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## NEWS RELEASE

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### Chicago Area Students Ace Trout Unlimited "Trout in the Classroom" Conservation Program

What has two antennae, three tails, two eyes and six legs? If you answered a sci-fi alien space invader, you are wrong. However, if you correctly identified a mayfly or damselfly, you are probably either an avid fly fisher or your son or daughter recently participated in the Trout Unlimited Oak Brook chapter "Trout in the Classroom" conservation program during the 2015-16 school year across 10 Chicago western and south suburban middle and high schools.

"Trout in the Classroom" started 20 years ago as a national Trout Unlimited grass roots environmental education program in which students in grades K-12 learn to raise trout from eggs to fry, monitor tank water quality, engage in stream habitat study, learn to appreciate water resources, begin to foster a conservation ethic, and grow to understand ecosystems. Most six-month programs end the school year by releasing their trout in a state-approved stream near the school or within a nearby coldwater watershed.

The Oak Brook TU "Trout in the Classroom" program requires a standard 55-gallon tank setup, filter system, chiller, water pump, and gravel. The program is licensed by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR), and each individual school and teacher is permitted by the state to rear trout. However, they are barred from having any other plants or fish in the tank, for fear of potential contamination. The brown trout eggs and food are provided by the IDNR at no cost. The average cost to set up a program is approximately \$1,200, which is covered by the Oak Brook TU chapter's conservation and education budget. During the year each teacher tailors the program to fit his or her curricular needs. Therefore, each program is unique.

"The beauty of the Trout in the Classroom program is its flexibility for each teacher," said Marvin Strauch, Oak Brook TU Youth Education Director. "We have had participating school programs ranging from 4<sup>th</sup> grade through 12<sup>th</sup> grade AP Biology. However, right now, most of our programs are in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades. Personally, I think that is the sweet spot for our program. The students are far enough along in their education to understand what we are presenting."

#### Roosevelt Middle School Aces Trout Class

On Tuesday, May 3, 42 students from Cory Kadlec's Roosevelt Middle School seventh-grade science class concluded their six-month "Trout in the Classroom" program with the release of over 70 brown trout fingerlings in a coldwater spring creek near Rockford, IL. The River Forest Middle School was one of 10 area middle schools and high schools who participated in the Oak Brook chapter's eighth year of Trout Unlimited's grass roots environmental education program. Over 4,000 students have participated in the program.

The 42 Roosevelt seventh graders represented Mr. Kadlec's "Trout Team"—those students who volunteered out of 190 students across seven classes to personally take responsibility for raising the brown trout from eggs to fry to their final "hands on" streamside release.

According to Mr. Kadlec, "The most important lessons provided by the program are: nature is accessible; middle school students can be interested in the exciting world of Life Science; middle school students can be advocates for coldwater fisheries now and into the future; and being involved with trout and other people who care about coldwater fisheries can be inspiring and a lot of fun."



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For Mr. Kadlec, the “Trout in the Classroom” program marked his seventh consecutive year integrating the program into his science curriculum, which included an April day when Minnesota entomologist Dean Hansen brought his “live bug” collection for his students to hold, inspect and identify by species.

“As Trout Unlimited leaders, we know that the future of our continued success is the next generation of conservation stewards we inspire to take care of our rivers and streams long after we are gone,” said Mr. Strauch. “And our Trout in the Classroom initiative is one of the three youth education programs Oak Brook Trout Unlimited supports along with our annual Youth Fly Fishing Classes and summer Illinois Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Camp.”

### **Free Monthly Saturday Fly Fishing Classes**

The Oak Brook Trout Unlimited chapter offers free introductory one-day youth fly fishing classes one Saturday each month from May through September. The program—in its 11<sup>th</sup> year—is open to boys and girls 11 years and older. Participants receive an easy-to-understand overview to the sport of fly fishing.

All fly fishing equipment and fly tying materials are provided by the Oak Brook Trout Unlimited chapter. There is no cost to participants. Classes consisting of 15 participants are scheduled at the Camp Sagawau Environmental Education Center in Lemont.

The Youth Fly Fishing Program runs from 8am to 4:30 p.m. on Saturday dates as follows: June 18, July 16, August 13 and September 10.

Class participants learn: understanding fly tackle—rods, lines, leaders and flies; fly rod casting, basic fly fishing knots, fly tying, outdoor safety and fishing. See the Oak Brook Trout Unlimited website ([obtu.org](http://obtu.org)) for more information.

### **July 24-29 Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Summer Camp**

The ninth edition of the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing camp is scheduled July 24-29, 2016 at the RAM Conference Center in Roscommon, Michigan.

The 2016 camp mission is to develop the next generation of coldwater conservation advocates while also providing a rigorous introduction to the sport of fly fishing on the famed Au Sable River in Michigan. An experienced Trout Unlimited mentor team will guide twelve 13- to 18-year-old participants through prime time morning and evening fishing sessions. Throughout the week, an abundance of “hands on” active learning opportunities will be conducted during the fully loaded mid-day periods.

The fly fishing instruction includes fly rod casting, fly tying, knots, basic entomology and what fish eat, reading the water, safe wading techniques, catch and release, and other outdoors and fly fishing related skills. See the Oak Brook Trout Unlimited website ([obtu.org](http://obtu.org)) for more information.

### **About Oak Brook Trout Unlimited**

Oak Brook Trout Unlimited is dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring coldwater fisheries and their watersheds in the Midwest. The Oak Brook Chapter is comprised of over 1,200 members from Chicago’s western and south suburbs and downstate Illinois and is part of the national Trout Unlimited organization ([www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)). Oak Brook Trout Unlimited fulfills its mission through advocacy and education efforts regarding the impact of pollution and soil erosion on water-based ecosystems, and by engaging volunteers in hands-on projects to improve and rehabilitate coldwater river systems. For more information about Oak Brook Trout Unlimited, visit [www.obtu.org](http://www.obtu.org).

**NOTE: HIGH RESOLUTION PHOTOS ARE AVAILABLE.**



**Caption:** Entomologist Dean Hansen quizzes a Roosevelt Middle School student Ella Taira on the characteristics of a mayfly.



**Caption:** Oak Brook Trout Unlimited members Willie Beshire and Stan Zarnowiecki provide Roosevelt Middle School students Lily Genovese and Jonah Friedmann with brown trout fry for their release into a spring creek near Rockford, Illinois.



**Caption:** Roosevelt Middle School student Anna Savramis and "Trout Team" member samples aquatic insects in a spring creek near Rockford, Illinois.