

STREAMSIDE

VOLUME 26 ISSUE 1

DAME JULIANA LEAGUE

SPRING/SUMMER 2020



John Burgos

Riffles & Runs

Where did the last few months go? I'm sure I am not the first to say that this is certainly a "different" kind of fishing season. First of all, before I make a lackluster attempt at humor, I truly hope that all of our DJL members, friends and families are safe and healthy in this exceptional time.

I'd like to address a bit of DJL business before getting into the fun. We just completed a "truncated," but informative and fun year of speakers and presentations. We can't thank Emerson Cannon enough for the effort he puts in to lining up activities. Next season, help him out. Come with a presentation. We all love to hear the exploits of our fellow members.

I also want to recognize Skip Krause for all the effort expended for our Learn to Fly Fish Course.

Unfortunately, the virus knocked the course right off our wall. Well, we now have a great framework for it.

Already looking towards next spring, we will need all volunteers. Come out and join us as we bring new anglers into our sport.

I also want to thank all our board and committee members for putting in the effort to organize and bring our events to bear. This organization cannot make it without the countless volunteer hours.

Where did the last few months go? I'm sure I am not the first to say that this is certainly a "different" kind of fishing

season. First of all, before I make lackluster attempt at humor, I truly hope that all of our DJL members, friends and families are safe and healthy in this exceptional time.

As most of you were, and still are, I'm at home "sheltering in place." Thankfully Jack Mick is around to fill my fly tying supply orders (anyone get this subtle endorsement?). With my boxes filled and the Fish Commission announcing a surprise opening to our trout season I've been trying to get out as often as I can. Most of my fishing has been on French Creek. I can say, for sure, that fish have been well distributed.

For all of us, patience and a little extra effort will go a long way to enjoying our days on the stream this year. I've noticed many more people on the water.

Since so many of our normal spring activities have been sidelined (think Little League), more people have been "sharing" the water with us. Work with it!

Here's a few suggestions:

- a. Get on the water earlier. There are certainly different experiences to be had if you're on the water at the break of dawn.
- b. Stay out later. Fish the evening hatch. Find that nocturnal feeder.
- c. Walk farther. If someone is fishing your favorite hole, continue walking. Try new water.

- d. Try a new technique. Years ago I started nymph fishing because the dry fly pools were busy.
- e. They still are today.
- f. Change your quarry. There are other worthy adversaries. The "warm water" streams and ponds will start picking up. There are more miles and fewer anglers with these waters.

Thankfully, we all share a sport that fits well under any "social distancing" guidelines.

Enjoy your pastime and we look forward to sharing our stories.

John Buagoz



Emerson & Brenna



Circles

By Todd Degrosselliers

I grew up in Maine, fishing its numerous lakes and streams for whatever I could catch – often with a fly rod. I usually conducted this activity with friends and family.

Consequently, I maintain fond memories associated with it. Reflecting on my current situation and as I've grown older, I find it amazing how life forms a circle - if you let it. Ultimately, I've concluded that in life all action, positive and negative, is compensatory. Any actions we take - good or bad - eventually come back to us as help or as obstacles completing the full circle of our lives. But then we can always draw another circle. When you let the circle complete itself - every end is also a beginning.

Life is filled with options. Sometimes we just need to let go of the wheel and let life take its proper course. Sometimes we need to take a longer view. Sometimes we need to surrender to something outside to gain strength within. Sometimes we might need

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someone to remind us that to fulfill ourselves we may have to forget ourselves in the process. Indeed, finding ourselves can require us to first lose ourselves. Maybe we just need to stop and remember that holding firm to our character, integrity and moral compass is about confronting life's disappointments and overcoming them as challenges. Often we must first give in order to receive. Is our cup half full or half empty? It depends - are we drinking or pouring?

Sometimes when we're struggling, we can't see that life is much bigger than we realize at the time. Our inward focus can blind us to the cause and effect which combine in a vast moral structure that ultimately directs us to do better, to become better – even when we dwell in the most powerful, confused darkness. Often our biggest failures in life can lead us to our greatest successes - humility, learning, and post-traumatic growth.

Sometimes we forget this, and when we do – well - we can lose our way. Sometimes we lack the strength and the willpower to pick ourselves up and return to the fray. That's when we need help to get back home – to help us to ask ourselves the right questions ; not - “What do I want from life?” but , “What does life need from me?” And, “What are my circumstances calling me to do for others? The answer to these three questions can provide us with a summons to life. They can point us towards our vocation, our calling...if we let them.

I was wounded several times in 2004 fighting alongside my men in Iraq during the Second Battle of Fallujah. The result for me was multiple Traumatic Brain Injuries as well as a long list of orthopedic and balance issues from exposure to numerous explosions and from fighting in close quarters with the enemy. I also commanded thousands of men in combat – 22 of them were killed in action and more than 300 were wounded. As I struggled to deal with the effects of my wounds and the war over the past decade my symptoms progressively got worse – requiring extensive physical therapy and recently culminated in my medical retirement after 31 years as a U.S. Marine.



Fortunately, in April 2015, during a physical therapy appointment, my vision therapist recommended fly fishing as an option to my clinical regimen. That's how I got connected to Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing. I began my relationship with Project

Healing Waters Fly Fishing as a participant in their program located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Our program met weekly at the USO located near the Intrepid Spirit Clinic on Fort Belvoir where I attended my daily physical therapy sessions. The camaraderie, mentoring, and friendships only added to their exceptional core program. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing provides disabled veterans with a core fly fishing program at more than 230 locations across the country.

Their core program includes fly tying, fly casting, fly fishing education, fly fishing outings, and – my personal favorite – fly rod building. The fly rod building program is a nationwide effort - funded by a very generous grant from the Bob Woodruff



Foundation - that culminates in a competition between the best fly rods built by participants across the nation for the year.

I built my first Fly Rod as a participant in 2016. Building a fly rod helped me in several ways with my rehabilitation. The camaraderie of sitting around a table with good friends completing a project I've never done before – together – helped restore my spirit. The concentration and focus necessary to work through the small details involved in something I've never done before - building a fly rod – helped improve my concentration and information processing. Catching a fish on a fly rod that I built myself.... priceless!!

Becoming a Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing participant was the best thing I did to start to accept and build the strength it took to try to recover from my physical and emotional injuries. Project Healing Waters served this function for me and it does the same for thousands of other wounded, ill, and injured active duty military and disabled veterans in more than 200 programs Nationwide. As a participant in its program I experienced it and saw it with my own eyes – over and over again. Now, as its President & Chief Executive Officer I see it even more!!! It's about fly fishing – but it isn't...

Project Healing Waters' wisdom let me to see life from a wider perspective. As one participant told me – Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Programs provide love and hugs – not drugs... This can help us recover – physically and emotionally - and in the end our injuries can become our strengths. We can emerge healed – reborn and reconnected in ways we never thought possible. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. helped bring life full circle for me.



Todd Desgrosseilliers is a Marine Corps veteran and infantry officer with 31 years of service to our Nation. A native of Auburn, Maine, he enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1985 and attained the rank of Sergeant before becoming an officer. He commanded at each rank and most recently served as the Commanding Officer, The Basic School from 2012 to 2014. He also served as the Commanding Officer, 3rd Battalion, 2nd Marines from 2005 to 2007 – deploying the Battalion to get it! Iraq in 2006-2007, where they conducted counter-insurgency operations in Ramadi and Fallujah. Todd developed a love for fly fishing growing up in Maine chasing its abundant native brook trout and landlocked salmon in its numerous lakes and streams. Todd reconnected with fly fishing after joining the PHWFF Quantico and Fort Belvoir Programs upon the recommendation of his physical therapist in March, 2015. As a participant, Todd recognized the remarkable physical and emotional transformation that PHWFF Programs initiated for him and his fellow veterans and decided that he wanted to join its exceptional team after his retirement from the military and currently serves as the President & Chief Executive Officer for Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing Inc. (PHWFF). The PHWFF fly rod building program is made possible through a generous grant from the Bob Woodruff Foundation.



How to See a Stream

Part Two: Stream Monitoring and Impairment

By David Bressler

Understanding stream impairment via biological monitoring efforts has been happening in the U.S. since the 1950s and in Europe since the early 1900s. Quantitative stream monitoring is not as simple as many would like it to be, however. Lots of watershed groups go out once in a while and collect macroinvertebrates, do chemistry measurements, and evaluate physical habitat in their local streams, hoping that this will be useful information for characterizing the condition of the stream. Indeed anybody with the motivation and basic taxonomic knowledge can go to a stream, look under some rocks, or make a couple of net collections and get an idea about its condition. If you go to a stream, turn over a rock, and find a stonefly, then it's pretty likely that stream is in good condition. Note that even with stoneflies there may be exceptions (e.g., some types of Nemourid stoneflies are naturally conditioned to be tolerant of somewhat acidic conditions, so in cases where moderate acidic

pollution is occurring these types of stoneflies may be found). If you go to another stream and find only midge larvae and worms it's pretty likely that stream is not in very good condition (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Pollution intolerant Stonefly (Family - Chloroperlidae; Genus - Alloperla) and pollution tolerant midge larvae (Family - Chironomidae; Genus - Chironomus) and aquatic earthworm (Oligochaeta). Photo credit Macroinvertebrates.org and Stroud Water Research Center.

When federal, state, and county governments evaluate stream and river health they do so by choosing “reference” sites that are most representative of what they think things should be like in that geographic region and then compare all other streams to this standard. Basically, in the non-arid eastern U.S. it means choosing reference sites

that are in forested areas – these are the watersheds that are usually least impacted by human activity. There are certainly exceptions to this – for instance, a single toxic discharge from an abandoned mine in a highly forested watershed can kill everything a stream. Generally, however, if a watershed is highly forested it is very likely its streams will contain mayflies, stoneflies, and caddisflies and if the water is cold enough there will probably be trout. The problem with amateur stream monitoring is in repeatability, comparability, and reliability of the data that are produced. To assign an official quantitative rating to a stream based on macroinvertebrate community composition (or any other biological community, e.g., fish and algae are often used) you have to use standardized processes that involve long lists of supplies, sample processing procedures, taxonomic training, and complicated data analysis and summarization methods. There are protocols available that are relatively accessible to volunteers but these still take significant time and effort. Furthermore, the usability of these volunteer-collected data by government agencies can be challenged because of issues in standardization of collection methods, seasonal timing of sampling, taxonomic quality control, sample size and sample processing procedures, geographic calibration issues, and many other factors that can complicate regulatory use.

So what can a person do if they want to make a difference in the health of their local stream? What can one do to help a stream recover from pollution, protect a stream from degradation, or simply understand what the issues and risks are?

What Can Anglers Do?

For an angler who is simply trying to keep track of the condition of their local stream, undertaking an official technically sound monitoring effort may not be necessary or even possible. Turning over rocks and starting to get a feel for what's in the stream is certainly a good idea and many citizen science protocols are available (e.g., *Trout Unlimited Coldwater Conservation Corps*, <https://patrout.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/macro-sampling-id-manual.pdf>) for use in establishing a qualitative (or semi-quantitative) baseline for local stream knowledge. Paying attention to and identifying the adult insects emerging from the stream can also key an angler into what's living in the stream and in what quantities. And of course, at some point, doing chemistry measurements can be informative, especially if there are suspected pollutants and/or sources towards which one's monitoring efforts can be focused.

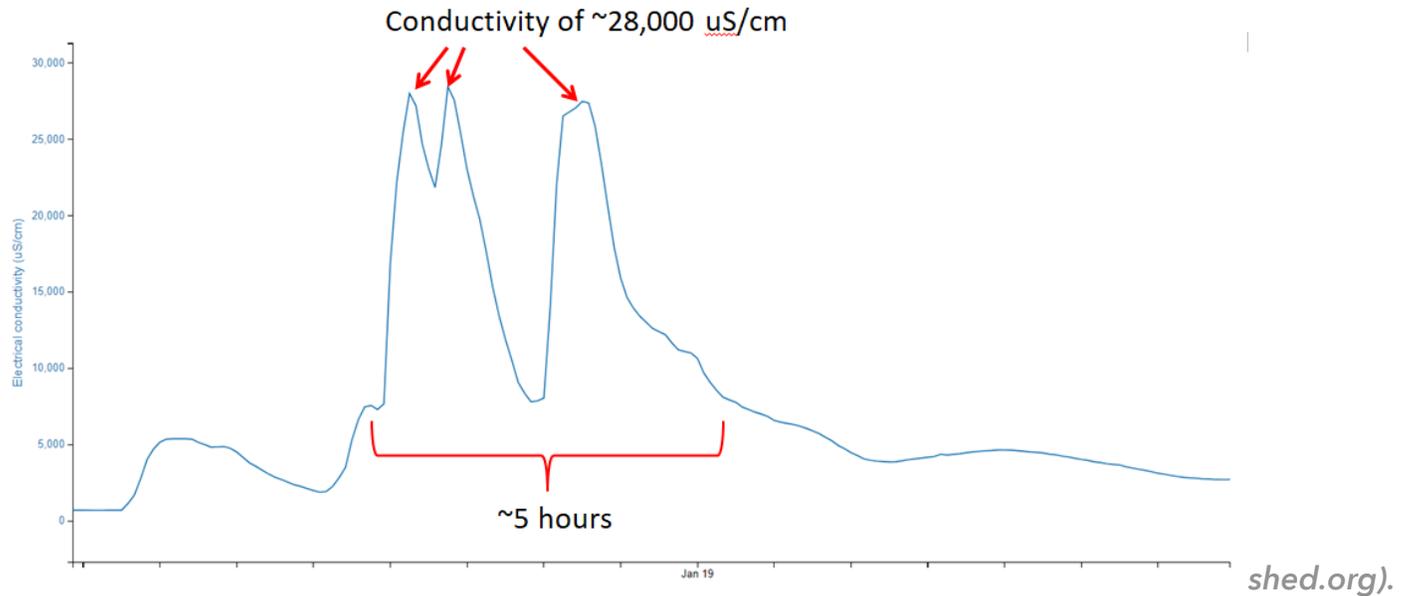
However, getting out of the water and paying attention to the landscape, the entire watershed, simply walking upstream, might be the most important step that an angler

can take to develop a more holistic understanding of why the local waterway is the way it is. Human disturbance in one form or another is the primary reason that trout do not live in most of the small to medium sized streams in southeastern PA (larger rivers in our region are, for the most part, naturally devoid of trout because of warmer water and other physical and chemical characteristics – to delve deeper into natural longitudinal river progression read up on the River Continuum Concept on the Stroud Center website). The more stressor sources there are, roads and bridges, housing developments, agriculture, industrial effluents, illicit and accidental discharges and spills, etc., the less likely streams draining the watershed will be able to support a healthy community of organisms, including trout and the many foundational microbial, algal, plant, and macroinvertebrate species on which they rely (Figure 2).



Figure 2a. Road salt is just one of many stressors associated with human activity. Its usage has increased steadily over the past 50 years and is resulting in what is being called the “freshwater salinization syndrome”. Photo credit Stroud Water Research Center.

Figure 2b. (Below) Electrical conductivity is a measure of the concentration of dissolved ions in water and is directly related to the amount of salt in a stream. The above graph shows data collected during a winter storm in 2020 from a stream that is unable to support trout, located near West Chester, PA. For reference, the conductivity of sea 50,000 uS/cm. Data collected by Stroud Water Research Center in collaboration with West Chester University (data publicly available via [MonitorMyWatershed.org](https://www.monitormywatershed.org))



Knowing what has happened on the land historically, what the current issues are, and what future risks there may be is critical knowledge that can empower action. Proactive citizens who understand the risks associated with these problems can be powerful influences on local management and decision-making in support of local water resources. Those who want to make a difference in their watershed should engage in the planning process and join watershed protection efforts. In this effort they should consider asking questions like, “Is this the best we can do?” and “Will this action protect what we have?” – Not needing an answer but posing the questions nonetheless for decision-makers to reflect upon and consider.

In the context of trout fishery management, anglers need to realize that being able to catch fish in a stream does not necessarily mean anything about the stream’s health. In fact, in our region some streams are able to support reproducing trout populations in spite of high levels of human activity and associated stressors (e.g., Valley Creek, Little Valley Creek, West Valley Creek). As described in Part One of this article, these types of resilient streams are usually limestone spring creeks that stay cold all year long and because of high natural alkalinity can buffer some of the toxicity originating from the surrounding anthropogenic land uses. Even in these situations where wild trout populations persist, reproduction usually declines, fish size gets smaller, and often stocking is used to increase numbers. Furthermore, the macroinvertebrate communities in these streams are often degraded and overall condition is rated as “fair” or “poor” according to regulatory standards. In many other cases where limestone buffering is not found, streams are even more degraded, trout reproduction has stopped entirely, and regular stocking is the only reason trout are found. Because

of this decline in trout populations and for the sake of holding on to our love of trout fishing we have developed ways to keep them in the streams. The main way being the aforementioned stocking of hatchery raised fish – breeding and rearing trout somewhere else, where water is cold and clean, and then transporting these fish to other streams that are no longer able to support populations on their own. This is how brown trout and rainbow trout made their way to the eastern U.S. long ago and continues to be the reason these species are found in many of our local streams. In addition to being more resistant to toxic and thermal pollution, browns and rainbows compete with brook trout for limited food, habitat, and spawning resources. In fact, many conservation and environmental groups consider brown and rainbow trout to be an invasive species in the eastern U.S. Ironically, the brook trout has been stocked in western U.S. streams and rivers and has pushed out indigenous species such as the cutthroat trout. Even more ironic still, many of the spring creeks and forested streams on which hatcheries are positioned end up suffering from diseases, nutrients, and other wastes produced by the hatcheries.

From Observer to Guardian

If you're an angler interested in going beyond catching fish and want to build your understanding of the ecology of watersheds and support the health of your local stream here are some things that you can do:

Know whether the trout you're catching are stocked or are stream bred – stocked fish may have missing or worn fins (Figure 3), washed out and faded colors, and if recently stocked may be found at isolated points in the stream where the stocking occurred (for county stocking info see https://fbweb.pa.gov/stocking/TroutStockingDetails_GIS.aspx). If the trout are stocked, is this because there is no natural reproduction in the stream? If there is natural reproduction but stocking is still occurring, is it necessary? If the stream were left alone would the natural population become more robust without the competition from the stocked fish? What could be done to improve conditions to support natural reproduction? Is the water cold enough in the summer? What are fisheries managers doing in terms of catch and size limits and could alterations to these regulations better support a wild or native trout fishery?

Figure 3. (Below) Hatchery raised rainbow trout and brown trout. Note the absence of the pectoral fin on the rainbow and deformed pectoral fin on the brown, most likely due to abrasion from concrete hatchery channels. Photo credit Stroud Water Research Center.



Understand what types of macroinvertebrates are found in high quality streams and what ones are found in low quality – compare this to what you find in your local fishery. Look under the rocks and catch bugs flying in the air, then use a good taxonomic reference to help with identification (e.g., for larvae - Macroinvertebrates.org; for adults – *Hatches II: A Complete Guide to the Hatches of North American Trout Streams* by Caucchi and Nastasi). If you want to go the extra step find a local watershed group to partner with on macroinvertebrate sampling and other types of stream monitoring.

Pay attention to water temperature – any stream that is regularly above 70° F will be questionable as to whether it can support any trout species. Connect this to the landscape and think about how much of the stream along its course is currently shaded. If your stream of interest stays cold, think about how things like reduced shade from cutting streamside trees and warm storm water runoff from asphalt associated with potential future developments could affect the trout population. If your stream is warm and has minimal riparian tree cover, consider whether there are significant unshaded sections where streamside tree cover could be restored to reduce water temperature.

How close are the roads in your watershed to the streams? How many bridge crossings are there? How many housing developments, construction areas, stores, and industrial areas are within 100 feet of your streams? Are there vegetated buffers, trees, shrubs, and other vegetation between the stream and the human activity? “Riparian” (streamside) buffers do just that – they buffer pollution – any stream that does not have a buffer is at much higher risk of pollution from whatever contaminants are associated with the adjacent land use.

Are there culverts and dams in your watershed? Are trout and other fish able to pass through these sections or do the structures block their movement? Habitat fragmentation has been shown to have significant effects on trout populations, fish size, and spawning success. Trout Unlimited has made a lot of progress in recent years in redesigning culverts to reduce habitat fragmentation and support whole system connectivity.

Go out in a winter storm and see how much salt is spread on roads and parking lots, watch where the melting ice and snow goes. If it disappears into a storm drain, figure out where that storm drain goes – most likely it goes directly into a nearby stream. With increased development, road salt is being applied more and more, is accumulating in the soil and groundwater, and is causing salinization of streams and rivers across the country (for summary see <https://cmns.umd.edu/news-events/features/4059>; for detailed article see Freshwater salinization syndrome on a continental scale, <https://www.pnas.org/content/115/4/E574.full>)).

Go out in a rain storm and see what happens. Where does the water that falls on the land go? Does the water slowly infiltrate into the ground or does it quickly run over top the land, across pavement, across farm fields, across lawns and into the nearest stream channel or storm drain? What does this water flowing over top the land gather in its path to the stream? Consider how a lot of water running quickly and powerfully from the land to the stream may affect stream banks, stream substrate and habitat, and water levels and flooding downstream.

■ ***For those who want to go deeper into how data are used in relation to regulations and management: investigate the local data, look up studies that have already been done, use websites that have ranked streams and fisheries, and build understanding of how regulations function.***

■ ***For maps and lists of trout-supporting waters see <https://www.fishandboat.com/Fish/PennsylvaniaFishes/Trout/Pages/TroutWaterClassifications.aspx>;***

■ ***For an interactive map of PA Aquatic, Recreational, and Drinking water use see https://www.depgis.state.pa.us/integrated_report_viewer/index.html;***

■ ***For info Chester County streams see <https://www.chesco.org/2027/Impaired-Waters-of-Chester-County>***

■ ***For federal regulations research the Clean Water Act and the function of its sections on Designated Uses (aquatic life/recreation/drinking water) and Water Quality Standards (see <https://cfpub.epa.gov/watertrain/pdf/modules/introtocwa.pdf>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clean_Water_Act).***

■ ***For state regulations research PA DEP aquatic uses and regulations (see PA DEP Water Quality site, <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Water/CleanWater/WaterQuality/Pages/default.aspx> or Penn Future's Stream Redesignation Handbook, <https://www.pennfuture.org/Files/Admin/PennFutureStreamHndbk09.pdf>)***

Call to Action!

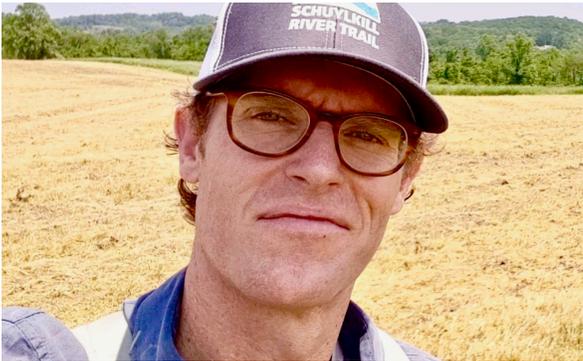
Pay attention to what's happening in your watershed. Get involved proactively and support others who are working on the issues. But don't be afraid to become an authority and make things happen yourself (long-term local knowledge is invaluable and standing up for your home water can be a powerful influence).

If your stream is healthy, keep tabs on how use of the land may change in the future. Make an effort to understand who is making the decisions in your locality and figure out how you can influence the decision-making process when there is risky activity being planned or considered. Valley Forge Trout Unlimited is good at this and has been doing it for over 40 years.

If your stream is degraded and you want it to improve, try to understand why it is the way it is. Is there a specific isolated issue? Is the water simply too warm and needs more shade in order to possibly support trout? Or is it a pervasive problem caused by many stressors and sources? Either way, look into what work is being done to improve the situation and figure out what personal skills and knowledge you have that can support the effort. If nothing is being done in your watershed and you know action needs to be taken, find examples that can help focus your efforts and make something happen. Consider getting involved with a local environmental action committee (EAC) that can support/influence municipal and county decision-making (or even start an EAC on your own). Your county's Penn State Master Watershed Stewards organization may be able to help direct your efforts.

Consider what local watershed groups are doing and how your insights as an angler may be able to inform, assist, and guide their work. Many fly anglers are on the water

far more than even many aquatic ecologists and often understand the stream in subtle ways not observed even by the scientists. If you haven't already done so, consider transitioning your love and understanding of your local fishery to a more comprehensive understanding and love of the watershed as a whole.



Dave Bressler has been with Stroud Water Research Center for four years. The Stroud Center's mission is to conduct high quality freshwater ecology research, provide support and guidance for watershed restoration, and educate students and adults on stream and river ecology (see StroudCenter.org for events, workshops, and opportunities). Dave has an undergraduate degree in biology and anthropology and masters degrees in water

resources and science education.

Prior to the Stroud Center, he worked at Tetra Tech's Center for Ecological Sciences for 17 years, supporting federal, state, and county environmental agencies in rating stream health and understanding why and how things happen as they do in freshwater environments. He has collected and analyzed data from streams and rivers, lakes, and wetlands across the country. Dave grew up in central PA and started fly fishing in his early teens on the Little Juniata, Spruce Creek, and Spring Creek. Since then he has tied flies and fished them on streams and rivers in most parts of the country that have trout. He did a bit of guiding in Montana and central PA in the mid-1990s, but it was a lot of pressure and science was a better fit!



A Friendship Runs Through It

By Chuck Cutshall

Fishing of any kind is in my DNA. As a child in Allentown, PA, my mother would drop me off at the Little Lehigh and I would stay in one spot and fish for trout with Velveeta cheese until she came to pick me up a couple hours later.

My interest in fly fishing started about 25 years ago as a result of an introduction from none other than Barry and Cathy Beck.

The “learn how to fly fish” weekend was planned by my wife, Suzanne, as my birthday present. The scoop on this program was obtained by my wife from her dermatologist, Dr. Steve Binnick, who today is a fly fishing friend of mine. Back then, I had no idea who the Becks were nor any idea of where Benton, PA was located.

After college, I drifted away from fishing but fishing was often a theme of my nightly dreams. My wife knew that I had an interest in fishing but not with the traditional bait approach. At the time, the notion of introducing me to fly fishing seemed like a great idea!

Over the years, I’ve been fortunate to get to know and become friends with a number of fellow fly fishers who share similar views on life. The old saying goes “birds of a feather flock together” is certainly true. I believe there are common threads that run through each of us who are passionate about fly fishing. When I

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meet a fly fisher for the first time, I already know we generally have a lot in common and that we could talk about fly fishing for hours if time allowed.

I believe fly fishers are dreamers. Watching, on high alert, a dry fly floating perfectly on a dark water bubble line, conjures visions of a heart stopping take, cast after cast after cast. My wife asks, “Why is that fun?” It’s hard to describe! It just seems like I’m locked in a trance with the clock moving twice as fast as normal. As a fly fishing population, we tend to explain Mother Nature’s codes as if we’re in the know. I’ve seen green drakes on Penns Creek floating by unmolested while trout were eagerly focused on eating March Brown emergers. How on earth does that happen? Our quest to figure out why is like finding the proverbial pot of gold at the end of a rainbow. For us mortal souls it will never happen, but it is fun trying.

I’ve come closer to better understanding the cadence of nature and fly fishing because of my friend Don Baylor. I got to know Don about 15 years ago while he was presenting to one of the fly fishing groups that I attended. To me, Don epitomizes what it means to be a genuine person and ambassador of our fly fishing community. Don is a professional entomologist, author, program presenter, and accomplished fly fisher and tier, as well as, a steadfast champion for environmental and open access



causes in the Brodhead watershed. Don will happily spend as much time with anyone who wants to discuss their favorite outdoor topic.

When you are in Don's company, there are no fishing secrets. He will recommend a productive fly, teach you how to tie it (or hand you a couple) and then provide information as to where to use it. Oh and along the way, Don will identify any bug you encounter while

on the stream. Don has a passion for travel and back country adventure. I absolutely respect his rigor of maintaining a level of physical fitness to take on consecutive 12 hour days of hiking, rowing, wading, and casting. I've traveled out West a couple of times with Don and was inspired by his tireless pace combined with his eternal light-hearted spirit. Any extra reps I made at the gym came in handy.

I have noticed over the years that the longer one has pursued fly fishing with a passion, the passion tends to increasingly gravitate beyond catching fish. In Don's case, he is an incredibly talented artist. When I speak with Don, he is typically juggling his "fishing schedule" to include Brodhead advocacy work with his local TU chapter, book or article writing, pro bono local stream water sampling, painting, tying, and actual fishing. I believe I speak for most when I say that over time we grow our fly fishing satisfaction through non-fishing activities, such as nature photography, Dame Juliana League, VFTU, Main Line Fly Tiers, or Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

to name a few. Lefty Kreh once said that fly fishing is the only sport where you get better with age. As I spend my fishing time with people like Don, I realize that getting better at fly fishing goes way beyond a day on the stream. Dream on.



Chuck is the past chairman of the Anglers Club of Philadelphia. Additionally, during his time as a VFTU board member, Chuck played a role in getting the Healing Waters chapter started at the Coatesville VA Medical Center



and the Williamsport VA Clinic. Favorite places to fish are mostly in Northeastern, PA including the Upper Delaware, Lehigh River, and Paradise Creek.

Tough Bugs

By Mary Kuss

“Stream channelization, pollution, and insecticides have taken their toll on the mayfly life that, according to trouting literature, once flourished in our waters. The eager rise of trout to emerging insects, that magical event for which many trout fishermen live, is unfortunately rare. Many of the classic hatches have all but disappeared from public waters in the Poconos. If one were to follow a source such as Schwiebert’s Matching the Hatch in preparing patterns for use in our area, he might find a considerable number of them can be eliminated because so few of the naturals now exist in major streams.”

*Don Baylor
Pocono Hatches*

The quote by Mr. Baylor was written in 1980, and as you can imagine this situation has, for the most part, only gotten worse during the forty years since. Even so, the Poconos still have much better and more diverse hatches than the waters nearer my home in the Philadelphia suburbs. The best thing I can say is that there isn’t much channelizing of streams going on anymore.

Those of us who love fly fishing, of course, have adapted to the decline of the classic hatches. Attractor patterns have become increasingly important in our pursuit of trout and other gamefish. Yet there are still hatch-matching opportunities. We’ve simply had to turn our attention to the insects that have also been able to adapt. There are a handful of aquatic insects that still live, and sometimes even thrive, in our altered streams.

Midges



Chironomids are by far the most significant hatch in the streams I fish. They are ubiquitous, abundant, and a frequent trigger for selective feeding. I like to keep my workhorse fly patterns simple and easy to tie. Although I believe firmly that a wise fly fisher always carries some change-ups, I rely on two midge patterns. For the pupa, which is often the most important, I use an Al's Rat. This pattern could not be simpler. On a standard dry fly hook, form a double layer of brown size 3/0 Danville Monocord. Add a small ball of Muskrat dubbing as a thorax. Done. I once

saw a photograph of a real midge pupa next to a wet Al's Rat and the likeness was uncanny. For the adults, I like a Griffith's Gnat. I tie both in sizes 20, 22, and 24.



Blue-winged Olives

BWOs are second only to midges in their importance on local waters. In this area they generally range in size from 16 to 26 and can hatch any time from March through December. For the nymph, you can't beat the traditional Pheasant Tail. I am also very partial to the Barr BWO Emerger invented by John Barr, the originator of the famous Copper John nymph. For the larger duns I like parachute patterns, for the smaller ones a

simple hackle dry fly. For the spinners, my choice is an appropriately-sized Poly-wing Rusty Spinner in the larger sizes, and for the smaller ones a hackle dry fly with a rusty body and white or pale dun hackle clipped flat on the bottom.

Craneflies

I'm not talking about the huge "mosquitoes on steroids" craneflies that buzz around your porch light on summer evenings, but rather the much smaller ones that emerge in



mid-spring often along with Sulphur mayflies. It's hard to describe these insects in terms of a hook size because of their bizarre bodily proportions. They are very spindly, with a skinny body and very long legs. They vary in color from cream to tan to ginger, and sometimes gray.

I imitate the crane fly adults with a soft hackle tied on a #16 hook with an abdomen of some sort of quill, a dubbed fur thorax, and just a turn or two of hackle of a length you'd normally use on a #12 hook. This

fly will float briefly if treated with a powdered floatant like Frog's Fanny. It also works fished just subsurface, which I suppose imitates a drowned fly. These insects are so delicate, it wouldn't take much turbulence to sink one that was knocked down onto the water.

If you see crane fly adults, but there is no surface activity on the part of the trout, try nymphing with a Walt's Worm. Again, a very simple pattern consisting of nothing more than a chubby body of Hare's Ear dubbing with a bit of Antron mixed in, on a scud hook.

I once ran into an angler Czech-nymphing on a local stream that holds a good wild Brown Trout population. Fishing had been tough. He was almost apologetic in admitting he'd stomach-pumped the one trout he'd managed to catch and found it stuffed with size 16 crane fly larvae. Although I generally don't approve of this procedure the information provided made a big impression on me. I've used the Walt's Worm very successfully many times since.

Caddis

Not all caddis species are tolerant to environmental degradation. However, the net-spinners of the genus *Hydropsyche* are more so than most. They are filter-feeders, and mild organic pollution actually benefits them by producing higher concentrations of their food in the water. Craig Mathews' "X-Caddis" is my go-to pattern for caddis

adults. For the pupa, I like a Partridge and Olive or Partridge and Hare's Ear soft hackle.

Sulphurs



Ephemerella invaria (the Big Sulphur) and *E. dorothea* (the Pale Evening Dun) are well-known to be among the tough, pioneer invertebrates that are the first to repopulate streams that are recovering from environmental damage.

Although I don't see them in the numbers I once did, this is still a hatch that is well worth looking for.

My fly selection for these insects is a lot more complicated than usual. I've had experiences with this hatch when trout would take a simple cream-colored hackle

dry fly very consistently. The pattern is nothing but a hackle fiber tail, a quill or sparse dubbed body, and enough wound hackle to float the fly well. I've also fished to Sulphur hatches when the trout were incredibly fussy, requiring a lot of fly changes and tippet-tinkering to solve the puzzle. So I tie and carry a variety of patterns for all life-stages. I particularly like a Thorax-Style dry for the duns. Emerger patterns can be very important.



Tricos

The tiny *Tricorythodes* mayflies that hatch reliably on summer mornings seem quite tolerant of degraded stream conditions. I generally fish only spinner patterns for this hatch. The classic poly-wing spinner is my fly of choice. Size really matters with this fly. Eastern Tricos run smaller than the Western ones. I use sizes 24 and 26 exclusively. I

carry Trico spinner patterns with an all-black body, which imitates the male spinners, and use this fly most. I also carry some with white abdomens, which fish for the females. Once mating is complete the males hit the water first, with the females following toward the end of the spinner fall after the eggs have been laid. I have seen trout selective to the females.

I sometimes fish a #14 or 16 Griffith's Gnat during Trico hatches on warmwater streams. A Trico spinner fall can bring many Fallfish and panfish to the surface. Stalking risers and sight-fishing to these fish on shallow flats is great sport.



Terrestrials

In addition to the aquatic insects listed above, terrestrial insects are obviously very important to both fish and angler in degraded streams. Ant and beetle imitations are my bread-and-butter terrestrial fly patterns.

In my opinion, many anglers tend to get far too precious with these flies. Yes, there are times when you have to go to tiny flies and light tippets when one form is sufficiently

abundant to trigger selectivity. This happens most often with mating flights of ants. The water can be peppered with winged ants, and success requires an accurate imitation and careful presentation.

Most feeding on terrestrial insects, however, is opportunistic in nature and any number of different forms will draw strikes. I tie my workhorse beetles and ants on size 14, 16, and 18 hooks, and almost invariably they are constructed of foam.

Patterns and tying instructions for foam beetles are simple and readily available. Foam cylinders make excellent ant bodies. Lash the foam to the hook, take enough thread turns in the middle to form a well-defined waist, and add a turn of hackle or a few fibers of synthetic hair to suggest legs. If you have trouble getting foam bodies to hold securely on the hook, put a small dab of Superglue on the thread base before mounting the body.

If you feel like you've been carrying around way too many flies that you never use, and want to do some downsizing, targeting the Tough Bugs may be a great way to simplify your fly selection. Happy tying and fishing.



Mary Kuss is now retired after a long tenure as an instructor, licensed Pennsylvania guide, and retail clerk at The Sporting Gentleman in Glen Mills, PA. She has taught numerous group classes and private lessons in fly fishing and fly tying over the past 35 years. She has served on the Board of Directors for several non-profit conservation organizations, and has donated countless hours of volunteer teaching. Mary is a life-member of Trout Unlimited and has served on the Board of the Ken Lockwood, Valley Forge, and Delco-Manning Chapters of T. U. She is the founder and an active member of the Delaware Valley Women's Fly Fishing Association, one of the largest clubs of its kind on the East Coast, which celebrated its 20th anniversary year in 2016.

The Profits Run Upstream

By William Schlesinger

*Is not it enough for you to drink the clear water?
Must you also muddy the rest with your feet?
Ezekiel 34:18*

Sometime in the midst of the floodwaters of testimony excoriating the President's behavior in Ukraine, his administration quietly reduced protections of surface waters across the United States, as afforded by the Clean Water Rule. This comes at a time

when adequate supplies of high quality fresh water for human use are in peril, and many cities have uncertain water supplies for future growth. The proposed rollbacks contradict the conclusions of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) of the Environmental Protection Agency, and its “Connectivity Report” of 2015. Apparently science does not inform policy when it comes to a removing policies of the Obama administration. Operatives within the Environmental Protection Agency seem to overlook a basic law of physics – going back to Biblical times and reinforced by Newton’s observations of gravity – that water flows downhill to the sea. What enters the smallest streams, what enters the smallest streams, what environmental scientists call “first order” streams that have no tributaries, passes to larger streams and eventually to large rivers. Following Newton’s law, the small freshwater ecosystems have “connectivity” to large rivers—what enters at the headwaters inevitably determines water quality downstream. Ephemeral and intermittent streams comprise more than 2/3 of all streams in the lower 48 United States. Eliminating protection for first order and seasonal (ephemeral) streams means that anything dumped in the headwaters would be exempt from pollution laws, even if it later shows up in large rivers. Have the laws of physics been reversed?

WHY #CleanWaterRules

Clean water upstream means cleaner water downstream.
Our Clean Water Rule protects the streams and wetlands that feed our rivers, lakes, bays and coastal waters. These waters are critical for agriculture, healthy communities, our economy and our way of life.

60% of stream miles in the U.S. only flow seasonally or after rain.

Streams and wetlands filter pollution, reduce flooding and give fish and wildlife a place to live.

One-third of threatened and endangered species live only in wetlands.

Normal farming and ranching activities – like planting, harvesting and moving livestock – won't be affected by the Clean Water Rule.

Farms depend on clean water for irrigation, crops and livestock.

Tourism, fishing, recreation, energy production, manufacturing and other industries that depend on clean water add billions of dollars to our economy every year.

1 in 3 Americans get drinking water from seasonal and rain-dependent streams.

19 million people per year go paddling, spending \$86 billion on gear and trips.

Fishing adds \$48 billion to the economy every year, and supports nearly a million jobs.

www.epa.gov/cleanwaterrule

Further, protection would be eliminated for wetlands and water bodies with no permanent connections to navigable waters, including the floodplains of rivers and seasonal ponds. In a time of

dwindling natural habitat, all those who fish for sport—in small upland streams or in larger downstream rivers and lakes—will see this ruling impact their catch. Floodplains are important areas where pollutants are filtered and eliminated from flowing waters, albeit only when they flood. Also known as vernal pools, seasonal wetlands are also important areas of wildlife habitat, groundwater recharge, and denitrification—habitats where soil bacteria can remove nitrate and convert it to nitrogen gas that fills 78% of our atmosphere.

Farmers have always enjoyed some freedom regarding the waters draining their fields, but elimination of the Clean Water Rule by the proposed changes, would make it nearly impossible to regulate the increasing flow of nitrate and phosphate into the Great Lakes from agricultural sources. Farmers pushed to have the Clean Water Rule vacated, so they would not be responsible for water pollution. They are happy—the citizens of Toledo should be outraged.

These roll-backs are said to be good for business. They are motivated by real estate developers, who want to have the fewest restrictions on how lands are managed. The mining industry has also lobbied for fewer restrictions, since mine tailings are often drained by first-order streams that would become free of regulations. The chemical industry would be free to dump wastes, including “forever” pollutants, into small streams that feed larger watercourses on their way to the sea. The elimination of the Clean Water Rule seems a political payoff to business interests. Short-term profits flow upstream to a few; unhealthy water flows downstream to the many.

Importantly, once lost or polluted, headwater streams, floodplain habitats, and seasonal ponds are likely gone forever. The environmental degradation will last far beyond the Trump Administration, and cause future citizens to ask who got the benefits.



William H. Schlesinger is an emeritus Dean of Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment and emeritus President of the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, NY. A member of the National Academy of Sciences, he is one of the nation's premier environmental and earth scientists, who now focuses his attention on translating science for the general public. His weekly blog can be accessed at <http://blogs.nicholas.duke.edu/citizenscientist>, and he can be reached at schlesingerw@caryinstitute.org

Range Wars

By Matt Seymour



I began hearing about eels being “released” into a local watershed a few months ago. My first thought was “here goes another ecological experiment that promises to have some unintended consequences.” Visions of killer eels ravaging our beloved trout streams wriggled through my gray head.

I found out a little more by checking a few press stories about a group of scientists and educators releasing eels into Pickering Creek. The stories made the endeavor sound harmless enough and the rationale was good: native American eels would be released into streams which were under assault by invasive species of crayfish.

Curiosity piqued, I shuffled off to hear Dr. Erik Silldorff, Restoration Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network speak. Erik was the speaker at Valley Forge Trout Unlimited’s monthly meeting on January 9th. He didn’t disappoint.

First a note about what *invasive* means. Think “non-native plants and animals from other parts of the world— that threaten native wildlife and ecosystems and are causing ecological havoc in many of our most sensitive habitats, pushing many of our native plants and animals to the brink of extinction.”

In this particular case the invaders include a number of species of crayfish. These little buggers are aggressive. Not only do they eat more biotic material than their native counterparts but seem to be more pugnacious. They move in and our native crayfish back off. The invaders may have come the way other pests enter - perhaps emptied bait boxes or aquarium dumps or perhaps concluded school bio outings. But suffice to say they’re ornery.



One of the more common invasive crayfish species is as *faxonius rusticus* - the Rusty Crayfish. Don’t even think about identifying them without tweezers, a good knowledge of crayfish reproductive taxonomy, and a really good magnifying glass.



The good guys (the “home boys”?) Include the Appalachian Brook Crayfish (*C. Bartonii*) and newly identified natural resident loosely classified as *F. Limos Acumenatis*, in the *Cambarus Acuminatus* species group.

The Cast of Characters:

Dr. Erik Silldorff

Restoration Director, Delaware Riverkeeper Network, stream ecologist

Dr. Rich Horowitz

Senior Scientist, Fisheries Section Leader, Ruth Patrick Chair of Environmental Sciences, Patrick Center for Environmental Research, eel migration and dam obstruction expertise

Dr. Dave Lieb

Currently Invertebrate Zoologist, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy/Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission/Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program; crayfish expert

A Eureka Moment

It happened that one day during a peripatetic stroll that Silldorff and Lieb were musing out loud about the relationship between eels and crayfish. Horwitz walking with them but mostly silent, suddenly blurted out, “Say that again”! Horwitz it turns out had noticed in his own eel studies that wherever eels seemed to have been found in any density in local creeks there seemed to fewer invasive species of crayfish. *Lieb & Silldorff had a hypothesis! And Horwitz had a rich pool of data!*

What if eels, those that occurred naturally in PA’s fresh water streams, could diminish the abundance of invasive crayfish species? But a worrisome alternative suggested itself : what if the eels found both the invasive and home-boy crayfish equally delectable?

THE EXPERIMENT

Pickering Creek was selected as a prime spot for the experiment:

- It had a high density of invasive crayfish (this time, the Virile Crayfish, *F. virilis*)
- There were no eels present
- Good water quality and habitat
- The lands were preserved and appeared to have stable regulatory and habitat future
- There were still some native crayfish present

A baseline of crayfish data had been collected since 2006, and then more intensive efforts began in 2019 in 5 different locations in the watershed. Crayfish *and fish* quantitative data were established.

And the experiment began in earnest in August 2019 with the introduction of over 4,000 American (*Anguilla rostrata*) eels in only 3 Pickering basin sites. There are no definitive plans to introduce more eels in the near future. Instead, next efforts will help them get over the barriers that prevent their migration. In the meantime the impact of their presence on native *and* invasive crayfish will be thoroughly examined. Fortunately it appears from other literature

the American Eel seems to have a “preference” for the invaders. It may be that the native crayfish have developed an early eel warning system their late-to-the-party invasive cousins have not. Or perhaps the intruders are more foolishly combative than our native born crayfish.

If the eels stay (they won’t reproduce in our waters) in sufficient numbers, for an ample number of years (4-10 depending on sex) things may prove fortuitous for our streams’ health. But there is much to be done.



Another Dynamic

An interesting question arises. To what extent will dammed rivers have an impact on the fluidity of the comings and goings of eels in a water system. Specifically, will implanted eels be able, when their biology urges them, to return to the Sargasso Sea to reproduce. And if they make it to Bermudian waters will they be able to return to where they were introduced?

The good news is that eels are extraordinarily resourceful at bridging obstacles, even many dams. But in the Pickering experiment only time ... maybe up to 10-15 years ... will tell. And getting young eels to return in solid numbers to the Schuylkill and its feeder streams is another challenge we have to face.

Hopefully this short piece whets your appetite for keeping abreast of issues that affect the health of our freshwater streams - not just our beloved Pickering Creek. It starts with your interest/curiosity, blooms into knowledge and hopefully provokes us to action. A check, volunteering for a work project, or advocacy - all work. Take your pick:

1. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network
Restoration & Advocacy for river health:
<https://www.delawariverkeeper.org>
2. Patrick Center for Environmental Research
Fisheries research:
<https://ansp.org/research/environmental-research/sections/fisheries/>
3. Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Watershed Conservation:
<https://waterlandlife.org/watershed-conservation/>



Dr. Erik Silldorff is the Restoration Director and senior scientist at the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. As a stream ecologist and statistician, Erik brings an ecological focus to both protection and restoration efforts throughout the Delaware River Basin, seeking to maintain ecological health where it persists and restore ecological health in degraded streams and rivers.

Eye on the Eagle

By Bob Bonney

The Struble Lake Eagle



This is the story of a bald eagle that was near death (It was unable to breathe). The eagle was discovered in a farm field, by a farmer in Honey Brook, who immediately contacted the PA Game Commission (PGC).



PGC, WCO Scott Fredericks responded and transported the dying eagle to Dr. Fraenkel's Animal Hospital in Honey Brook. Dr. Frankel treated the eagle for a bacterial infection in its lungs, saving its life. Dr. Frankel stated the eagle was only an hour away from dying when WCO Fredericks brought it to him. The eagle responded quickly to the antibiotics it received and two weeks later was transported by PGC WCO's to the Center Wildlife Care facility, in Port Matilda, where Wildlife Rehabilitator Robyn Graboski

rehabilitated it.

Three weeks later the eagle was returned to Struble Lake, the area where it was found, and released back into the wild. Later that year, in the area where the eagle was released, a new eagle's nest was discovered. That was seven years ago.

Now this would "normally" be the happy ending to the story, however, nothing about this bald eagle is normal.

On December 18, 2019 I had just left Struble Lake where I had been exercising Jager, my German Shepherd, (Yes, the very same parking lot where the eagle was released). As we headed up the road to the intersection at Chestnut Tree and Morgantown Roads, I saw a vehicle stopped in the roadway. As I pulled up behind him to see if he needed assistance, something on the side of the road caught my eye. When I looked, I could not believe what I saw, it was a mature bald eagle laying in the grass with its wings spread out and obviously dead.

I stopped, got out of my vehicle and examined the eagle. It didn't appear to have been shot, nor could I find any other obvious wounds. I took charge of the eagle, placed it in the rear of

my truck and later turned it over to the PGC.

According to the witness, he was behind a car when he saw the eagle fly in to the side of it. The deceased eagle was less than 150 yards from the Struble nest and only 100 feet or so from a tree the pair always perched in to observe their nest. So, naturally I presumed it was one the Struble Eagles that perished that morning, that is until about a week later when I observed both eagles perched in their tree.

I could not have been happier, but what about the dead eagle? At first, we (PGC & I) thought it had been chasing after prey on the opposite side of the road, didn't see the car and flew into it. We now believe that due to the fact eagles are so fiercely protective of their territory, the Struble Eagles were chasing the eagle when it came too close to their nest causing it to fly into the oncoming vehicle while attempting to escape. And while I'm sad to see the other eagle die, I'm very happy to report the Struble Lake Eagles are alive and doing well!

By the way, unless you are a Native American Indian it is illegal to possess a bald eagle or any part thereof.

I posted a 3-4-minute video/slide show of the Struble Lake Eagle's release on the internet, which can be viewed on line by googling "*Struble Lake Bald Eagle.*"



Bob Bonney is Chester County's Waterways Conservation Office and valued member of The Dame Juliana League, Valley Forge Trout Unlimited and Project Healing Waters. Beside being a gifted nature photographer, he may be a poacher's worst nightmare.

Bob in Four Mile Creek

Help Wanted

Advice needed to restore two ponds fed by a stream and spring on a small wetland in Landenburg.
Contact Ted Nawalinski via email biologee@verizon.net or 484-686-8919

Last Casts

By John Burgos

This too shall pass. I keep saying that to myself, if only to keep some sanity.

As we look to the fall, we have a full plate of speakers. Please see our website for all details.

But, before we even get to the fall, we have summer business to take care of. As most of you know, DJL provides volunteers at the Kimberton Fair to collect "parking donations" for the Kimberton Fire Company. We commit to supporting the fire company Monday through Wednesday of the Fair. This year, those dates are July 20-22. Please free up your calendar and help DJL meet our commitment to the Fire Company.

As I said in my opening notes, we are all looking for "normal" again. I don't expect it too soon. Work within the guidelines and enjoy our sport. Be respectful of others. Take advantage of the great fishing opportunities we have around here. When you get out, take a picture. Let us all enjoy your exploits.

Have a great season,

John B



Featured Friends of Dame Juliana League

