



2023/2024 CONSERVATION & EDUCATION PROGRAMS



CONSERVATION PROGRAM:

The amount budgeted in 2023 for our Conservation Program is \$24,100

Conservation Projects: OBTU plans to support several stream improvement projects in 2023. We joined the Clear Waters Trout Unlimited Chapter on a National Fish Habitat Partnership Grant request for Traverse Valley Creek, a native brook trout stream in northern Trempealeau County, WI. The announcement of the grant award was made in February 2023 and completion of the project is projected by the end of the year. In 2022 we helped the Northeast Iowa TU Chapter with its \$9,000 match for a NRCS grant for a project on North Bear Creek. The project cost was over \$100,000, but the NRCS covered most of the project costs. There are several similar projects on North Bear Creek planned for 2023 we are looking to participate in. OBTU makes an annual contribution to the Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Effort (TUDARE). Without TUDARE, many of the projects that occur in the Driftless Area of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois would not happen. Funds have also been set aside for projects with other conservation partners, such as the Monroe County Land Conservation Department (WI) and MEANDRS (Meeting Ecological and Agricultural Needs within the Dowagiac River).

Stream Monitoring: There is money in the budget this year to help with maintenance and updating of EnviroDIY Monitoring Stations on the Coldwater and Dowagiac Rivers in Michigan. Money has been set aside to upgrade and replace lost water temperature monitoring sensors in Illinois and Michigan too. New scientific research, Environmental DNA is rapidly evolving as a tool for monitoring the distribution of aquatic species. Water samples from streams are used to determine the existence of a variety of fish. Funds have been earmarked for the purchase of a pump unit and filter kits for eDNA analysis.

Volunteer Activities: OBTU has a lot of great conservation activities planned for 2023. Spring and fall DuPage River Cleanup Workdays will take place on our assigned section of the East Branch of the DuPage River in Naperville, Illinois. We continue our involvement with the Coldwater River Watershed Council in western Michigan. Spring and fall Macroinvertebrate Surveys on the Coldwater River and its tributaries are scheduled. In addition, we will be participating in three joint Stream Workdays located in nearby southeast Wisconsin with our Southeast Wisconsin TU chapter (SEWTU) partners.



EDUCATION PROGRAM:

The total amount budgeted for our Education Program is \$7,000.

We continue to have robust plans for our Education Program. We are proud that our Education Program was highlighted in Chris Wood's Zoom presentation on a short list of TU's major accomplishments last year which was presented in his annual address to all members and reported in Trout Magazine.

OBTU's **Trout in the Classroom Program** continues to grow. We had 16 schools for the 2022-2023 school year and are now reaching over 1,000 students each year. Our goal is to set up a new school each new school year, while maintaining existing schools. It costs approximately \$1,700 to add a school to our TIC program and another \$2,400 for maintenance and to bring an entomologist to the classrooms.

Our **Summer Youth Fly Fishing Program** continues to educate scores of teens each summer. There are five sessions scheduled for 2023, one per month. This is a great way to teach the next generation about fly fishing. Our budgeted amount is **\$400** for this upcoming year.

OBTU partnered with Girl Scouts in 2022 to hold the first session of our new **Stream Girls** program in 2022. In Stream Girls, girls use investigation of a stream as a vehicle to further STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) along with Reading and Art (hence the extension of "STEM" to "STREAM"). Trout Unlimited volunteers lead the Girl Scouts in observing a stream, collecting flow data, sampling macroinvertebrates (aka aquatic bugs), fly tying, and fly casting. The girls intimately explore their natural surroundings and record their thoughts, feelings, and observations in their handbooks. Due to its success in 2022, more sessions are planned in 2023. We budgeted **\$500** for this program.



Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited's Youth Camp: This youth camp is scheduled for the week of July 21st. Our chapter makes a donation of **\$1,500** to help defray some of the expenses associated with the camp.

TU Headwaters Youth Program: Each year our chapter makes a donation of **\$500** to this TU National Program which aims to build the next generation of river stewards and conservation-minded anglers