Board of Directors and among the Officers. The time commitments can be as much, or only few as a couple hours a month. What we need are new ideas and a desire to help make those ideas become a reality. We are in real need to find a volunteer to help lead fishing outings for those that wish to fish with friends. We are all volunteers, we understand if SVTU is not on the top of your agenda, but we have a great group of officers and directors and it is a chance to give back to the sport of fly fishing and the resources that support it.

If you like to fish you need someplace to do it, and if you do not protect and improve it, who will? We look forward to your support and participation as we all go down this improving path in 2022.

Stay safe and Tight lines!
Noel Gollehon, President SVTU

Support SVTU When you Shop!

A note from the SVTU Chapter Treasurer, Nate Wallace

Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited has partnered with CauseNetwork and AmazonSmile. These two organizations enable you to direct a portion of your online purchases to SVTU *at no cost to you* when you register with them.

We received quarterly checks from these organizations that have provided much needed funds. In addition, one of our members donated an automobile through CauseNetwork with SVTU being the beneficiary of the funds. The donation was tax deductible to the member and the process was very easy. If you have an extra vehicle that you do not want to deal with—this might be an option. Even if you do not have an auto to donate, if you register with these organizations and utilize them, we will be able to receive more donations. This is simple and will not cost you anything, other than the time to register.

To register with either or both, go to www.senecavalleytu.org/support-svtu/ where you'll find the directions to register with CauseNetwork and AmazonSmile. You'll also find more information on the two organizations.

CauseNetwork

CauseNetwork is a marketplace where up to 10% of every purchase you make (at no cost to you) through <http://svtu.causenetwork.com> helps fund our education programs and stream improvement projects.

There are over 1,000 stores participating in the CauseNetwork program—including many of the brand names you know and love.

When you click one of the links below, you will be directed to our CauseNetwork site. It is easy to help. Below are three different ways to support SVTU through CauseNetwork when you shop online.

1. Click the SHOP buttons on our CauseNetwork website: svtu.causenetwork.com
2. CauseNetwork Mobile App: svtu.causenetwork.com/mobile
 - Open the app and select a cause
 - SVTU can be found under the following category: Environmental Protection
 - Scroll down and select Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited (#369)
 - Complete registration
 - Use the Web App: svtu.causenetwork.com/webapp

There's never been an easier way to help us. Visit svtu.causenetwork.com to get started. We thank you for your support. Watch the video to [learn more about how CauseNetwork works](#).

AMAZON SMILE

If you shop through Amazon, please select us for your Smile cause and Amazon will donate to SVTU as well.

- Register at org.amazon.com
- Click the **Register Now** button
- In the search box type in:
Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited

Select us by choosing:

Seneca Valley Trout Unlimited
12520 Knightsbridge CT, Rockville MD

Stay Informed About Happenings in our Chapter

Website

<https://www.senecavalleytu.org> is the primary manner we reach all friends of the Chapter. Check it out for info on upcoming events/activities.

Social Media

We are now on social media, follow us on [Instagram](#) and/or [Facebook](#).

eMail

Our email is a secure opt-in email alert and event invitation system that is used only by the Chapter for functions that we sponsor or support. This service, along with the Chapter's website, provides up to the minute details of upcoming activities. We do not share or sell our email listing. Our database is separate from National TU's email system. If you wish to opt-in or opt-out to our email list, please contact the Chapter at svtroutunlimited@gmail.com.

Trout Unlimited Online Community

TU National has an [ONLINE COMMUNITY](#) which is open to the entire Trout Unlimited membership.

In the past, the online community has been specific to volunteer leaders. A separate forum for leaders-specific conversations will be maintained for volunteer leaders.

The Open Forum enables both leaders and all TU members to participate with the discussions in all the communities.

Supporting the conversations in both the Open Forum and the Leaders Forum helps to grow engagement in the online community and our local communities as well.

To sign up for the new community go to his link: <http://community.tu.org/browse/welcome-guide>

Verify Your TU Membership Status

There has been a lot of chatter on the TU website regarding membership by many chapter reps around the country. One key issue is that many members do not review and update, if necessary, their profiles.

As newsletter and email communications editor I utilize the Chapter membership roster that TU National provides to approved Chapter Officers.

Login to www.tu.org and check your profile information in the TU national database. Membership reports from TU national indicate the email or mailing address for several chapter members needs to be corrected. ***Also, don't forget to renew your membership!***

Note from the Editor

If you have articles, photos, fish stories, fishing/stream reports, that you think might be appropriate for inclusion in the newsletter or the website, send an email to me @ wjunium1@hotmail.com or to the Chapter @ sytroutunlimited@gmail.com. We hope to see you at future events.