Trout on the Rocks
YOUR GUIDE TO FLYFISHING POCKET WATER FOR TROPHY BROWNS AND RAINBOWS

POPPER TRICKS FOR LARGEMOUTH BASS
THE BEST BAIT RIG FOR MONSTER CATS
HOW TO KILL A CALL-SHY Gobbler
FIND THE MOREL MOTHER LODE

SPRING FEVER
12 TACTICS TO HUNT AND FISH LIKE AN EXPERT ALL SEASON LONG
BANK OF LABOR HAS ONE AIM IN MIND, BECOMING YOUR BANK OF CHOICE.

At Bank of Labor we are operated by and for union members, meeting the unique needs and challenges of the labor community. We share your values and will work alongside you to help you meet your financial goals.

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As a union member, you understand the value of unions. You know it’s because of unions that Americans no longer work 16-hour days in unsafe conditions without health care or job security. You know your union brothers and sisters have your back when times get tough. You also know that unions and union members continually give back to the communities where they live and work.

It’s no secret that the American public has misconceptions about unions and union members. Despite the fact that union members band together for workers’ rights, we are often wrongly depicted merely as picketers and protesters and unfairly stereotyped as being anti-gun and anti-sportsman.

As a community of union members who share both union values and a passion for hunting, fishing, shooting, and conservation, the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance is working to change the public’s perception.

Our Work Boots on the Ground conservation projects are not only improving outdoor access, conserving wildlife habitat, renewing America’s parks, and passing on our outdoor heritage to youth, they are also getting long overdue media coverage for the contributions union members make to their communities.

Volunteering and giving back is nothing new to union members, but it’s time their good work is seen and heard by the public. The USA can be one of the best PR tools for the union community. Just keep doing the great things you do, and share your stories with us. Together, we’ll show all of America what it really means to be a union member.

FRED MYERS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO
**TRIPS THAT SUPPORT CONSERVATION**

Union Sportsmen’s Alliance partners with Remington Country Outfitters

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In September 2013, Remington Arms Company, LLC, announced the launch of Remington Country Outfitters (RCO), a premier service that aligns sportsmen with the finest outfitters for first-class hunting and fishing experiences.

“Over the course of our nearly 200-year history, we have been building the most trusted brand in the hunting, shooting, and outdoor space,” says Scott Blackwell, President of Remington. “Now we’re excited to take the next step and help our consumers find the right outfitter for their hunting and fishing needs. Whether sportsmen are looking for a whitetail hunt out West or a fishing expedition in the South, Remington Country Outfitters is the premier choice for booking any outdoor adventure and creating an experience to last a lifetime.”

Affiliation with RCO is limited to a select group of hand-picked hunting and fishing outfitters. These outfitters are chosen for the depth and breadth of experience they bring to sportsmen and anglers around the globe. Factors RCO considers in choosing an outfitter include safety, meals and lodging, facilities, and hunting and fishing quality.

“Remington Country Outfitters will represent only the most trusted and proven outfitters across the globe,” says Carl Brown, founder of RCO.

Brown advises sportsmen to choose a respected booking agency for hunting and fishing trips because they will help locate and secure the right outfitter to ensure that all expectations are met. Clients deserve straight answers, and that’s what RCO offers.

“A good booking agency will know their outfitters on a first-name basis,” says Brown. “They will know what species they offer and what you can expect in the quality and quantity of animals you are hunting. They will make sure that you are treated fairly and that everyone has a chance of filling their tag while having an enjoyable experience on their hunt.”

Thanks to a partnership between the USA and Remington Country Outfitters, USA members can now take advantage of this resource while supporting conservation, because RCO will make a donation to the USA as part of every booked package.

“The USA is excited to partner with Remington Country Outfitters to bring the experience and professionalism of one of the industry’s most trusted travel groups to our members for individual and group bookings,” says USA Executive Director/CEO Fred Myers. “Now our members can book hunting and fishing trips with the confidence that they’ll be getting the best deals and working with some of the best outfitters in the business.”

To learn more about Remington Country Outfitters, visit remingtoncountryoutfitters.com or call 888-283-7336.

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**USA CONSERVATION GALA BECOMES AN ANNUAL EVENT**

**BY KATE CYWINSKI**

Editor’s Note: Due to the magazine deadlines, this article was written prior to February 13, 2014. Due to the weather in the DC area, USA’s Conservation Gala – scheduled for Feb. 13 – was postponed to a later date.

The USA’s Fifth Anniversary Dinner, hosted by AFL-CIO President and USA Chairman Michael Pronchik and renowned singer-songwriter C.J. and Carl Brown enjoy a turkey hunt at RCO’s Montana property.

The USA Conservation Gala for its goals of helping financially support the organization’s important conservation initiatives and honoring the efforts of USA members and volunteers in carrying them out.

In recognition of USA’s mission to unite the union community in preserving North America’s outdoor heritage and the organization’s many noteworthy projects over the past year, the theme of this year’s Conservation Gala, held on February 13 at the AFL-CIO headquarters, was “Mission in Motion.”

“With more than 6 million AFL-CIO union sportsmen and conservation successes across North America, we can build solidarity through the outdoors to confront the challenges facing our outdoor sporting heritage and reconnect union sportsmen with the age-old pastimes of hunting and fishing,” says USA Executive Director/CEO Fred Myers. “The Conservation Gala provides an opportunity to celebrate our successes and conservation achievements over the past year and get energized for the year ahead.”
RAISING THE ROOF

The Lake Delton Sportsman Club gets a new storage facility thanks to union volunteers

BY LAURA TINGO

It’s been officially “retired” for six years now. Still, when Larry Volkey, Vice President of Bricklayers Local 34 in Wisconsin, received a call from the Lake Delton Sportsman Club in Baraboo last June asking him to handle the renovations of its outdoor storage facility, he signed right up.

“I wanted to do it for the club because they do so many good things throughout the year here for so many people,” says Volkey. A past member of the club, he coordinated the project from start to finish.

Over the couple of months, Volkey volunteered his time and talents to get everything ready, from building the door frame to collecting the necessary construction materials donated by the club.

Next, Volkey rallied volunteers from his local and the club to turn out on a late September morning to get the storage building built in a day. Ten skilled union bricklayers and laborers joined together to build a new scaffolding frame, lay brick, and carry loads of supplies.

At the end of the day, the club’s new facility was insulated, heated, and enclosed with quality masonry to provide dry and secure storage.

“The BAC and LIUNA locals in Wisconsin have stepped up for conservation on a number of occasions, including this project in Lake Delton, our Take Kids Fishing events in La Crosse and Eau Claire, and the paver project at the Upper Mississippi Wildlife Area in Onalaska,” says Tim Bindl, USA Conservation Coordinator. “It goes to show that their hard work extends beyond the job site to helping their local community.”

Volkey says the renovations not only make the club nicer for retired and active members to work together and enjoy activities, but they also made it a prime venue for Bricklayers Local 34 to host its 2014 Wisconsin Bricklayers District Council Apprenticeship Contest.

“Now we can utilize the facility from the banquet to the awards,” he says.

WRAPPING UP the last phase of a USA conservation project that began on Aug. 21, volunteers from Electrical Workers Local 666, Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 10, 540, and 110, the Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, Virginia Pipe Trades, Carpenters Locals 613 and 388, and the Plasters and Cement Masons Local 891 came together at Virginia’s York River State Park on Nov. 18 to pour and finish a popular concrete walkway.

“When volunteers first arrived on the scene in August, the original pavement— laid down in the 1980’s—was buckled, cracked, and uneven from invasive tree roots, hindering access to amazing scenic views for some park visitors.

“Replacing the damaged sections of the accessible Blue Bird Loop Improves access for the physically challenged, enabling them to enjoy the beautiful views of the York River from the park gardens,” says Jonathan Tustin, Park Manager of York River State Park. “We are extremely grateful to the USA for their generous support.”

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

A USA-built custom deer blind creates safe hunting access for kids with mobility challenges by Laura Tingo

A NEW, CUSTOM-BUILT deer blind in the Texas Hill Country has set the stage for kids with mobility issues to experience the thrill of the hunt. The blind, affectionately named “Hugh” for Hugo Kraft, the USA member who solely constructed the park apparatus, was built to meet the needs of youth hunters dealing with a range of mobility issues, from needing a wheelchair to using canes, crutches, or braces.

The project began last year, when the Houston-area union community came together for a conservation dinner organized by longtime USA members and project co-chairmen Michael Cramer and Mike Shelton. In October, many of the same union tradesmen attended a second dinner and saw the finished blind.

“This truly was a labor of love,” says Cramer, Federal Secretary of USA Plumbers Local 68 in Houston. “It was a cooperative effort that is good for the community, good for youth with special needs, and good for labor.”

“Not only does it feel good,” says Walt Ingram, the USA’s Conservation Banquet Manager, “but it’s something we can contribute to help our communities.”

It’s really rare for an organization realize we had a need for a specialized hunting blind and provide a mobile blind that exceeded our highest expectations,” says Jerry Warden, Executive Director of the Texas Youth Hunting Program, a division of the Texas Wildlife Association. Each year, the program organizes 150 hunts for an average of 1,500 kids.

“Often times at first, parents who have children with mobility challenges express concern or apprehension about letting their children experience the outdoors, and we understand that,” says Warden. “With the correct assistance, their kids can become successful hunters.”

The finished stand is the product of the engineering and ingenuity of Hugo Kraft, a member of Electrical Workers Local 66 in Houston. After talking about the stand with Warden, Kraft was off to the lumber yard. “I brought materials home and started to build,” says Kraft, a five-year USA member. “I felt whatever it took, I was donating that.”

The deer stand is truly state-of-the-art, with a wheelchair-accessible ramp, a floor that can hold 1000 pounds, a window ledge, and an adjustable, handmade gun prop.

Kraft’s final request to the conservation committee—to purchase a trailer to allow the blind safe transport between hunting grounds—was approved unanimously.

“Any time you can help people with disabilities, it makes you feel good,” he says.

YORK RIVER WALKWAY COMPLETED

Union volunteers improve access for Virginia State Park visitors with mobility issues By Kate Cywinski

Top: Harrison Fentres, 11, of San Antonio, Texas, takes aim from the special-needs blind. Below: Mike Cramer (left) and Hugo Kraft proudly display the new ground blind and travel trailer at USA’s Houston Conservation Dinner.

CONSERVATION FOCUS

CONSERVATION FOCUS

GRAND PRIZE! 2016 Chevy Silverado 4x4
2ND PRIZE! Lazer Z X-Series Riding Lawn Mower
3RD PRIZE! Fishing Escape to Costa Rica!
4TH PRIZE! Guided Whitetail Hunt in North Idaho!
5TH PRIZE! Custom PSE Bow!
USA member Joe Sancho has fished on the pro circuit for more than two decades. His personal best is a largemouth bass that weighed a stunning 10 pounds 1 ounce, his best smallmouth, a whopping 6-pound-plus. He doesn’t credit anyone with teaching him how to fish, but he still appreciates the welcoming gesture of one special elder who invited him to belong—years ago, when he was just a boy.

Sancho shows off his bass while fishing the Hudson River in New York.

He first learned what pride of membership in the USA means when he attended a USA shooting event in New York. “There are more sportmen in construction than we realize,” Rick says. “I’d really like to see him compete more,” he says. “I think he’s got a great shot at getting some scholarships. And, besides, he loves it.”

Joe Sancho won the top youth shooting award at USA’s Kansas City Boilermakers shoot.

Drake Adams won the top youth shooting award at USA’s Kansas City Boilermakers shoot.

Drake Adams won the Super Bowl of fishing tournaments, he says. “It was really special for her to see her son get so much recognition shooting for her union,” Rick says.

Rick says that 15-year-old Drake has been hunting and shooting birds for more than 10 years. He had never entered a shooting competition but had always expressed interest. So when Drake’s mom, Renee—a member of Painters District Council 3—said that there were still a couple of openings on her team for the Boilermakers Shoot, Rick and Drake signed up. Renee didn’t shoot during the tournament, but she was captain of the team that Rick and Drake competed on and shared in Drake’s victory.

“My mom’s so proud of him, but I wasn’t surprised at all,” says Drake’s father, Rick, a member of Pipefitters Local 533. “I’ve hunted with him for years, so I know what a good shot he is.”

Since then, he’s been thinking of ways to connect and help his new brotherhood of USA members. “Maybe there’s a guy out there who doesn’t know how to fish or hunt,” he says. “We can share all that stuff. The USA offers a unique way to get involved with sportsmen to unite us.”

Drake Adams shows off his bass while fishing the Hudson River in New York.
Since 1903, hunters have been using Hoppe’s No. 9 solvent to clean their firearms. The company recently updated this American icon with a new synthetic blend that retains the cleaning power (and the cherished scent) of the original, but is now non-flammable and biodegradable. This new blend will still remove carbon, lead, and copper fouling, but it is now safe for use on modern firearms materials such as anodized aluminum, titanium, steel, chrome, nickel, plastic, polycarbonate, and rubber. Other Gill features include a steel food ramp, an improved extractor, a new elastomer extractor spring, dual ejectors, smoothed edges on all receiver surfaces, and a titanium firing pin. It is available in three models—Carbine, Recon, and Hunter. The Hunter has a 20-inch barrel, a good choice for deer and hog hunters.

HOPPE’S NO. 9 SYNTHETIC BLEND  HOPPES.COM

THE CANNON COMMANDER  CANNONSAFE.COM

MADE IN THE USA

Top equipment picks to enjoy in the American outdoors

If you’ve used a DPMS LR-308 in the past, the first thing you will notice about the brand-new GII is that it is considerably lighter. Much of that weight reduction came through redesigned upper and lower receivers; improved machining operations on the receivers, paired with a 7075 forging, allows the GII’s upper receiver to be smaller and lighter, yet stronger, than the current LR-308 design. DPMS also improved the bolt geometry to relieve stress lines, crafting an 8620-forged monolithic impingement carrier with a Carpenter 158 bolt. Other GII features include a steel food ramp, an improved extractor, a new elastomer extractor spring, dual ejectors, smoothed edges on all receiver surfaces, and a titanium firing pin. It is available in three models—Carbine, Recon, and Hunter. The Hunter has a 20-inch barrel, a good choice for deer and hog hunters.

THE CANNON COMMANDER  CANNONSAFE.COM

You buy a gun safe for three important reasons. First, to prevent theft; second, to keep firearms out of the hands of children; third, to protect your firearms (as well as any other valuable personal property) from natural disasters. The Cannon Commander Series 43 is built to meet all three conditions. The line has a fire rating of 90 minutes at 1,200°F, and the construction includes anti-pry bars to keep the bolt secure as well as six layers of hardened steel to protect the lock against any tampering. In addition, oversized (4-inch-long) locking bolts make it extremely difficult for an unauthorized person to gain entry.

HOPPE’S NO. 9 SYNTHETIC BLEND  HOPPES.COM

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QUAKER BOY EASY YELPER  QUAKERBOY.COM

If a new turkey hunter has time to learn only one call before going afield, it should be the yelp. A hunter who learns that has the potential to bring just about any gobbler within range. Thank Quaker Boy for flattening out the learning curve: The company’s Easy Yelper can help a novice sound like a hen right off the bat. This simple friction call is really no more than a box with an inserted dowel. All you need to do to mimic a hen is push the dowel; the box does the rest. Easy single-handed operation also serves to reduce any extraneous hand movements, which have been known to spook many a wary gobbler.

DPMS LR-308 GII  DPMS.COM

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SPRING FEVER

From bass to bears, trout to turkeys, there’s plenty to keep outdoorsmen busy—and happy—this season. Here are 12 expert tactics to help you succeed.

MAKE A SPLASH

Landing your first lunker of the spring spawn is a rush.

LEE THOMAS KJOS/TH’ RAW SPIRIT
Early to rise
It’s not too soon to coax bass to the surface

Most bass fishermen wouldn’t bother to cast a topwater bait before water temperatures climb above the 60-degree mark. It may surprise you to learn, however, that even as early as April the bite can be very good. Best of all, start plugging the surface when the water reaches 50 degrees or so and you’ll have the action all to yourself.

Cold Hotspots
For this tactic to work, you need calm, clear water, and you must target very specific areas. Look for bluff bank walls on the main lake that plunge into deep water, or find creek-channel, chunk-rock, and gravel banks in the arms of reservoirs, focusing on any woody cover.

Lakes that support submerged aquatic vegetation such as milfoil, coontail, and cabbages will also yield topwater action now. Target the backs of grassy coves where the water is 6 to 8 feet deep.

Top on Top
My favorite early-spring surface lures are Cordell’s Fat 4-inch Red Fin Minnow and Rebel’s 5/8-ounce Pop-R and Rico. The Red Fin responds with a slow, rolling action when you twitch it, giving lethargic coldwater bass plenty of time to react.

Work the Rebel poppers with extra-long pauses—up to 10 seconds or more. The feathers on the rear trebles move slowly and coax fish when the lure is at rest. Should a bass miss the bait on its first effort, try not to move the popper. Those subtly waving feathers can encourage second strikes, too.

These baits may not put as many fish in the boat as the best traditional coldwater lures do now, but there’s nothing like catching bass on top to welcome spring.

If you’re in
The market for an anchor fit for a small boat or canoe, here’s how to make one that’s easy to handle, easy to attach to a rope, and easy on the finish of your boat.

You’ll assume that you’re a coffee drinker. First, clean out an empty can. You want one of the large plastic containers (to protect your boat’s hull) that has a built-in handle (to make handling simpler). Fill the can with cement (hold the cream and sugar). Let the cement dry. Fasten a length of rope to the handle with a clinch knot, and it’s ready to go overboard. Just try not to spill your morning mug when you set the hook on that lunker as you’re anchored over your favorite sweet spot.

—Ed Cartier
Make a strong (and cool) turkey carrier just in time for spring

BY MARK HICKS

If you spent the winter months after whitetail season hunting sheds, here’s a fun project to tackle before the turkey opener: a D.I.Y. turkey carrier made from a palm-size length of antler and some nylon rope. The antler is tough, looks great, and fits nicely in your hand.

1. Through the outside curve of the antler, drill a hole that’s the same diameter—\(\frac{1}{8}\) to \(\frac{1}{4}\) inch—as the nylon rope you’ll use. Next, widen the hole by using a \(\frac{1}{4}\)- to \(\frac{3}{8}\)-inch countersink bit to drill about \(\frac{1}{4}\) inch deep.

2. Run a length of nylon rope through the hole. Melt the bottom end of the rope, and allow it to harden and form a lip that will fit into the countersink. Form a loop in the rope 6 inches down and fix it with a bowline knot.

3. To use, fold the end of the loop over itself to form a smaller loop and place it over the talons, above the spurs. The bird’s weight will pull the loop tight for a secure and more comfortable over-the-shoulder carry.

SAFETY FIRST
When carrying out your turkey, tie some orange tape around the legs and let it hang over the bird.
SPRING FEVER

ON THE ROCKS

The 12 best spots to catch trout in fast, broken water

1. **THE HYDRAULIC CUSHION**

   The hydraulic cushion is a feature of low-velocity current just past the bottom in front of a boulder. It is a first-rate spot for large trout. From a position upstream, swing a streamer or spinner through this holding zone. Let it pass a couple of feet upstream of the cushion, get too close to the rock, and you may put your lure beside the fish. You can also drift a weighted nymph under an indicator down the current line, right to the fish.

2. **SIDE SEAMS**

   Side seams are best approached from directly below, where you can key your fly line in the slick water to help minimize drag. Hit the slower, inside edges of the seams first, casting to alternate sides. Begin low down, and systematically extend your casts up to the corners of the boulder. In shallow water, use a dry fly and dropper combination. In deep water, try a nymph below an indicator.

3. **DEEP EDDIES**

   Deep eddies should be approached from upstream so you can get behind the fish. With a dry-dropper combination, work the center of the eddy first, gradually moving your casts toward the bank.

4. **ROCKY BREAKS**

   Slow the current enough to make productive holding water, and often hold the highest density of fish. Concentrate particularly on two spots: (a) where a seam from an upstream boulder flows directly into the face of a downstream rock, where the current meets the cushion; and (b) the slack water between two obstructions. Position yourself about a rod length to one side of the seam or slick. Using a weighted nymph (or two) with no indicator, cast a short line quartering upstream. Hold the rod high to keep slack off the water, and use the tip to guide the fly through the drift. You can fish floating patterns the same way.

5. **ROCK GARDENS**

   Slow water draws fish when flows drop and temperatures rise. Toss an attractor dry from below to limit drag, or cast a small, lightly weighted nymph into the turbulence, and retrieve downcurrent.

6. **SLOW, DEEP POOLS**

   SLOW, DEEP POOLS are an obvious feature, but study the water before making a cast. In the early season be alert for surface feeders, especially at the tailout, where the biggest fish often lurk. Pools are one of your best bets in summer, when trout keep cool near the bottom, fish anything, but get it down.

7. **DEEP WATER**

   DEEP WATER is always a good bet if there’s some depth, but look to those areas particularly in spring, when high water and heavy currents push trout to the edges.

8. **SLOW, DEEP WAVE**

   SLOW, DEEP WAVE along sheer rock faces looks appealing, but unless there is an obvious bottom structure, skip it.

9. **SUBMERSED BOULDER PATCHES**

   Submerged boulder patches are always worth a try. From below, toss a spinner or other small lure to the top of the rocks, then retrieve it just barely faster than the current. Approach from upstream and cast a heavy streamer across the current, let it swing or strip it through the boulders. This is also good water for drifting a bobber and bait or heavily weighted nymphs.
FLIES ON THE POND

Rivers and streams too high and cold for flyfishing?
Hit still waters for great spring action

WARM SPRING DAYS MAY TRIGGER YOUR INSTINCT TO BEAT A PATH TO THE RIVER, BUT IN MANY PLACES, STREAMS AREN’T QUITE READY FOR PRIME FLYFISHING. COOL WATER TEMPERATURES KEEP TROUT SLAGGISH, RUNOFF MAKES CURRENTS HIGH AND DIRTY, AND MOST POOL INSECT HATCHES NEED MORE DAYLIGHT TO REACH THEIR PEAK. BUT DON’T LET ANY OF THAT STOP YOU. SOME OF THE SEASON’S BEST FLYFISHING CAN BE HAD ON FASTER-WARMING PONDS AND SMALL LAKES. FISHING FLAT WATER CAN BE TECHNICALLY CHALLENGING, BUT IT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE, BECAUSE YOU CAN USE A WIDE VARIETY OF TECHNIQUES TO SCORE. HERE ARE MY FAVORITE APPROACHES, IN ORDER:

1. STRIKE IT RICH Instead of holding the peg like a pencil, use only your thumb and index finger to lightly stabilize it. Putting a death grip on the striker squealishes the sound. The last section of your middle finger should barely touch the striker, gently guiding as you clutch, yelp, and purr. Says Selton: “Striker control is what separates the masters from the just-good-enoughs.”

2. HANDLE WITH CARE Hold the pot up on your fingertips. “This creates a better sound chamber beneath the call and gives those yelps, clucks, and purrs better girth,” he says. “You run a pot and peg as instruments, not like a musical instrument: When your hand rests on the edge of the pot, ‘Think of that pot as giving those yelps, clucks, and purrs better girth.”

3. BEST EASY Your striker hand shouldn’t touch the call at all. But if you have to rest it on the call for stability, Selton says, lay only the side of your pinkie finger on the edge of the pot. “Think of that pot like a musical instrument. ‘When your hand rests on it, it’s like a muffler choking the notes you play.’

STAY DRY

The predominant live-water bug now are midges, which can provide fabulous dry-fly action. Don’t make the mistake of trying to match these tiny insects exactly with matching patterns. Midges like to cluster, and trout love a “meatball” of bug protein. Try a Grippa’s Great or a Grizzly Cluster in size 10 or 20. Use a light tippet, starting with 5X or 6X and working smaller if necessary. You don’t want to make much commotion, so cast only to rising fish. Imagine your target 3 feet above the surface: Cast to that spot, and your fly will fall gently into the water.

GET DOWN

TROUT EAT MOST of their food below the surface, especially at this time of year. That’s why nymphing can be deadly. Focus your attention on vegetation and structure, such as timber, rocks, and inlets. Don’t mess with heavy weights or strike indicators. Cast to your target, let the fly sink, and then work the fly with deliberate 2-inch strips. A size-16 soft-hackle Pheasant Tail or Hare’s Ear usually gets the job done. Sometimes, for whatever reason, the streamer fly prefers darker flies. I always carry a few black A.P. nymphs in my box.

GO UGLY

The right streamer fly can bring out the monster in early-spring trout. Try a tandem rig. Start with a large, white- or yellow-bugged stinger fly, like a size-10 Zonker. Tie a foot of tippet onto its Shank and add a trailing “stinger” fly, like a size-12 black or white-bugged stinger fly. With a floating line, your leader should be at least 6 feet long. With a sink tip, you can go down to just a few feet, let the flies sink after your cast. Mix up your retrieves until you crack the code. Trout often turn on the bright fly, then inhale. If you don’t see a strike, set the hook when you see a flash or boil and experience some heart-pounding action.

THE BAITING GAME

CIRCLE

The turned-in-point impales fish in the corner of the mouth for secure hookups and easy releases.

LIGHT WIRE WITH RING

This saltwater hook is catching on with freshwater anglers because the ring lets baits fish freely.

GOLD ABERDEEN

Thin and flashy, this universal minnow hook for crappies encourages bites and penetrates well.

BAIT-HOLDER

Two spikes on the shank of the worm’s dunker’s favorite hold long bait in place.

KAHLE

The large gap and turn in point lock larger bait in place. It holds fast after the hookset.

FLY SHOTS

Bottom rigs work with dead bait and cutbait. Fish a free line when you use live baitfish.

Any live-baitfish tactic can produce great results, including bobbers, flies, and bottom rigs.

Dip the Aberdeen hook and minnow combo in pools or fish it under a bobber with a tandem bottom rig.

Drift streams for trout, use a bottom rig under a bobber, or tie on spinner rigs for walleyes and pike.

BEARS TWO WAYS

This month, black bears should be out in force as they emerge from their dens to refuel on spring greens and the remnants of last autumn’s berries. Spotting these hungry bears is usually the easy part; just look for black spots dotting sliding, clear, or overgrown meadows or munching along logging roads. Once you’ve located a suitable bear, choose from this pair of pulse-pounding tactics—for both bow and rifle hunters—or use both.

1. THE CLOSE CALL Any doubts I had about the effectiveness of predator calls on bears were put to rest on a hunt in New Mexico with Backcountry Outfitters (backcountryoutfitters.com), where we called in three bears as in many days. The key was spotting the bears first. Blind calling just led to boredom, but when we saw a bear and called to it with sustained, pleading squeals, each came to us as if on a string. You can, move downstream of the bear and start calling quietly, increasing the volume until the animal turns your way.

2. THE LONG WALK It bears doubts having your calling—and some will—go after it. A spring bear often will settle on a good food source for an hour or more, giving you time to walk into position. Measure key landmarks and note which way the bear is feeding. Pay attention to wind direction as well. While bears have bad vision, their senses of smell and hearing are acute. If you get close, but not close enough, turn to your predator call. In tight quarters, a few soft squeaks may be all it takes to bring a bear the last few yards into range.
GROUP EFFORT

USA’s shoots and dinners generate funds to make conservation projects possible

Uniting the union community through conservation to preserve North America’s outdoor heritage: That’s the mission of the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance, and as sportmen and -women, we all recognize the importance of preserving the outdoor heritage we cherish. Uniting the union community is vital to achieving that goal, and the USA’s most effective tools for uniting union members from different trades and different cities all over the country are its on-the-ground sporting clays and trap shooting events and its conservation dinners.

Our magazine, TV show, website, and social networking presence are effective tools for uniting union members about the organization and recruit volunteers. To put it simply, these events act as building blocks for the USA’s conservation projects.

The USA’s Puget Sound shoot led to a USA Work Boots on the Ground project in which 40 members of Painters District Council No. 5 and Plumbers and Pipefitters Locals 26 and 32 constructed large gates for hunter walk-on access roads in Washington State, and our Minnesota shoot was the foundation for our annual Get Youth Outdoors Day. A conservation dinner in Dallas, Texas, raised funds for a project at Texas’ Cedar Hills State Park in which volunteers repaired three bridges to ensure the safety of park visitors, while a dinner in Houston resulted in a custom-built hunting blind for youths with mobility issues. And a dinner in Richmond, Virginia, raised the funds needed for union volunteers to complete a trail restoration project at Virginia’s York River State Park. As the USA’s shoot and dinner programs continue to grow, so will the opportunities they provide for union members to get connected and directly engaged in conservation efforts.

Since the USA held its first shooting event in 2009, we’ve had nearly 11,000 attendees at our shoots and dinners and raised more than $4.2 million before expenses; the growth from year to year has been nothing short of incredible. In 2013, USA shoots raised nine times the funds they did in 2009 and welcomed eight times the number of shooters—such growth in just five years! The money raised at the USA’s 2013 dinners increased fivefold and attendance tripled.

If you attended, sponsored, volunteered at, or helped spread the word about any of USA’s events, you were part of that success, and we can’t thank you enough! This year, we hope to enjoy a great meal with you at one of our conservation dinners and bust some clays with you at a shoot. And when the end of December rolls around, we want to thank you again for all you do. If you sponsored, attending, or helping organize an event near you, contact Nate Whiteman, Manager, Shooting Events, 615-831-6779, nate@unionsportsmen.org. For information about sponsoring, attending, or helping organize an event near you, contact Heather T azelaar, Event Analyst, 740-542-0470, heather@unionsportsmen.org.

USA EVENT REVENUE & PARTICIPATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 14
Ohio AFL-CIO Conservation Dinner COLUMBUS, OH

SATURDAY, MARCH 15
West Virginia Conservation Dinner CHARLESTON, WV

DFW Metroplex Sporting Clays Shoot DALLAS, TX

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 19
Greater Kansas City Building & Construction Trades Dinner KANSAS CITY, MO

SATURDAY, MARCH 22
Nashville Area Sporting Clays Shoot NASHVILLE, TN

SATURDAY, MARCH 29
Oklahoma AFL-CIO & BCTC Conservation Dinner TULSA, OK

SATURDAY, APRIL 5
Southern Florida Sporting Clays Shoot OKEECHOBEE, FL

SATURDAY, APRIL 12
So. Illinois Sporting Clays Shoot SPARTA, IL

Louisiana State Sporting Clays Shoot NATCHITOCHES, LA

SATURDAY, MAY 3
SMART New Jersey Sporting Clays Shoot PORT REPUBLIC, NJ

FRIDAY, MAY 30
AFL-CIO Capital Area Sporting Clays Shoot QUEENSTOWN, MD

For information about hosting, attending, or helping organize an event near you, contact Nate Whiteman, Manager, Shooting Events, 440-867-8229, nate@unionsportsmen.org. Heather T azelaar, Event Analyst, 740-542-0470, heather@unionsportsmen.org. Walt Ingram, Conservation Banquet Manager, 740-542-0470, walt@unionsportsmen.org.

Become part of a brotherhood of the great outdoors. Join the Union Sportsmen’s Alliance today! UNIONSportsmen.ORG 877-872-2211 (TOLL-FREE)
TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT

Share your best shots with your brothers and sisters of the USA. Visit UnionSportsmen.org/photos to check out additional photos and to submit your own for a chance to win a Buck Knife.

When Shane Lewis (right), a member of the Bricklayers and a union tile contractor, was diagnosed with ALS, Matthew Eleazer (left), a member of Bricklayers Local 1, helped him fulfill his dream of catching a salmon by putting a special rod holder on his sled to allow him to reel fish in while seated.

Donna Shaver, a member of Steelworkers Local 1657 from New London, NC, celebrated Veterans Day by harvesting this 10-point with a muzzleloader. It green-scored 153 ¾ with a 21½-inch inside spread, and weighed 197 pounds.

Mike “Sparky” Sparkes, a member of Fire Fighters Local 29 from Chattanoo, WA, took this monster bull on M2D Camo Properties in Idaho.

Darren Jones, a member of Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 344 from Guthrie, OK, took his daughter on her first hog hunt. Priceless!

Tony Christy, four-year-old great-grandson of Painters Local 246 member Ralph Southern, reeled in this 17-inch bass. He loves fishing with his papa!
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