

TIGHTLINES



TOP NEWS OF THE MONTH - FEBRUARY 2024

FEBRUARY MEETING CHANGE!

➤➤➤ READ MORE

Due to various reasons, the February PSA general meeting will be moved from Wednesday the 14th to Tuesday the 13th. The meeting will still be at the American Legion at 7 PM. The speaker will still be Mike Hosack. Again, the February PSA general meeting is now Tuesday, February 13th at our normal location and time.

READ MORE <<<

The PA Steelhead Association holds meetings each month except May, June, July, and December at 7:00 PM on the second Wednesday of each month. Most meetings are held at the American Legion Post 773 at 4109 West 12th Street, just east of the Erie Airport. We meet in the banquet room and encourage members as well as the public to attend and share their views and opinions. Meetings focus on items pertaining to the mission of the club, fundraising events, and local public and political issues affecting our fisheries. The PFBC is asked to be represented at our meetings for reports and questions. If you are unable to attend in person, join us on Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81084538949?pwd=anRZMG1GQkE3Y092SWZmUzRkQlQvUT09>

Meeting ID: 81084538949 Passcode: 257378

JOIN US AT A MONTHLY MEETING.

A NOT FOR PROFIT 501(C)3 CORPORATION
PO BOX 8892 ERIE, PA 16505



Editor: Emma Mader

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

By Chris Larson

>>> FROM THE TRIBS

The latter half of January 2024 has not been kind to area steelhead anglers. Sub-freezing temperatures, ice-coated streams, and lots of rain have made for difficult fishing conditions over the past 2 weeks. Earlier today I drove over Conneaut Creek in the city of Conneaut. The creek was filled with huge slabs of ice and the water level was incredibly high with significant flooding all along the banks. Even if we don't receive any further precipitation, it is going to be unfishable for several more days. I know many of you don't fish Conneaut Creek, but I'm sure that what I observed is representative of what is happening in our Pennsylvania Lake Erie tributaries. Until we get a break in the weather, this is a good time to check your gear, organize your vest or tackle box, and tie some more flies or egg sacs.

On January 24 th , several members of the PSA (Roger Latimer, Chris Fatica, Karl Weixlmann, Jim Simonelli, and myself) met with a number of PA Fish & Boat Commission personnel (Jeff Bowman, Dan Pastore, Matt Brown, Matt Visosky, Jake Schwartzmiller, Jim Smolko, and Tyler Soety).

UPCOMING MEETINGS

Date	Location	Speaker
01/10/24	American Legion 773 7 PM	Combined Meeting with TU & Gannon
02/13/24	American Legion 773 7 PM	Mike Hosack, PFBC Biologist-Steelhead Stocking
03/13/24	American Legion 773 7 PM	Dr. Sarah Ewing, Gannon Project NepTWNE
04/10/24	American Legion 773 7 PM	Sister Pat Lupo-Pennsylvania Lake Erie Watershed Association

Jeff Bowman, PFBC Chief of Construction and Maintenance, headed up the meeting which was held at the Walnut Creek Marina Office. The PFBC asked the PSA members to help identify small-scale access problems on Lake Erie tributaries that needed to be fixed or improved but could be remedied without doing major construction or requiring major equipment.

An example would be improving or creating an access trail to a stream. These are projects which the PSA could perform most of the necessary work. During the meeting, we identified about a half-dozen potential projects. We were tasked with developing a list of 10-12 such projects which would be submitted to the PFBC. We would then meet again to prioritize the items on the list and hopefully work on plans for carrying out a few of the projects during the summer. If you have any suggestions for this list, then please share it with any of the PSA members who attended the meeting.

These PSA work projects are in line with our mission statement, which in part, states: "The purpose and objectives of the Association shall be to enhance and preserve the steelhead fishery in Pennsylvania including IMPROVING PUBLIC ACCESS for steelhead fishing..." This is the type of work that our organization needs to do more of going forward.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

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By Chris Larson

>>> CONTINUED

On another note. Your good friend asks you to catch a bucket full of bluegills for the purpose of stocking their private farm pond. Before you rush off to Misery Bay with your lightweight spinning rod and a bucket, you will need to fill out and submit a form to the Commonwealth called the NOTICE of STOCKING (NOS) form before any fish can be moved from one body of water to another. It doesn't matter if the body of water is on public or private lands. The form is free and can be filled out online.

There are a few exceptions to the NOS requirement:

- Fish baited on a hook for angling purposes
- Ornamental ponds with a closed system of water circulation with no risk of contacting the surface waters of this Commonwealth
- Stocking of triploid (sterile) grass carp which requires its own special permit

The requirement for this form went into place on January 1, 2024. It was put into place to prevent the spread of invasive aquatic species. The following hyperlink will take you to a PFBC page with more information: <https://www.fishandboat.com/FAQs/Pages/NOS.aspx>

Looking forward to seeing everyone at the February PSA General Meeting. Because the 2nd Wednesday in February is Valentine's Day and Ash Wednesday, we changed the meeting date to Tuesday, February 13, at the usual time and place. At that meeting, nominations will start to be accepted for positions on the PSA Board. Currently, 5 directors are up for re-election and there are 2 vacant spots on the Board. Elections are held at the March General Meeting.

Time to sign off. Tight Lines!
Chris





This beautiful painting of a steelhead will be raffled off at the April general meeting. It is the artistic creation of Sam Zacour. The painting measures 8" x 23". It is painted on a plank of wood with the bark remaining on the edges which gives it a very rustic look. There is mounting hardware on the back so it is ready to hang.

Tickets will be sold at the door. 1 ticket for \$5. 3 tickets for \$10.

Raffle proceeds will go to the Landowner Appreciation Fruit Basket Program.

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>>> CHECK OUT OUR NEW WEBSITE!

For the last several months the PSA has been updating our website, check it out below!



MEET THE TEAM

OUR MISSION, OFFICERS, AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

>>> OUR MISSION

The purpose and objectives of the Association shall be to enhance and preserve the steelhead fishery in Pennsylvania including:

- Improving public access to steelhead fishing,
- Encouraging private landowners to maintain public access to steelhead fishing,
- Implementing stream enhancement and habitat improvement projects for steelhead, and
- Assisting nonprofit organizations which operate nurseries for spawning or raising steel head, or
- Which acquire land or access easements for steelhead fishing, or which engage in activities that complement the purposes and activities of the PA Steelhead Association.

>>> OFFICERS & BOD

Chris Larson- **President**
 Roger Latimer- **Vice President**
 Chris Fatica- **Treasurer**
 Dan Beck- **Secretary**

Board of Directors

Jack Barr
 John Hall
 Paul Krott
 Emma Mader- *Newsletter Editor*
 Marie Scalera
 Skip Simmons
 Tim Weeks
 Karl Weixlmann
 Sam Zacour- *Newsletter Editor*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Victor Cawthorne
 William Corrente
 Carl Fry
 Gregory Schultz
 Nicole Sharkey

>>> ADDITIONAL CONACT INFORMATION

Erie County WCO's & Region offices Contact Info:

Sgt. Tyler Soety: 814-722-8643

NW Fish & Boat Regional Office: 814-337-0444

Matt Visosky

Central Erie 814-573-3638

Jacob Schwartzmiller

Western Erie 814-337-0444

Logan Schuller

Eastern Erie 814-908-6371

Walnut Creek Access

814-833-2464

(Note: The Walnut Creek office is the best # to call to report poachers)



UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

>>> EVENTS IN THE AREA

Date	Location	Event
02/13/24	American Legion 7 PM	Mike Hosack, PFBC Biologist Steelhead Stocking
Ongoing	Van Kamp Road	Gem City Fly Tiers 2nd Thursday of the month @ 6:30 PM
03/02/24	TREC 5 PM	International Fly Fishing Film Festival
09/28/24	TBD	PA Steelhead Association Fall Run Picnic

>>> TROUT UNVEILING- ASBURY WOODS

Join Asbury Woods as their trout fry are released from their hatchling baskets and can swim freely throughout the whole tank! This program is in partnership with Trout Unlimited and their "Trout in the Classroom" initiative. Learn about the trout life cycle and do a trout craft! This event is Saturday, February 3rd from 11 AM - 12 PM. This is a free, no pre-registration required event for all ages located at the Nature Center! If you want to learn more, check out Asbury Woods *Trout in the Classroom* webpage [here](#).



UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

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>>> NWPA TROUT UNLIMITED INTERNATIONAL FLY FISHING FILM FESTIVAL 2024

The annual International Fly Fishing Film Festival fundraiser for Trout Unlimited is back! This fundraiser helps support TU's mission of cold water conservation in the region, with cold water fisheries being a prime indicator of system health. Presque Isle Partnership is a proud supporter and sponsor of the NWPA Trout Unlimited showing the film at the Tom Ridge Environmental Center at Presque Isle State Park on Saturday, March 2 at 5 PM. There will be raffles, prizes, and more!

The price is \$20 at the door or Pre-Sale Online [click here](#).



To preview the film, click the photo here!

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

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➤➤➤ PSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS RE-ELECTION

We will start to take nominations for PSA Officers and Board of Directors at the February General Meeting on Tuesday, February 13th. Nominations will stay open until the elections at the March General Meeting on Wednesday, March 13th.

Officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer) have 1 year terms. The following is the list of officers:

- Chris Larson—President
- Roger Latimer—Vice President
- Dan Beck—Secretary
- Chris Fatica—Treasurer

Board of Directors have 2-year terms. The following is the list of the Board of Directors up for re-election:

- John Hall
- Paul Krott
- Roger Latimer
- Emma Mader
- Skip Simmons

In addition to the 5 Directors up for re-election, 2 vacant Board seats can be filled. Nominations can be made at the February meeting or by contacting any of the current Officers or Board Members. Self-nominations are allowed.



JOIN OUR TEAM!

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

>>> MARYANN MOOK AND THE WEST COUNTY NEWS-JOURNAL

The PA Steelhead Association Bob Hetz memorial donation to Gannon was featured in an article by Maryann Mook for the West County News- Journal. Below is a copy of the article for those who were unable to get a copy of the paper.

To say that the late Robert Lee "Bob" Hetz was a fish enthusiast would be an understatement. Chris Larson, president of the PA Steelhead Association (PSA), referred to Hetz as "a major driving force in the development of the local steelhead fishery in northwest Pennsylvania."



Larson said Hetz was an iconic figure amongst the fishing community in northwestern Pennsylvania. Along with Norm Ely, Jerry Honard, and Jimmy Dallas, Hetz founded 3-CU, which is the largest cooperative nursery in Pennsylvania at this time. Co-op nurseries receive fish from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, and then volunteers raise the fish until they reach a size that they can be stocked.

Larson said these volunteers must tend to the fish every day for several months – rain, snow, or sun. They feed the fish, check water quality, do maintenance work on the raceways that hold the fish and then stock the fish into one of the Lake Erie tributary streams. The cost of food, equipment and maintenance work is paid for only through donations to the co-operative nursery, Larson said.

Hetz passed away on Feb. 23, 2023, at the age of 87. He left behind his wife, June, and their four children, Kurt, Kara, Kraig and Kim. Prior to retiring in 2001, he had been employed at his family business, Fairview Evergreen Nurseries Inc. In memory of Hetz's dedication to fish and educating youth, the PSA presented a \$12,000 check to Gannon University's Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree Program during the association's meeting on Jan. 10 at the American Legion Millcreek Post 773 in Erie. Larson represented the PA Steelhead Association; June, Kraig and Kurt Hetz represented the Hetz family; Nancy Bird, vice president of the university, Dr. Chris Dempsey, director of the Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree Program and Dr. Greg Andraso, professor of biology, represented Gannon. "It is the PA Steelhead Association's hope that this memorial donation to the Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree Program will help develop individuals who will become stewards of our aquatic environment – Lake Erie and its tributaries – and the creatures that live within it, including Bob's beloved steelhead," Larson said.

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

>>> MARYANN MOOK AND THE WEST COUNTY NEWS-JOURNAL

Educating people to understand this environment, the myriad of problems it faces and how to develop solutions to these problems is key to the continued well being of our waters.” June Hetz said the family was “very pleased that Bob was honored in such a fashion.”

“Bob was interested in educating people about the fish, and he showed anybody and everybody the raceways and told them about the programs and what they were doing,” she said. Larson said steelhead make up “the overwhelming majority” of the fish raised by 3-CU, and it is estimated that Hetz’s efforts led to the stocking of several million steelhead in his lifetime. “Steelhead are beautiful fish that are electrifying to catch. Thousands of anglers travel great distances to try and catch them in our local streams,” Larson said. “The steelhead fishery creates many jobs for our Erie County economy and brings in millions of dollars of revenue to various businesses in our area.” Hetz also raised brown trout, and at one time, salmon. Many of the brown trout were stocked into the Fairview Gravel Pits Pond, which has been renamed the Bob Hetz Memorial Pond.

A boulder that is inscribed “Bob Hetz Memorial Pond” was placed on the shores of that body of water. Several fishing organizations collaborated to honor Hetz in various ways after his death. A plaque in his memory was placed at Avonia Beach. And 3-CU dedicated its annual button to Hetz this year, Larson said. The PA Steelhead Association was a sponsor of the Avonia Beach plaque, but members wanted to do something in addition to that. “The PSA’s board of directors suggested creating a scholarship at a local university in memory of Bob,” Larson said. “After researching this possibility, it was deemed not feasible for a variety of reasons. Instead, the decision was made by the PSA board to make a sizable one-time directed donation to a local educational institution in memory of Bob.

“Gannon University has a Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree program that was a good fit for this memorial donation. The program’s director is Dr. Christopher Dempsey, who spoke about his program at the PSA general meeting.” Another thing Hetz did was collect aluminum cans for recycling. He used the funds to purchase fish food and supplies. June Hetz said he had two routes in Fairview, and he would get out of bed in the middle of the night to collect the cans. “People knew what he was doing, and they would save cans for him,” June Hetz said. “He would sort them and recycle them.” Judy Schroeck, Planning and Zoning secretary and recycling coordinator for Fairview Township, said Hetz would collect aluminum cans and take them into recycling to raise money for 3-CU. “He would give us the reporting slips that we would include on our annual recycling report,” Schroeck said. Planning and Zoning Administrator Jim Cardman said the township would then receive funds. June Hetz also said that, on the first day of trout season, her husband would shoot off a gun to signify it was time to cast your line.

UPCOMING EVENTS & UPDATES

>>> MARYANN MOOK AND THE WEST COUNTY NEWS-JOURNAL

Larson said the volunteers who are involved in 3-CU are outdoors people who like to hunt and who like to fish. "It's not about fishing to them, it's about the fish," Larson said. Larson said Hetz loved the fish he raised and tended to and the bodies of water they inhabit. "He devoted a large portion of his life to raising these fish, tending to them every day for several months every year until their release into one of the local tributary streams in the springtime," Larson said. "Even in the dead of winter, he religiously checked on these fish and made sure that they were fed. In the process, he created a following of dedicated 3-CU volunteers who have continued to carry on Bob's work to this day."



Editor's note: Chris Larson, president of the PA Steelhead Association, contributed to this article.

Pictured left: Chris Larson, PSA President; Kraig Hetz; Nancy Bird, VP of University Advancement; Dr. Christopher Dempsey, Director of the Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree program; Kurt Hetz; and June Hetz.

>>> JANUARY MEETING RECAP

The January 10th meeting was a busy one. The PA Steelhead Association made a \$12,000 memorial donation on Wednesday night to the Gannon University Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree program (Gannon Biology). This donation was made in memory of Bob Hetz. Bob's widow, June, and his 2 sons, Kraig and Kurt, were in attendance at the meeting. Dr. Christopher Dempsey is the director of the Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree program and he talked about the program and some of the research that his students are currently doing. In addition, Nancy Bird, Vice President of University Advancement, and Dr. Greg Andraso, Biology Professor, represented Gannon at the meeting. The PA Steelhead Association hopes that this memorial donation to the Freshwater and Marine Biology Degree Program will help develop individuals who will become stewards of our aquatic environment -- Lake Erie and its tributaries -- and the creatures that live within it including Bob's beloved steelhead. Educating people to understand this environment, the myriad of problems it faces, and how to develop solutions to these problems is key to the continued well-being of our waters.

FISH ON!

>>> SEND US YOUR FISH PICS!

We would love to publish your Steelhead fishing photos in our monthly newsletter.

Please send photos to: info@pasteelhead.com with "Fish Pic for TightLines" in the subject area!



Way to go, Skip!



Nice one, Sam Z!



Terry Smith, 12/23

FIRST STEELHEAD!

12

>>> BY: SKIP

We all remember the thrill of landing our first Steelhead, as well as the frustration of those early Steelhead days when we hooked fish but failed to land them. The frustration of those early unsuccessful hookups made the catching of our first Steelhead catch so much sweeter.

I was able to enjoy the thrill of a 'First Steelhead Moment' in the afternoon on December 29, 2023 when Lauren Chadwick of Mount Lebanon, PA brought to hand her first Steelhead on only her third-time Steelhead fishing ever. Witnessing the suspense of the fight and the joy in landing her first Steelhead, made that day on the water more special for me than many that I've had in quite some time.

I was fishing upper Elk Creek and happened upon a nice big pool with numerous active fish. Three other anglers were fly fishing there as I arrived but there was plenty of room for me as well.

Not too long after arriving, Lauren hooked a Steelhead and fought it valiantly. After the fish tired Lauren coaxed it near the bank. Her angling partner, Mike Panchik, also of Mt. Lebanon, PA scooped the net under the Steelhead but, with a final burst of energy, it jumped and spun and came off the hook.

With much disappointment, Mike mentioned that Lauren was attempting to land her first Steelhead ever. The fish that had just escaped was the second fish that day that Lauren got all the way to the net but was not able to land. I shared with Lauren that she shouldn't get discouraged. It was just part of the Steelhead game, and she had fought the fish extremely well.



FIRST STEELHEAD!

>>> BY: SKIP

13

Eventually, the fourth angler, who had been there when I arrived, moved on. Later, as I was getting ready to move on too, and just as I was saying my 'goodbyes' to Mike and Lauren, Lauren hooked into another Steelhead. The fight was on, and this was an energetic fish! It was leaping and making numerous runs, but as Mike offered encouragement Lauren patiently fought on. I decided that I had to see how the story was going to end. I put down my rod and got out my phone to record the action.

After a great fight which I captured with photos and videos, Mike scooped the fish into the net and Lauren beamed with joy looking at her first Steelhead! The pictures tell the story. After Lauren landed her fish, we exchanged phone numbers before I moved on, so that I could share the photos and videos with them when I got home. But that is not the end of the story.

The next day, after sharing the photos and videos with Mike and Lauren, I received a text from Mike. Mike texted that, after that day on the water, Lauren is now hooked for life on Steelhead fishing, and that they had continued fishing on into dusk. As it got dark, Mike enticed a beautiful Steelhead by swinging a streamer. You can see Mike's pleasure in catching that monster at the end of their day but, as impressive as Mike's fish was, it paled by comparison to the joy of Lauren's first Steelhead which she successfully brought to hand that afternoon on Elk Creek.



CONGRATULATIONS, LAUREN!



AND MIKE, TOO!

FIRST STEELHEAD!

14



YOU'RE HOOKED NOW!

PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN AND BE KIND TO OTHERS

15

>>> BY: SAM Z

FISHING LINE, BAIT CONTAINERS, PLASTIC BOTTLES, BEER CANS, OLD TIRES, SHOPPING CARTS. HAVE YOU EVER GONE FISHING AND THOUGHT “WOW, PEOPLE CAN BE REAL PIGS”. I have, much too often. While our clean-up at the Walnut Creek Access has shown less trash than a few years ago, too many people think someone is paid to clean up after them. Walk the banks of your favorite stream and you will mostly find some garbage. I found sites where it looked like someone backed a truck up to the stream bank and dump a truckload of their unwanted crap in. These types may be hard to stop as fisher persons, but problems aren’t limited to those ignoramuses. Trash left by those who call themselves outdoor men or women is still commonplace. This is where a little peer pressure calling out someone could help. Litter is one of my big pet peeves, along with people who park in handicapped spaces.



I have spoken up many times and have been pleasantly surprised by the reaction to my comment. Most often they really weren’t paying attention to what they were doing and apologized and cleaned up there mess. Once as I was walking to a fishing hole on a stream a guy parked in a handicapped space stream side and started briskly walking toward the stream. Now often I try to be real polite when I call out people for this, because handicaps are not always readily visible (My brother had a heart transplant and I have Parkinson’s, but if you saw us on the stream you’d be hard-pressed to tell). However this guy was bounding out of this big pickup and so I spoke up and said, “Wow, you don’t look handicapped”. He smiled and said he didn’t plan on staying long, but when I did not smile back, he got in the truck and moved it back up to the main parking lot.

“THE MESSES ON OUR WATERWAYS ARE THE FAULT OF HUMANS AND WE ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO CAN FIX THIS MESS.”

PACK OUT WHAT YOU PACK IN AND BE KIND TO OTHERS CONTIN.

>>> BY: SAM Z

We all rely on clean water for drinking, farming, fishing, boating and dozens of other things. It creates jobs, recreational activities, food and lots of economic benefits. I grew up in Pittsburgh where the rivers were filthy as a kid, and I don't want to go back towards those days. Stopping acid mine drainage goes a long way to making for healthy waters, but we all have a part to play in keeping the environment clean. Why would people think that trashing things we depend on is okay? We have done wonderful things with the environment the last 50 years, but now some have the attitude that things are good enough and we don't have to be diligent anymore. That is how we got in trouble in the first place. We need to do a little better educating those that have trouble learning from our past mistakes and standing up for our waters. How you speak up is important, do it in a tactful and kind manner and you are more likely to get a positive reaction.



Let's be stewards of our favorite places and take care of things so we can pass our great hobby to our sons, daughters and grandchildren. We need to stay diligent and leave a legacy of clean water and air and not a mess for them to clean up. Take a bag with you to clean up after careless or mindless people on your way back to the car.

Volunteer for cleanups, or better yet, organize one for your favorite spot. Let's take care of our waters.

DID YOU FILL OUT YOUR STEELHEAD SURVEY TODAY?

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>>> STEELHEAD ANGLER SURVEY LETTER

For the 3rd straight year, the PA Steelhead Association is managing an online survey about steelhead fishing in Pennsylvania. The first fishing season (fall 2021-spring 2022) we collected 408 surveys. The following fishing season (2022-23) we collected 475 surveys. We are opening up the survey again for the 2023-24 steelhead season.

The information from last season's survey was given to the Lake Erie Research Unit of the PA Fish & Boat Commission for analysis. The LERU will publish this information on the Fish Commission's website in the Biologist Reports Area 9 section. By comparing catch rates from year to year, this data may be helpful in monitoring the health of the fishery over time. The more surveys that are submitted, the more accurate the data.

We are encouraging everyone to fill out a survey every time that they fish for steelhead in northwest Pennsylvania --- whether you catch a fish or not. It only takes a minute or two to complete. You can use your cell phone to access the survey via the following QR code:



iPhone cameras read QR codes and will get you connected to the survey. Most android phones require that you download a QR code reader app first in order to get connected. You can also access the survey through the following hyperlink: [PSA Steelhead Survey 2023-24](#)

You can save the link on your phone for easy access later on.

The survey asks for your email address which allows us to identify how many surveys were submitted by individual anglers. Last year a total of 475 surveys were submitted by 164 anglers which averages out to 2.9 surveys per angler. Email addresses are required to fill out the survey but are only shared with the PA Fish & Boat Commission.

Some individuals have expressed concern that the PA Steelhead Association uses the survey to identify the best places to fish on the tributaries for its members. The only information that the survey asks for is which stream that you fished --- nothing more specific than that. The only exception to this is whether you fished from the "Wall" or in the stream on Walnut Creek. When the Lake Erie Research Unit releases the survey analysis on the PA Fish & Boat Commission website, we will provide a link to the information on the PSA website and in our newsletter, Tight Lines.

Again, we are encouraging everyone who fishes for steelhead to fill out our Steelhead Fishing Survey --- whether they catch a fish or not.

Thank you.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE STREAMS

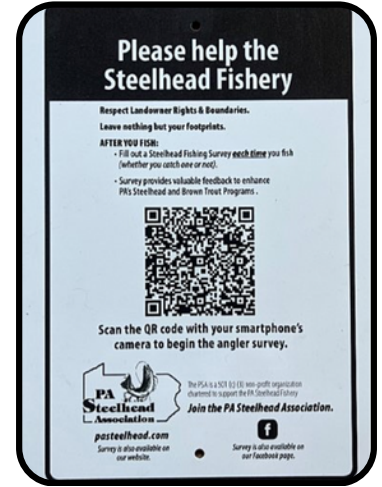
»»» STEELHEAD ANGLER SURVEY UPDATE

Please fill out a survey every time that you fish - even if you don't catch anything.

The survey was created by and is managed by the PA Steelhead Association. This information is shared with the Lake Erie Research Unit of the PA Fish & Boat Commission. The data is analyzed by the LERU to gather knowledge about the northwest Pennsylvania steelhead fishery. The results of the 2022-23 survey data analysis will be published on the PA Fish & Boat Commission website sometime in 2024.

You can access the survey by using the QR reader on your smart phone. Then save the web address on your phone for easy access in the future. Takes less than 2 minutes to fill out.

Every survey submitted adds useful information about our steelhead fishery. Last year we received 475 surveys. Let's see if we can double that this year! Access the survey by scanning the QR code your smartphone.



»»» AVONIA BEACH LIVE CAMERA

The Pennsylvania Steelhead Association has worked together with SONS of Erie, FishUSA, and the Fairview Township to install a camera at the mouth of Trout Run. It is now operational and has gone live!

We have committed to 1/3 of the cost of the camera and installation. Fish USA will be the host platform for the application The Avonia Beach Live Camera Feed is a great way for anglers to keep tabs on current water and weather conditions at the foot of Avonia Road in Fairview, PA.

<https://www.fishusa.com/avonia-webcam>



Presented by Fairview Township, FishUSA,
Sons of Lake Erie, & PA Steelhead Assc

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER? LOOK NO FURTHER!



PA STEELHEAD ASSOCIATION

WORKING TO PROTECT OUR FISHERY

• ACCESS TO WATERWAYS • EDUCATION, PROTECTION, AND PRESERVATION • LANDOWNER COOPERATION

www.pasteelhead.com

FOUNDED IN 1996

The PA Steelhead Association (PSA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was formed by three avid Steelhead anglers to address a rash of property postings on prime Steelhead streams in Erie County. Like-minded anglers gathered and they got the ball rolling for the development of landowner relations and working relationships with the PFBC and local and State governments to address the issues of fishing access. Today the PSA is a vital player in the protection and preservation of Pennsylvania's Lake Erie Steelhead fishery. The PSA's continued efforts to gain access easements, maintain and promote favorable landowner relations, undertake stream-improvement projects around the area, and work closely with 3-CU cooperative nursery to raise steelhead for local stocking are central to our efforts. And in addition to all that, we still find time to fish!

The strength of our membership drives our mission. If you love to fish for Steelhead in the Lake Erie Watershed, please join the PA Steelhead Association today!

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$20.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25.00 * |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Senior \$15.00 (65 and older) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$10.00 ** |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Military \$15.00 (Active & Veterans) | <input type="checkbox"/> Business \$50.00 |

Name: _____ DOB: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____

Zip: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

(We NEVER disclose your personal information to ANY third parties)

Return this completed form with payment to:

PA Steelhead Association

P.O. Box 8892

Erie, PA 16505

*Family Membership includes spouse and all children under 13 years.

** Student is 13 years and older with valid school ID.

12 MONTH MEMBERSHIP BEGINS WHEN PAYMENT IS RECEIVED.



By "Fly by Night Guy"

>>> "SEXY WALT'S"- NYMPH PATTERN & VARIATIONS

The Walt's Worm is an estimable old pattern developed by Walt Young, to imitate various crane fly larvae. There are many reincarnations of the attractor version of this fly, including "William's Sexy Waltz", "McKenna's Sexy Walt's Worm", "Xtra Sexy Walt's Worm" and even a "Son of Sexy Walt's".

This version adds just a little to attract fish in high-pressure areas, hopefully without adding too much to scare away fish. They all have been used to produce fish. The best thing about a Walt's Worm or a Sexy Walt's is they are simple to tie and catch fish! They pattern can be fished blind, as an attractor pattern. The most effective sizes are #10-18. Many are tied on jig hooks. I first tied the Sexy Walt's in the Featured Fly column in August of 2018.

I have seen view variations lately that are a little more subtle and look interesting. Below, I will show the original Sexy Walt's from that 2018 article, followed by the new twist on it.

Description The addition of lead wire, a bead head, and sparse dubbing helps the fly get down deeper. It can be used as a dropper under a dry or in combination with another nymph.

The Sexy Walt's Worm can be fished in a variety of ways. Often it is effective when fished on the stream bottom with a split shot on the leader that allows it to sink while dead drifting. At the end of the drift let it rise to imitate a nymph trying to reach the surface.

To learn how to tie these flies, check out the various instructions below!

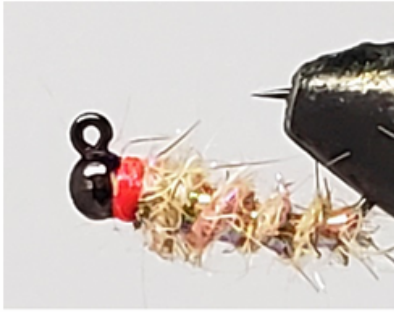
MEET THE FLIES



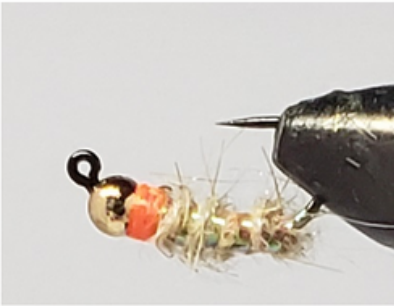
FEATURED FLY

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By "Fly by Night Guy"



Tied with Black Slotted Bead & Fluorescent Fire Orange thread. (Black was the only slotted bead I had left). Here I mixed a little Pink UV dub with the hare's ear.



Ran out of slotted beads, so here I used a Fluorescent Orange Thread & a Gold Tungsten Bead. You can see how the bead does not quite seat tight to the eye like the slotted bead in the other picture.

Fly Type: Fished as a nymph

Target Species: Steelhead, Trout, Bass, Pan fish

Recommended Region: Anywhere in streams, still lakes, ponds, etc.

Imitation: Mayflies, Cased Caddis larva, Crane Fly Larvae

Original Material List:

Hook: Orvis Tactical Barbless Jig Hook #10-18 (here a size 12)

Bead: Gold, Pink or Olive Slotted Tungsten

Weight: Lead wire .015

Thread: 6/0 Fluor. Orange

Rib: Flat Pearl Tinsel

Body: Light Hare's Mask with clear antron (some mix in a little pink UV Ice Dub)

Tying Instructions:

1. Slide the bead on small hole first. Align slot and secure in vise. Attach about 6 wraps of lead wire-sized to match the diameter of the hook's wire (here .015).
2. Cover the wire with thread and try to taper the body, bring it to the rear of the hook.
3. Tie in the tinsel ribbing and secure ribbing to far side of hook and let it hang off the back.
4. Gently dub a light noodle of the blended hare's mask to the Thread (dubbing wax helps here). This allows a spiky dubbed fly with a minimum of dubbing so when wet the colored thread will show through slightly. If tied sparse it also allows the fly to sink quicker.
5. Wrap the dubbing noodle forward over the thread body to head of the fly.
6. Wrap the tinsel with open spiral wraps forward to the bead.
7. Build a narrow hot spot with the thread and whip-finish.

Below is my take on the Sexy Walt's Variations:

Variation #1 Sexy Walt's with Ultra Wire Rib

Hook: Jig Hook #10-18 (here a size 14)

Bead: Silver Slotted Tungsten

Weight: Lead wire .015 (3-6 wraps behind bead)

Thread: 6/0 Fluor. Fire Orange (for hot spots)

Rib: Silver Wire - size small

Body: Hare's Ear Plus dubbing



Tying Instructions:

1. Slide the bead on small hole first. Align slot and secure in vise. Attach about 3-6 wraps of lead wire-sized to match the diameter of the hook's wire (here .015).
2. Cover the hook wire with thread to just beyond the bend and try to taper the body, bring it to the rear of the hook.
3. Tie in the silver wire ribbing and secure ribbing to far side of hook and let it hang off the back, with a slight tag (hot spot) of thread.

FEATURED FLY

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By "Fly by Night Guy"

Below is my take on the Sexy Walt's Variations: Variation #1 Sexy Walt's with Ultra Wire Rib

Hook: Jig Hook #10-18
(here a size 14)

Bead: Silver Slotted
Tungsten

Weight: Lead wire .015
(3-6 wraps behind bead)

Thread: 6/0 Fluor. Fire
Orange (for hot spots)

Rib: Silver Wire - size small

Body: Hare's Ear Plus dubbing



Tying Instructions continued:

4. Gently dub a sparse noodle of the hare's ear plus to the thread (dubbing wax helps here). This allows a spiky dubbed fly with a minimum of dubbing so when wet the colored thread will show through slightly. If tied sparse it also allows the fly to sink quicker.
5. Wrap the dubbing noodle forward over the thread body to the head of the fly.

6. Wrap the wire with open spiral wraps forward to the bead. Secure wire with thread and cut or helicopter off the excess wire.
7. Build a narrow hot spot with the thread and whip-finish.

Variation #2 Rainbow Dubbed Walt's

Hook: Jig Hook #10-18 (here a size 14)

Bead: Silver Slotted
Tungsten

Weight: Lead wire
.015 (3-6 wraps
behind bead)

Thread: 6/0 Olive
Green (for "hot spots")

Rib: Silver Wire - size
small

Body: Light Scow-Scud Rainbow dubbing



Tying Instructions:

1. Slide the bead on small hole first. A lign slot and secure in vise. Attach about 3-6 wraps of lead wire-sized to match the diameter of the hook's wire (here .015).
2. Cover the hook wire with thread to just beyond the bend and try to taper the body, bring it to the rear of the hook.
3. Tie in the silver wire ribbing and secure ribbing to far side of hook and let it hang off the back, with a slight tag of thread.

4. Gently dub a sparse noodle of the Light Scow-Scud Rainbow dubbing to the thread. If tied loosely it also traps air bubbles and gives the fly a life like look.
5. Wrap the dubbing noodle forward over the thread body to head of the fly.
6. Wrap the wire with open spiral wraps forward to the bead. Secure wire with thread and cut or helicopter off the excess wire.
7. Build a narrow hot spot with the Olive thread and whip-finish. Using olive and brown thread in these variations make it more subtle and lifelike, although you can hardly call them "hot" spots.

FEATURED FLY

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By "Fly by Night Guy"

Variation #3 CDC Soft Hackle Walt's

Hook: Jig Hook #10-18 (here a size 14)

Bead: Gold Slotted Tungsten

Weight: Lead wire .015

(3-6 wraps behind
bead)

Thread: 6/0 Brown

Rib: Copper Wire - size
small

Body: Dark Scow-Scud
Rainbow dubbing (I
mixed Senyo's
Rainbow Fusion Dub to
darken mine)



Tying Instructions:

1. Slide the bead on small hole first. Align slot and secure in vise. Attach about 3-6 wraps of lead wire-sized to match the diameter of the hook's wire (here .015).
2. Cover the hook wire with thread to just beyond the bend and try to taper the body, bring it to the rear of the hook.
3. Tie in the copper wire ribbing and secure ribbing to far side of hook and let it hang off the back, with a slight "hot spot" of Brown thread.
4. Gently dub a sparse noodle of the Dark Scow-Scud Rainbow dubbing to the thread.
5. Wrap the dubbing noodle forward over the thread body to head of the fly.
6. Wrap the wire with open spiral wraps forward to the bead. Secure wire with thread and cut or helicopter off the excess wire.
8. Tie in a Natural Dunn-CDC by the tip and use hackle pliers to make a few wraps for a collar and tie off.
9. Build a narrow hot spot with the Brown thread just behind the bead and whip-finish.

If any Steelhead Association members have questions about a fly or wish to see a fly featured in this column of the newsletter send an email to: info@PaSteelhead.com with "Fly by Night Guy" in the subject line!

Sam is officially stepping down as Tightlines Newsletter Editor. We'd like to thank Sam for all of his years of service both as PSA Board Member and Newsletter editor!!

THANK YOU, SAM!



THE READING ROOM

RECOMMENDED BOOKS/NOVELS/ARTICLES RELATED TO FISHING AND/OR THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

>>> BOOKS & NOVELS

- **“Steelhead Dreams: The Theory, Method, Science and Madness of Great Lakes Steelhead Fly-Fishing”**. By Matthew Supinski, Frank Amato Publications; 2nd edition (October 1, 2013)
- **“Selectivity: The Theory & Method of Fly Fishing for Fussy Trout, Salmon, & Steelhead”** By Matthew Supinski, Stackpole Books, 1st Ed. 2014.
- **“The Tug is the Drug: 37 Fly-Fishing Essays from the New York Times & Beyond”** by Chris Santella (STACKPOLE BOOKS 2014)
- **“Sight Fishing for Trout”**, by Landon Mayer (STACKPOLE BOOKS 2010)
- **“The Unreasonable Virtue of Fly Fishing”** by Mark Kurlansky and published by Bloomsbury Publishing in 2021. Thirteen chapters and 256 pages of entertaining history, trivia, and anecdotes that even a long-time angler can learn something from reading it. : Recommended by Rick Sherbondy, Erie PA.
- **“Trout from the Hills: The Confessions of an Addicted Fly-Fisherman”** by Ian Niall (Author) Hardcover – January 1, 1991, ISBN 10: 0854932054 / ISBN 13: 9780854932054 Published by Victor Gollancz, 1991
- **Trout Bum: Fly Fishing as a Way of Life.** (John Gierach's Fly-fishing Library) Paperback – January 15, 1988 by John Gierach (Author)
- **Sex, Death, and Fly-Fishing** – August 15, 1990, by John Gierach (Author) - **Publisher:** Simon & Schuster; First Edition (August 15, 1990), **Hardcover:** 240 pages; **ISBN-10:** 0671707388; **ISBN-13:** 978- 0671707385
- **“Going Fishing”** - by Negley Farson. (1942, Hardcover 1st Edition: original Publisher - Country Life Limited); 1973 edition published by White Lion Publishers; n.e. 156 pages; ISBN-10: 0856179507
- **“All the Time in the World”**, the latest book by John Gierach (Publisher: Simon & Schuster 2023), will take the fly fishing enthusiast to locations in Colorado, Montana, Alaska (March 21, 2023) 22ISBN13: 9781501168659
- **“Great Lakes Steelhead & Trout: Essential Techniques For Fly Fishing The Tributaries”** By Karl Weixlmann; Photos by Jack Hanrahan; Stackhole Books 2009; ISBN 978-0-8117-3583-4

If you would like to share a book title that you think would interest others email it to:

info@pasteelhead.com, with “Reading Room Suggestions”, in the subject line!

Hopefully, we will be able to start a regular page of The Reading Room.



THE READING ROOM

RECOMMENDED BOOKS/NOVELS/ARTICLES RELATED TO FISHING
AND/OR THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

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>>> INTERESTING ARTICLES

Fly Fishing the Life Cycle of the Caddis

By: Chris Solfelt 2023, from FlyLord magazine blog

To read an interesting article on the life cycle of an important food source for fish, [click here](#).

Favorite Steelhead Flies

By Ralph Scherder / November 12, 2021 / Hatches & Patterns from the Dark Skies Flyfishing blog

To read about the author's favorite Steelhead flies, [click here](#).

The True Cast - Teaching vs. Telling

By Kirk Deeter Sep 07, 2023, from Trout Unlimited magazine blog

To read about the author's take on teaching stream etiquette, [click here](#).

The 5 Essentials Of A Good Fly Cast Revisited

POSTED ON SEPTEMBER 17, 2023 / BY LOUIS CAHILL IN THE GINKANDGASOLINE BLOG

Who doesn't need to read about refining your casting? To read [click here](#).

Thriving in a Fished Run - How to Fish Run After Your Buddy Blew It Up.

By Jeff Sasaki September 15, 2023 from mavrkusa flyfishing blog

To read about the author's take on fishing a stream section after it has been fished through, [click here](#).

Streamer Presentations — Your First Move

By Domenick Swentosky | Oct 19, 2023 | STREAMERS TACTICS

From the Troutbitten online blog

In this Streamer Presentations series, the focus is on how a streamer can move. Instead of starting with the gear first — with flies, leaders, and lines — the chapters in this series consider the movements of a streamer. The equipment necessary to achieve those movements is secondary. Streamers must sell life with motion, but dry flies and nymphs are laser-focused on achieving one look — the dead drift. So a winning pitch on a streamer can happen with a host of leaders, lines, and casting styles. Think about how the streamer should move, then use the tools in your hands to make it happen.

To read the article in its entirety [click here](#):

Are You Spooking Trout?

By Domenick Swentosky | Sep 10, 2020 | SPOOKY TROUT TACTICS

From the Troutbitten online blog

We make countless excuses for why trout don't eat the fly. It's the pattern or presentation, the weather or the water.

It's angler pressure or a low fish count. Sure it is. But so many times, the real answer is more simple. We've scared the fish that we aim to catch.

To read the article in its entirety [click here](#).

Winter Fly Fishing 101

Dying to get out there? Don't be intimidated by winter angling.

By Ben Kryzinski - Wednesday, Dec 30th, 2020 from the Hatch magazine blog

To read the article in its entirety [click here](#).

THE READING ROOM

RECOMMENDED BOOKS/NOVELS/ARTICLES RELATED TO FISHING
AND/OR THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

>>> INTERESTING ARTICLES CONTINUED

Tip - Knots

Trout Unlimited Staff Nov 28, 2023 from the Trout Unlimited blog

DO YOU HAVE YOUR KNOTS DIALED? Simon Gawesworth walks us through a bunch of knots for you to practice during your wintertime off the water.

To read, [click here](#).

Handling Trout in Cold Weather

By: Louis Cahill, Gink and Gasoline blog.

When temperatures drop below freezing good catch-and-release practices become critical. We think of trout as needing special handling care when water temperatures are high, but fish are just as vulnerable when air temperatures are low. Mishandling fish in cold weather can easily be fatal.

Fish are, of course, cold-blooded. They're bodies do not produce heat like ours do and this leaves them especially vulnerable to frostbite. The fragile tissues of their gills can freeze in an instant when air temps are below freezing. Again, they have no body temperature to stabilize their cells, so it happens quickly.

We adapt very well to cold temperatures. We have evolved to survive wide temperature swings. Fish on the other hand have evolved in a world that never drops below freezing, so taking them out in the cold air is as alien to them as dropping us on the surface of Mars.

The solution is simple. Don't take fish out of the water when air temps are below freezing...

To read the entire article click on link below:

<https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/fly-fishing-tips-technique/handling-trout-in-cold-weather/>

Steelhead Flies, Half as Much

By: Louis Cahill, Gink and Gasoline blog.

WHEN THE RAIN WON'T STOP, THE LIGHT IS FAILING, AND THE RIVER SWELLS, STEEL HEADERS DRINK WHISKY AND STARE DARKLY INTO THEIR FLY BOXES.

Maybe that's a bit dramatic, but we all do it. I spent an evening like this with a group of friends recently. One of the guys had just started tying his own steelhead flies and they were pretty nice. Beautifully tapered, undulating forms with ostrich hurl and marabou and jungle cock eyes. They looked pretty deadly. He would sort carefully through the box, selecting the perfect specimen, and passing it to Barrett, our guide. Barrett would give each fly a brief glance and toss it carelessly back across the table. Half as much," he'd say and go back to his drink. "They're great flies," he went on, "and they'll catch fish, just not as many fish." The reason is pretty simple. Bulky flies with lots of materials look great, but they don't sink as quickly or as deep as sparse flies do. That's one of the reasons simple flies often catch the most fish...

To read the entire article click on link below:

<https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/gink-gasoline-fly-patterns/steelhead-flies-half-as-much/>

Swimmable, Drinkable, Fishable: Public Input on Great Lakes Water Quality

By Rachel Wyatt Nov 21, 2023 from the International Joint Commission newsletter

To read the entire article [click here](#).

In fall 2022, the International Joint Commission asked "Are the Great Lakes swimmable, drinkable and fishable?" The hundreds of people who answered that question helped inform IJC recommendations to the Canadian and United States federal governments that appear in the new Triennial Assessment of Progress Report on Great Lakes Water Quality.

THE READING ROOM

RECOMMENDED BOOKS/NOVELS/ARTICLES RELATED TO FISHING AND/OR THE GREAT OUTDOORS!

>>> INTERESTING ARTICLES CONT.

PUTMBAK!

By: Louis Cahill, Gink and Gasoline blog.

I wonder what the Great Lakes Steelhead would think if he knew what a controversial fish he is.

No, he's not a native fish. Yes, it's a completely man-made fishery. No, it's not a wild and scenic experience. Is he a real steelhead? Who cares. I love fishing the tributaries of the Great Lakes for the biggest toughest trout this side of the Mississippi and so does everyone else who's tried it. I have to wonder though, as I stand in the river with my fly rod watching the horde of bait fisherman stack their catch on the bank, if these fish got the respect enjoyed by their West Coast cousins, couldn't this be a whole lot better? I'm not dogging the fishery, it's awesome, but it just seems like common sense. It's true that Great Lakes steelhead do not successfully reproduce but left in the river they will continue to come back year after year, providing a better angling experience and saving state hatcheries money. I'm with this angler whose license plate I found in New York in a parking lot on the Oak Orchard.

PUTMBAK!

Read the full article [here](#).

Louis Cahill; **Gink & Gasoline**; www.ginkandgasoline.com

Sign Up For Their Weekly Newsletter! hookups@ginkandgasoline.com

PA Sea Grant's Tom Cermak Recognized With Great Lakes Sea Grant Individual Achievement Award

By: Pa Environment Digest

<http://www.paenvironmentdigest.com/newsletter/default.asp?NewsletterArticleID=59252&SubjectID=>

Tom Cermak, Pennsylvania Sea Grant Coastal Outreach Specialist was recently honored with the 2023 Great Lakes Sea Grant Individual Mid-Career Achievement Award. The Mid-Year award recognizes individual Sea Grant professionals (>7 years of service) who have shown noteworthy enthusiasm, performance, accomplishments and impact during their Sea Grant careers. Specifically, the award criteria areas include excellence of performance, personal interaction, initiative and creativity, outstanding achievement, and impact. Cermak began working for Pennsylvania Sea Grant in 2012 as a Coastal Outreach Specialist working in the Lake Erie watershed. He brings unique perspective and leadership in development and implementation of projects that pertain to invasive species outreach and management, public access improvement, land conservation, water quality and quantity management, and social science.



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