



1. President's Letter

Wow, what a year! In addition to our usual awesome programs and activities, we hosted an amazing 50th Anniversary Celebration in August and received TU's prestigious Silver Trout Award in September. This really has been a special year!

Chris Wood, President & Chief Executive Office of Trout Unlimited, joined us for our 50th Celebration and made specific mention of OBTU's excellent communication programs. He was amazed at the number of people who had heard that he would be speaking in Oak Brook. Folks from all over had seen our Facebook page, Instagram posts, and email blasts.

The Silver Trout Award recognized our excellence as a chapter. We are very proud of our nationally recognized education programs and innovative conservation collaborations. Our membership programs and special events continued to expand in 2023. We had a great lineup of speakers at our monthly Chapter Meetings, numerous Trout on Tap, Breakfast Club, Fly Tying events, and Fly-Casting sessions. Not to mention the chapter fishing outings, another great way to get together and meet folks (and catch some fish).

As you read through this edition of "The Flyer", you'll be amazed at everything happening at OBTU. Please reach out to me or one of the committee chairs if you would like to be more involved in any activities. We need your help to keep the chapter going strong.

All of OBTU's activities and accomplishments would not have been possible without the generous support of our donors, friends, partners, and especially our dedicated volunteers. Thanks to everyone for stepping up to help!

Dave Carlson

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10. You are Invited to Join an OBTU Committee

Save the Date:
OBTU Holiday Banquet
Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023

Venuti's in Addison
<https://venutis.com/>

Stay Tuned for Party Details
Be alert for fly rod and reel raffle:
(Orvis Helios Rod/Lamson Reel)





2. 50th Anniversary Celebration Report (August 12 Event)

Mission Accomplished! OBTU hosted a festive and well-attended 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Oak Brook Park District on August 12. Many exhibitors, participants & attendees praised the event. Chris Wood, TU CEO, kept saying “This is great!” Chris was also impressed that all 4 Illinois Chapter Presidents and Council Chair joined him for lunch before the event.

OBTU expresses special thanks to Jim Dickens and Kevin Graham, Celebration Committee co-chairs, who provided excellent leadership, planning, and execution to deliver a great event that will long be remembered. They were supported by a strong Celebration Committee team who worked diligently to deliver. Highlights of the event include:

-Chris Wood, TU CEO, delivered a key note address praising OBTU accomplishments, and mingled with the crowd for 4 hours.

-Janet Yang Rohr, Illinois Congresswoman (Naperville, 41st District), spoke on the issue of access to Illinois waterways. (Janet introduced HB5844 to safeguard public rights to Illinois navigable waters.)

-A conservatively estimated 180 people attended including presidents of all four Illinois TU Chapters. Weather was perfect. Two large tents sheltered the crowd and several other smaller pop-up tents were also used in support of a variety of activities. Two food trucks were on site.

-A \$5000 check was presented to Mike Siepker, Iowa DNR Fisheries Management Biologist, for habitat improvement of North Bear Creek. Dave Carlson, OBTU President, announced that this project had been designated as OBTU’s 50th Anniversary Special Commemorative Conservation Project. A special thanks to Mike & his wife Liz for travelling from Decorah, Iowa!

-15 OBTU partners staffed display tables. Fly Casting, Fly Tying, Fishing for “Lawn Trout”, crafts and other activities kept everyone entertained. OBTU fly boxes & other giveaways were distributed. Thank you to the following partners who staffed tables to promote their offerings:

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers	Forest Preserves of Cook County	TU Lee Wulff Chapter
Coren’s Rod and Reel	Forest Preserve District of DuPage County	John Van Vliet, Author
DRiFT	Forest Preserve District of Will County	Patagonia
DuPage Fly Fishing Co	Illinois DNR	The Conservation Foundation
Filson	Iowa DNR	TU Gary Borger Chapter

OBTU gained significant publicity through a vigorous campaign. Content from our press release was placed in the Daily Herald, the Sun Times, and the Chicago Tribune’s event calendar. Numerous marketing messages went out on Instagram and Facebook. Extensive content was distributed internally through email as well as postings on the OBTU.org web site.

Jeff Troutman and the Parachute Adams Band was Outstanding!

OBTU 50th Event Pictures:



Chris wood delivered the key note address summarizing TU National accomplishments & celebrating OBTU's win of the national "Silver Trout Award" from TU.



IL State Congresswomen Janet Rohr, author of House Bill 5844, spoke on the issue of access to Illinois navigable waters.



OBTU presented a \$5000.00 check to assist with rehabilitation of North Bear Creek in the Iowa Driftless Area to Mike Sieper, Iowa DNR Biologist.



Jeff Troutman and the Parachute Adams Band performed well. They were a perfect fit for OBTU's event.



There was good traffic through the display tables. Visitors from down state are pictured at the OBTU Table and Jeremy is shown entertaining guests at the DuPage Fly table.



There were many faces in the crowd!



A portion of the OBTU 50th Anniversary Party Grounds

More OBTU 50th Event Pictures:



Mike Siepker, Iowa DNR, and Liz, his wife, at the Iowa Table distributing Iowa Trout Stream maps.



John Van Vliet, autographing his books on Driftless Area fishing. Sales were brisk.



Corens Rod & Reel bamboo rod display table



Folks Discovering that fly-casting is fun!



Children of all ages could be seen at the arts & crafts table.



Tying flies along with Tom Wilhelm.



Close up of the "Founders Fly Box" that was presented to Chris Wood, TU CEO.



Attentive listeners to Chris Wood speech.

3. OBTU's Silver Trout Award

Only two of TU's 386 chapters receive national awards each year. As the winner of the "Silver Trout Award", OBTU is proud to be recognized as being among TU's highest performing chapters. While the award is based on recent performance, it is clear this award is a culmination of the efforts of many members who have built OBTU over our 50-year history.

TU National awards were presented at the 2023 National Meeting held in Spokane, Washington, on September 29. Dave Carlson, OBTU President; Jack Potts, Treasurer; and Willie Beshire, Ex-Officio President; accepted the "Silver Trout Award" on behalf of OBTU.



OBTU's award is a beautiful rendition of a brook trout. As our region's cherished native, the brook trout is a most appropriate symbol of OBTU's conservation efforts. The "Silver Trout Award" will be on display at upcoming Oak Brook Park District chapter meetings. Come to a meeting and check out this wonderful recognition of our collective efforts!

National's briefing on why OBTU earned the Silver Trout Award follows:

“The Oak Brook Chapter has overcome geographical challenges to become a shining example of dynamic, innovative and generous cold-water conservation efforts. Despite lacking nearby cold-water resources, the chapter has collaborated with neighboring states like Michigan and Wisconsin, providing volunteer support for various projects, including macroinvertebrate surveys and invasive species removal. Locally, they actively participate in workdays like the DuPage River Cleanup in Naperville.

Oak Brook TU's advocacy efforts extend to Illinois and the Great Lakes, where their knowledgeable leaders contribute to the Great Lakes National Leadership Council Workgroup and engage in local partnerships to advocate for important issues like invasive carp and Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding.

Their effective communications keep members and subscribers informed about upcoming events, meetings and workdays through regular emails, an attractive website and engaging social media pages. Their strong fundraising skills are evident in well-attended events like their Holiday Party, which not only brings the community together but also raises impressive dollars to ensure the success of their chapter and programs. The chapter sets itself apart through its extensive community engagement efforts, offering a variety of programs, including monthly meetings, Trout on Tap nights, the Breakfast Club, fly tying events and fly-casting sessions. Their remarkable youth program stands out, featuring a multi-day Youth Camp, Youth Fly Fishing Program, Wet Bugs classroom program and Trout in the Classroom releases for 10 schools. Additionally, they recently launched a STREAM Girls Camp, providing opportunities for girl scouts in the Chicagoland area.

The chapter's leaders place a great deal of emphasis on empowering future volunteers, from making their events a welcoming place for young people, to breaking down the barriers to fly fishing, making the community a bit less intimidating for beginner anglers, to offering countless learning opportunities to train volunteers for their youth programs.

The time, physical work, and dedication that this chapter gives to its community every day is remarkable and inspiring, and incredibly deserving of TU's Silver Trout Award.”



Chris Wood, TU CEO, presented the award to OBTU at the Sept 29 TU Annual Meeting. Dave, Willie & Jack were delighted to accept the Silver Trout Award on behalf of OBTU.

4. Founder's Fly Box

Chris Wood was impressed that we asked him to speak at our 50th event a full year in advance. Chris was willing to commit to Aug 12, so we locked him in. Chris travelled from TU Headquarters in Alexandria, Virginia, treated a group of Illinois TU leaders to lunch, and circulated at our party for 4 hours. He provided all of this at no cost to OBTU. His presence was key to making our event special enough to make news, attract a sizable crowd, and add exceptional substance to our program.

Based on Chris's commitment to our event, the OBTU Board decided that a special recognition from OBTU was in order. Through discussions with Carl Hueter, former Chairman of the Michigan TU Council, it was decided that presenting Chris with a uniquely crafted "TU Founders Fly Box" would be an appropriate and memorable gesture from OBTU. Carl constructed the box from historic components obtained from TU's founding fathers. Carl was pleased to donate the Founders Fly Box to OBTU.

Carl had a strong desire that OBTU profit from the "Founders Fly Box", and encouraged us to use the box to raise at least \$1,000.00 for OBTU. So, to avoid asking OBTU members to contribute one more time, several members of the OBTU Board contributed over \$1,000 for the box that was then presented to Chris Wood at our 50th event. The \$1,000 from Board members was contributed to the OBTU general fund.



Dave Carlson, OBTU President, presents the Founder's Fly Box to Chris Wood, Trout Unlimited CEO at the August 12 Celebration.

Chris Wood so appreciated OBTU's gift that he pledged to have the fly box, along with proclamations of its historic authenticity, mounted and displayed at TU headquarters. Copies of the proclamations with descriptions of Founder's Box historic components follow on the following pages. This display has the potential to memorialize OBTU accomplishments with a permanent presence among the national leaders of TU.



This is a proclamation prepared and signed by Carl Hueter, former Chairman of the Michigan TU Council and bulder of the Founder's Fly Box. Carl is the current owner of WANIGAS, a company previously owned by Art Neumann, one of the original founders and the first Executive Director of TU. WANIGAS offers high quality bamboo rods and other fine fly fishing accessories including custom crafted hard wood fly boxes.

WANIGAS ROD COMPANY

FOUNDER'S BOX

THIS IS A CUSTOM "RETRO" STYLE WOOD FLY BOX OF UNIQUE PROVENANCE

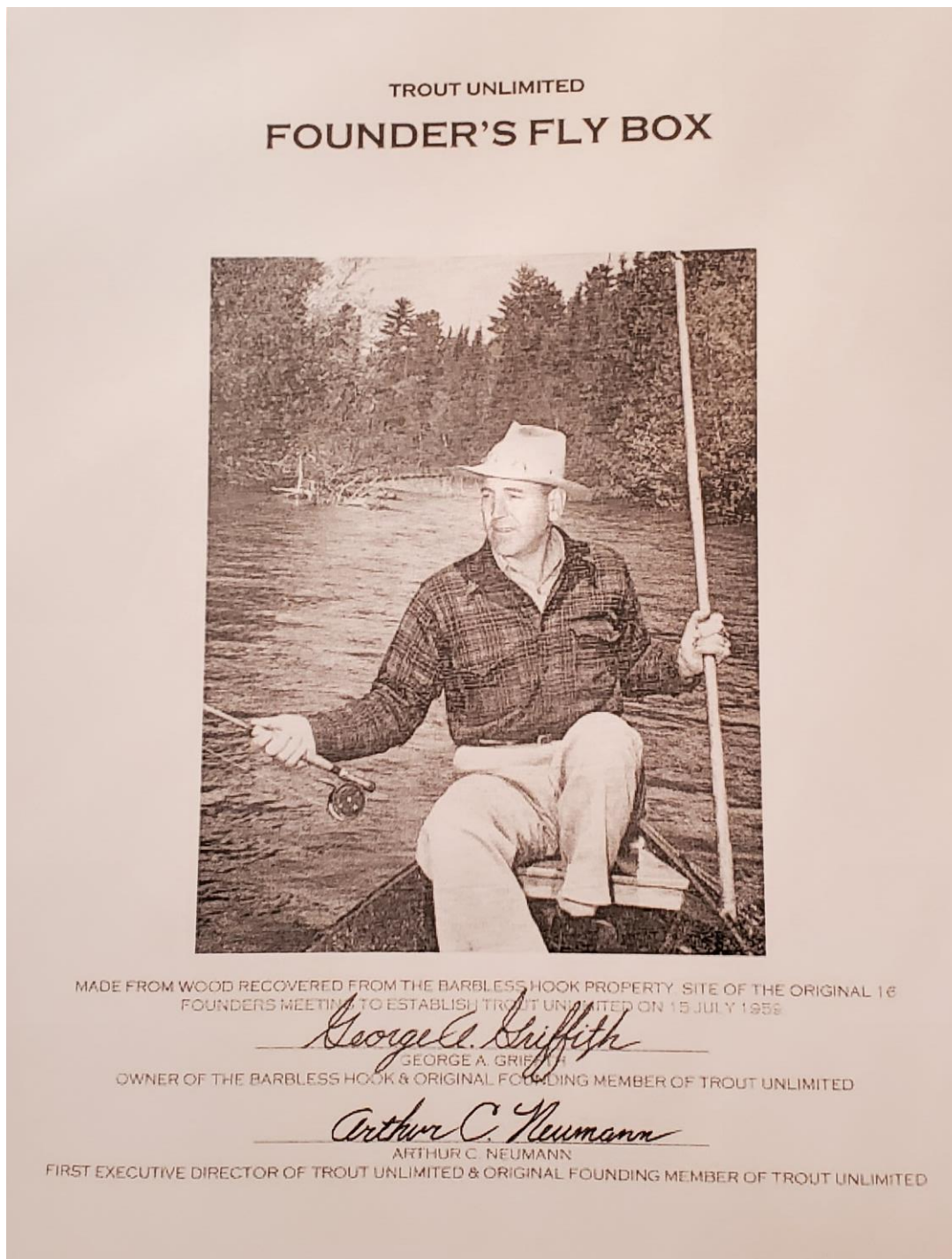
- 1) THE BOX IS MADE FROM QUARTERSAWN RED OAK RECOVERED FROM A TREE FELLED ON THE BARBLESS HOOK PROPERTY ALONG THE BANKS OF MICHIGAN'S AU SABLE RIVER, THEN HOME OF GEORGE GRIFFITHS, WHO IN JULY 1959 CONVENED A MEETING WITH 15 OTHER LIKEMINDED INDIVIDUALS AT THE BARBLESS HOOK WHERE THEY AGREED TO FORM TROUT UNLIMITED. I IMAGINED DURING THAT MEETING A FEW DRINKS WERE CONSUMED IN THE SHADE OF THIS TREE. WHILE I WAS MICHIGAN STATE COUNCIL CHAIR, I RECOVERED THIS WOOD WHILE MICHIGAN TROUT UNLIMITED OWNED THE PROPERTY. THE WOOD WAS CAREFULLY CUT AN CURED. IT DISPLAYS THE QUARTERSAWN LOOK WITH INSECT HOLES THROUGH IT.
- 2) INLAID IN THE TOP OF THE BOX IS AN ORIGINAL BRONZE TROUT UNLIMITED PIN GIVEN TO ME BY GEORGE GRIFFITHS WITH A BURNISHED GOLD TU 50TH ANNIVERSERY PIN.
- 3) THE THUMB CATCH IS MADE FROM A SMALL PIECE OF ONE OF GEORGE'S BAMBOO RODS.
- 4) INSIDE THE BOX THE FLY COMPARTMENTS WERE MADE FROM SPANISH CEDAR RECOVERED FROM AN OLD CIGAR BOX FOUND AT THE BARBLESS HOOK.
- 5) INCLUDED IS A PICTURE OF GEORGE ON THE AU SABLE SIGNED BY BOTH GEORGE GRIFFITHS AND ART NEUMANN. BOTH MEN WERE PART OF THE ORIGINAL FOUNDING GROUP. ART WENT ON TO BECOME THE FIRST EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TROUT UNLIMITED. I HAD BOTH MEN SIGN THESE YEARS AGO IN HOPES THEY COULD BE USED FOR FUND RAISING AS THIS.

AT MOST THERE WILL BE ONLY FIVE OF THESE BOXES MADE AS ALL OF THE COMPONENTS ARE VERY LIMITED,

THIS IS BOX NUMBER 2/5

DULY ATTESTED TO AND CREATED BY CARLO. HUETER, MICHIGAN COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED CHAIR 2006-2008.

This is a proclamation signed by Art Neumann and George Griffith (pictured) who are 2 of the original TU Founders. The proclamation attests to the authenticity of the wood from the site of the first founder's meeting held on July 15, 1959. Carl Hueter had the foresight to obtain the signatures while these founders were still living in order to support use of the "Founder's Fly Box" material for future Trout Unlimited fund raising.



5. CONSERVATION UPDATE

2023 has been a busy year for OBTU conservation. We completed numerous activities including two river cleanups, two macroinvertebrate surveys, three stream improvement workdays and participated in LUNKER building workday. We made financial contributions in support of two projects in the Iowa Driftless Area. We also conducted advocacy work in support of the Illinois Stream Access Bill and Fox River Dam Removal. All of these good things would not be possible without the enthusiastic involvement and generous contributions of OBTU members. Thank you for your continued support!

Conservation Activities

DuPage River Cleanups

DuPage River Cleanup Days are part of the DuPage County Adopt-A-Stream program, which was created to help keep local water resources clean. OBTU began participating in the Adopt-A-Stream program in 2019, with spring and fall cleanup days held on our adopted stretch of West Branch of the DuPage River, south of downtown Naperville, IL.



Spring 2023 DuPage River Cleanup participants.

Coldwater River Macroinvertebrate Surveys

Each year, OBTU conducts spring and fall macroinvertebrate surveys on the Coldwater River, located near Grand Rapids, Michigan. The surveys take approximately 4 hours, with teams surveying one of five stream sections, collecting insects with seines, recording the stream habitat, and returning to the meeting point to identify and count the insects collected. Our data aids in planning future restoration projects and is uploaded to a statewide database.

The surveys are a great excuse to get some fishing in on Michigan rivers such as the Coldwater, Rogue, and Muskegon. Fishing was good on the Rogue River after this year's spring survey!



Spring 2023 Coldwater River Macroinvertebrate Survey.

Southeast Wisconsin Workdays

OBTU partners with our friends at Southeast Wisconsin TU for workdays on Bluff Creek and Karcher Creek in nearby southeast Wisconsin. The workdays generally run from 9:00 am to noon on a Saturday, followed by a traditional brat fry lunch. Work consists of fun things like installing bio logs, removing invasive plants, cutting down buckthorn and clearing brush away from the stream corridor.





2023 Bluff Creek Workday, clearing brush and lunch afterward.



At our April chapter meeting, OBTU presented Ken Rizzo and Rick Larkin of SEWTU with a Stihl weed cutter.

Iowa Workday

The Iowa DNR and TUDARE hosted a conservation workday on Saturday, September 9, 2023, at the Decorah Fish Hatchery in Decorah, Iowa. Three OBTU members joined a group of over 20 volunteers from Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois. The primary focus of the workday was to build about 25 LUNKERS to be installed as part of future habitat improvement projects on North Bear and Patterson Creeks.



Willie admires a lunker structure constructed by our OBTU team. The lunkers were built with very heavy oak & walnut harvested by the DNR from the Yellow River State Forest.



The new design features a quarter log mounted on the stream-facing top to reduce the washout of rock and sod that will be placed over the top of the structures to stabilize the bank. Mike Siepker, Iowa DNR, drives a tractor to move the heavy lunkers constructed at the Decorah fish hatchery.

Conservation Projects

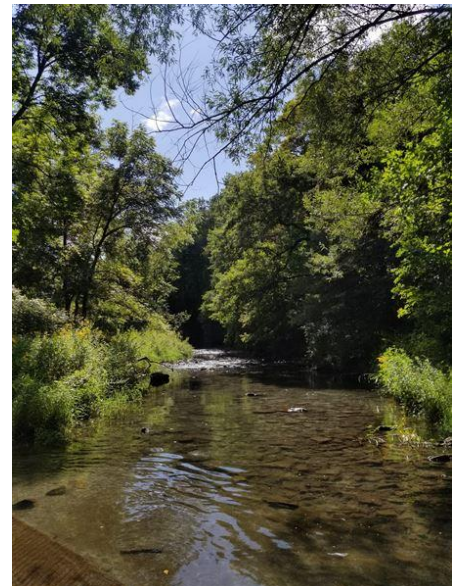
Otter Creek

Our partners at Driftless Trout Unlimited [Iowa chapter] contacted us in June regarding an opportunity to assist the Iowa DNR with the purchase of two easements on Otter Creek. The easements will expand the amount of water permanently open to fishing on the creek by over 2.5 miles. Otter Creek currently has public fishing in Echo Valley State Park plus a section of angler access easement shown on maps as "east Otter Creek". The two new segments are near the "east Otter Creek" segment, upstream of Elgin, Iowa.

Both new easement sections contained brown and rainbow (stocked) trout when they were sampled in June.

Early in August, the landowner confirmed their commitment to implementing the permanent angler access easement and signed an Offer to Sell with the DNR. The easement acquisition is moving forward and should be in place by the end of 2023.

OBTU made a \$2,000 contribution to the Iowa DNR toward the purchase of the two easements.



Otter Creek in Echo Valley State Park

North Bear Creek

North Bear Creek is one of the most popular and productive trout streams in the Iowa Driftless Area.

The Iowa DNR and TUDARE are working together to develop stream improvement projects. The projects are being developed under the EQIP conservation program through NRCS that provides funding for stream improvements.



Per Mike Seipker of the Iowa DNR, the designs have been completed for the next two segments on North Bear to be improved. Each project includes bank shaping to lower high banks and reconnect the stream to the floodplain, toe protection where needed to prevent bank failures, and instream fish habitat improvements such as bank hides, rock weirs, boulder clusters, and rootballs.

These portions of stream are both protected under the Iowa Angler Access Easement program that provides permanent angler access. They are great examples of how anglers are willing to step up to assist landowners while protecting coldwater habitat quality.



In recognition of our 50th Anniversary, Oak Brook TU established a \$5,000 special project fund. We decided to donate these funds toward stream improvement projects the Iowa DNR and TUDARE are working on at North Bear Creek. A "big check" for \$5,000 was presented to Mike Siepker at our 50th Anniversary Celebration.



Wise H2O Testing

As part of the Driftless Angler Science program, TU promoted a special blitz in September to increase the number of WiseH2O observations on brook trout streams. Several of our members helped contribute by adding readings from streams in the Iowa and Wisconsin Driftless area.

With the WiseH2O™ App, a smartphone, and inexpensive chemical test strips, users can make real-time water quality observations. Users dip a test strip, take a photo, and receive water chemistry results instantly. This technology provides the opportunity to screen for nitrates, nitrites, pH, and other analytes. Users can also take observation photos, add comments, and log waterway disturbances, such as bank erosion or the presence of trash.

The Wise H2O app is free to download and easy to use. If you would like some test strips to check out the app, please contact Dave Carlson at dmcarlson@hotmail.com or (312) 953-6759.

Additional information on the Driftless Area WiseH2O program can be found at: <https://www.mobileh2o.com/driftlessprogram>



Dowagiac River Monitoring

Since the removal of the Pucker Street Dam (Niles, MI) in 2021, steelhead and salmon have access to an additional 159 miles in the Dowagiac River and its tributary streams.

OBTU is part of MEANDRS, a partnership working to improve and protect the Dowagiac River System. We are currently working toward installing EnviroDIY Mayfly sensor stations on the Dowagiac for real-time stream monitoring above the former dam location. Once the sites for the sensor stations are finalized, permit requests will be submitted. The plan is to get the permits this winter and install two units next spring.

The EnviroDIY Monitoring Station is a low-cost, easy-to-use water monitoring station designed to collect continuous data. Data is uploaded to an online database via cellular signal for real-time access to current stream conditions. This data can be seen by going to Monitor My Watershed, an online data portal. Below is an example link to data collected on the Coldwater River:

<https://monitormywatershed.org/sites/ColdwaterMorse1/>

The cost to purchase 2 Mayfly units is expected to be \$3,200. OBTU has committed \$1,000 to help with the cost.



Traverse Valley Creek

One of our most exciting stream improvement projects is at Traverse Valley Creek in the northern Wisconsin Driftless Area. Streams in this area of Wisconsin support native brook trout and are thermally resilient due to cool groundwater inputs.

Unfortunately, due to a delay in the receipt of a National Fish Habitat Partnership grant, work on this project is not expected to begin until late this year.

OBTU is partnering with the Clear Waters TU chapter, and many other local community organizations on this project. We have committed \$6,000 to secure finances for the necessary matching funds.





6. Education Update

OBTU's Youth Education Programs continue to be among the best in Trout Unlimited as evidenced by the exceptional attention earned at the national level. OBTU is always in need of extra help from members. **We encourage you to contact any of the following leaders to learn more about how you can help with these programs.**

2023 OBTU Youth Program Leaders:

Marvin Strauch, Youth Education Chair, and Trout-in-the-Classroom Leader, youthed@obtu.org, 708-638-1318

Mike Lesiak, Youth Fly Fishing Training Leader, mdlesiak100@gmail.com, 630-300-4997

Alexa Cottrell, Stream Girls Leader, Alexa.d.cottrell@gmail.com, 847-651-2818

Dan LaFave, IL Council of TU, Youth Camp Director, dlafave@sbcglobal.net

Please check the obtu.org calendar for the most current information details on youth education events. Link: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>

Trout in the Classroom (TIC)

OBTU's TIC program makes a large impact reaching over 1,000 students each year. TIC is currently gearing up for the 2023-24 program by planning for fertilized trout egg delivery by OBTU members to participating schools during November. Classrooms manage the development of these trout eggs to a length of about 3 to 4 inches prior to their release in the spring. OBTU supports the schools throughout the year, conducts amazing live bug entomology days in the classrooms, and leads trout release trips with students in the field during May. If you have an interest in becoming involved in TIC, please contact Marvin Strauch.

Youth Fly Fishing Training Completes Another Successful Season

The OBTU Education Committee completed its 19th year of hosting Youth Fly Fishing Classes in September. Almost 60 youth participated in the program for 2023 over 5 Saturdays this past Summer. The classes are open to all youth, but are designed around the requirements of the (BSA) Fly Fishing Merit Badge so scouts who successfully complete the class will meet the requirements for the merit badge.

The sessions provide a basic understanding of fly tackle, outdoor ethics, safety, fly tying, basic fly-fishing knots, casting, and of course fishing (practicing catch and release techniques).

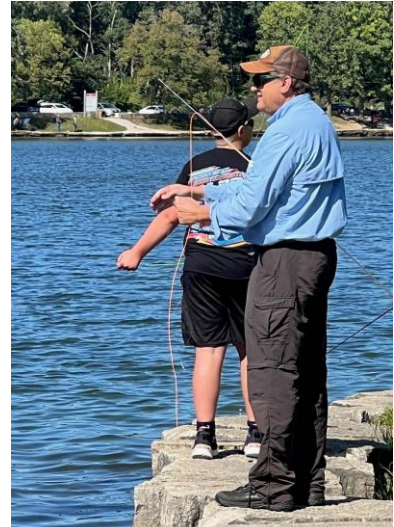
A special thanks to all the presenters and mentors of the classes for a successful 2023. The kids really enjoyed the sessions and many parents thanked me for the patience and good instruction for their children from the mentors.

The Education Committee is planning on hosting its 20th year in 2024, look to the OBTU website (www.obtu.org) for more information on next year's program. Presenters and mentors will be needed for all the sessions and a special training day will be scheduled sometime in late Winter – 2024 to help hone your skills.

Here are a couple of pictures from Youth Fly Fishing training sessions this past summer:



Fly Tying led by Stan Zarnowiecki. Students watch Stan tie a fly. They then return to their individual work stations to tie the fly with coaching from a mentor. Each student ties a soft hackle and a foam beetle.



OBTU fishing mentor Ken Krueger is shown coaching a student. Ken doubles as OBTU Membership Committee Chairman on the OBTU Board.

Stream Girls Program gains momentum in August

This is the second year OBTU hosted the [STREAM Girls](#) program. Although we had a slow start with interest and had to cancel our June date due to a lack of registration, we ended up with great groups on two dates in August.

The first location, Rock Creek in Kankakee River State Park, was coordinated thanks to Annie Vitti (Joe's daughter) who works for the DNR. Girls from grades 4 to 11 were all enthusiastic participants. They ended up fishing along the Kankakee River and most girls caught fish!

For the second Saturday, we were back at Girl Scout Camp Dean in Big Rock. We had fantastic finds during the macroinvertebrate survey and found many caddis cases and a large hellgrammite that rivaled Dean Hansen's specimens. Fishing took place on the pond, and everyone caught at least one fish—most girls caught several! A couple parents also joined for the day, and one of the most fun moments was watching a father and daughter hook blue gills at the same time.

A huge thank you to all the volunteers: Alexa Cottrell, Annie Vitti, Cheryl Vermillion, Kate Anderson, Lisa Gilmore, Phil Young, Rose Grumbine, and Steve Carlson.

We plan to host two sessions again in 2024 and appreciate any help we can get spreading the word to girls (they don't have to be in scouts) ages ~11-14 who might be interested.

Pictures from August, 2023 Stream Girls outings:



Illinois Council of TU Youth Camp

The 14th edition of the IL Council Youth Fly Fishing and Conservation Camp was held from July 16 through July 21. Ten campers successfully completed all major camp activities at this year's camp.

A big thanks to all of the TU mentors including Dan LaFave (Camp Director), Willie Beshire, Carol Hennessy, Lisa Gilmore, Carl Hueter, Mark Wortsman,, Dan Postelnick, John Nicewick, and Nicholas Anaclerio.who all served as mentors. Dan LaFave, Willie, Carol, and Lisa are from OBTU. Carl Hueter is from Michigan Trout Unlimited. Mark Wortsman is from the Gary Borger Chapter(North Shore). Dan Postelnick, John Nicewick and Nick Anaclerio are from the Elliot Donelley Chapter (Chicago and inner suburbs).



2023 IL Council Youth Camp Group Photo

IL TU thanks the following external volunteers for contributing their time and expertise to the 2023 camp:

Professor Dan Hayes and staff of Michigan State University (Assisted with entomology sampling & identification, electro-shocking fish survey, hydrology study and fish dissection,)

Mr. Craig Kasmer, Harwick-Pines State Park Interpreter & Staff (Hosted old growth forest walk & logging history museum programs.

Mr. Steve Sendek and Crew (Steve is a retired Michigan DNR biologist. Steve and his crew led our campers who worked on a stream habitat improvement project on the Au Sable North Branch.)

Mr. Patrick Ertel, Michigan DNR (Led stream table to demonstrate how moving water shapes the land)

Mr. Carl Hueter, former TU Michigan Council Chair (Hosted campers at his North Branch property for 1 day and provided deep knowledge of the Au Sable River environment throughout the 6-day camp.)

Pictures of some of the conservation activities from the 2023 youth camp:



Professor Dan Hayes leads the fish shocking survey. Largest trout sampled was 18" brown at right.



Campers rehabilitate Au Sable's North Branch by moving timber & anchoring structure in the stream.



Professor Dan Hayes, MSU, leads entomology survey. The yellow stone fly was just one of many interesting specimens captured.



Craig Kasmer, Hartwick Pines State Park, leads a walk thru one of the few remaining remnants of Michigan lower peninsula old growth forest.



7. Fund Raising Update

OBTU's 2023 Annual Fund-Raising Appeal Again Achieves Strong Results

The OBTU Board expresses sincere gratitude to the membership for the success of the 2023 fund-raising appeal.

OBTU began conducting annual fundraising drives 8 years ago as a concentrated effort to raise funds earmarked directly for the chapter's conservation & education programs. As in recent years, we are pleased to report that this year's campaign was highly successful once again with monetary donations in excess of \$10,000.



OBTU recognizes the following contributors to our successful fund-raising appeal. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you!

Peter Ballin
Thomas Banaszak
Wayne Bernahl
William Beshire
Walter Bird
Walter Bock
Caleb Carlson
Dave Carlson
Steve Carlson
Tyrone Clark
Dwight Clarke
Arthur Cottrell
William J Critchelow
David Dial
James Dickens
Jim Dickens
Ronald Dyslin
Elgin Jazz Espial
Janet Edman

Robert Eisenhart
Ross Forbes
Charles Gartland
Keith R Gabriel
Lisa Gilmore
Keven Graham
William Hancock
Carol Hennessy
Paavo Husen
Don Jackson
Christopher Johnson
James Jones
Vince Jones
Walter Kinney
Linda Kohut
Ronald Koziol
Dan LaFave
Osga Law
Michael Lesiak

James Lindon
Dave Lunardini
Richard Marsan
Nancy Martin
John Martyn
Brian McPheters
Chris & Kathy Mehuys
Jack Mensching
Edward Michael
Kim Nimitz
Stephen Phillips
George Pohlmann
Timothy Poisson
Jack Potts
Greg Prosen
David Rau
John Rindler
Robert Rowe
Steve Shapiro

Henry Sledz
Marvin Strauch
Ernest Stryjak
Gary Stuck
Robert Tompkin
Richard Tworek
Art Urban
Lawrence Varsek
Joe Vitti
Walter Wahlfeldt
Charles Weyhenmeyer
Tom Wilhelm
Raymond Wilmot
Wipfli (matching donation)
David Wochner
Ronald Wright
Michael Zahn
Francis Zbylski

In addition to the general funding appeal, thank you to the following OBTU Board members who made extra contributions in response to Carl Hueter's gift of the "Founder's Fly Box" raising an additional \$1,150 for OBTU:

Dave Carlson
Art Cottrell

Jim Dickens
Lisa Gilmore

Keven Graham
Jack Potts

Steve Shapiro
Marvin Strauch

In case you have not yet contributed and feel left out, it is not too late.
Click on the link to contribute now before the 2023 year end:

[**DONATE TO OBTU 2023 FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN**](#)



In addition to the annual campaign, we would like to thank the following who made significant contributions this year:

1. Thank you to Vulcan Materials Corporation. Vulcan Materials Company is the nation's largest producer of construction aggregates—primarily crushed stone, sand and gravel—and a major producer of aggregates-based construction materials, including asphalt and ready-mixed concrete. The company operates 25 aggregates production and distribution facilities in Illinois.

The Laraway Plant of Vulcan Materials Corporation (near Joliet) has once again donated \$1000 to OBTU. The plant has been donating to a conservation cause each year. Thank you to Mr. Stan Slusser and the Laraway plant team for once again selecting OBTU as the recipient of this donation.



Laraway Plant Team

2. Thank you to, Marvin Strauch, Emeritus Board Member and Chair of the Education Committee. Marvin once again built a bamboo rod which he donated to the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited youth camp. This rod was raffled earning proceeds of \$2000 to help fund the Illinois TU Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp held annually on Michigan's Au Sable River (The founding place of TU). **This year's bamboo rod was won at raffle by OBTU member John McKeivitt. Congratulations John!**

If your company donates to conservation causes (or matches employee contributions), OBTU would like to talk to you!

If you have a surplus of valuable fly-fishing equipment, supplies, or books that you would like to donate to a good cause, OBTU would like to talk to you!

The OBTU Holiday Party will be our 2nd major fund-raising event of the year:

This is the 8th consecutive year that OBTU has achieved strong fund-raising results by conducting 2 major fund-raising events each year which have funded our good work and kept OBTU fiscally sound for the future:

1. An annual fund-raising appeal.

2. A holiday party in December with the typical bucket raffles & silent auctions along with a premium rod raffle concluding with a drawing at the holiday party (The 2020 holiday party was disrupted due to Covid).

Once again, OBTU announces an annual holiday party:



Save the Date:
OBTU Holiday Banquet
Wednesday, Dec 6, 2023
Venuti's in Addison
<https://venutis.com/>

(Stay Tuned for Details)



8. OBTU Fall Fishing Outings

Fall 2023 Chapter Fishing Outings Debrief

The 5th annual OBTU Driftless Area fishing outings were completed as planned:

Viroqua, Wisconsin (Sept 21-24): Nature Nooks Retreat (NNR) was filled to capacity with a group of 12 OBTU members. Seven others camped at the West Fork Sportsman's club nearby and one more in a nearby motel bringing the total participation for the weekend fishing to 20 OBTU members. While the streams were low, the water was cold and rains leading up to the weekend produced a slightly stained flow that resulted in good fishing. The West Fork of the Kickapoo produced an impressive yield from grasshopper patterns. There was a strong afternoon of action on Weister Creek where OBTU contributed to stream rehabilitation for several years. Several participants reported success on the Timber Coulee, and rising fish were active on a number of other streams such as Reed's creek, Spring Coulee and Bohemian. Brookies were also caught on the Seas Branch.

This year's outing benefited from extraordinary culinary talents of participants. Tim Poisson, a career food industry specialist, helped prepare Friday nite brats to die for (Par boiled in beer & molasses, smothered in well caramelized onions, and served on expertly brushed with butter & toasted buns.) For Saturday dinner everyone feasted on lasagna, garlic toasted oven baked baguettes, a delicious mixed salad, dessert of locally raised watermelon, cookies & more. Bob Hutchinson once again excelled at creating a Saturday morning egg bake. Not one complaint was heard from 12 hungry men, but the complements flowed along with the fine wine!

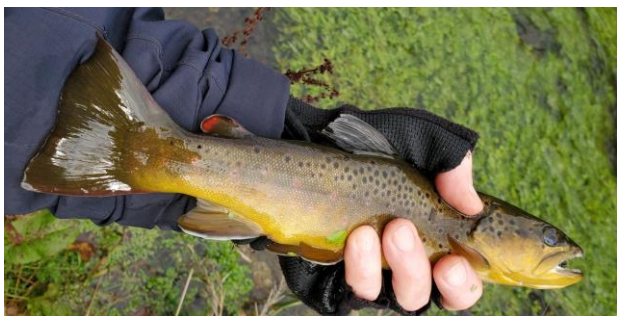


A very animated group enjoying the fellowship and a great dinner together at Nature Nooks.

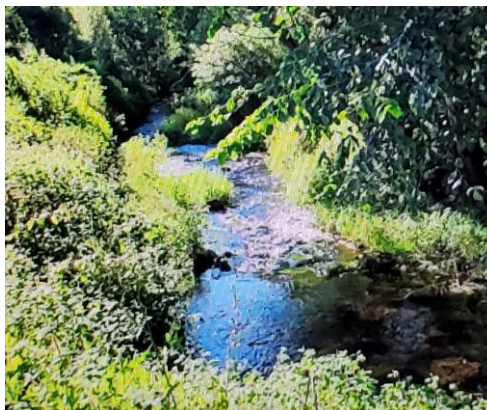
Decorah, Iowa: As in past years, there was high interest in this loosely coordinated Iowa trip where everyone arranges their own preferred travel and lodging. However, a number of people developed conflicts forcing quite a few withdrawals. In addition, over 2 inches of rain fell in the Decorah area during the lead up to the trip. In the end, only 5 brave souls attended. Despite the heavy rain, most streams remained clear and the fishing was good. The team of 5 had success on the top end of Waterloo Creek with fish rising to small bwo's; the headwaters of French Creek which is unstocked with only naturally reproducing wild trout. French Creek grudgingly yielded a brown here & there; and Paint Creek produced browns & rainbows even though the murky water required sub-surface fly tactics during a slight diversion from Sunday's trip home. John McKeivitt had a big day on Clear Creek near where he was staying in Lansing, Iowa. During the rain, the team also scouted Otter Creek where OBTU recently contributed to the purchase of 2.5 miles of public easements (See Conservation Projects in Section 5 of this newsletter). We delighted at the sighting of large spawning browns on Otter Creek.

Our group congregated at Toppling Goliath's Restaurant & Brewery on Friday evening. We were joined by Mike (Iowa DNR) & Liz (Iowa fishing guide) Siepker. In addition, other Iowa Council of TU leaders who we had met at the Spokane annual meeting also joined us since they were in the Decorah area for some fishing. Among other items discussed, Dave Carlson led discussion of upcoming Iowa Conservation plans (with emphasis on e-DNA developments).

Some added pictures of fall fishing outings:



A wild brown in fall colors teased out of the thin headwaters of French Creek, IA, on a hopper (one of many trout caught & released by our group).



Head waters of French Creek, IA, For those who enjoy the challenge of wild trout on small water.



Fog rising off of the West Fork of the Kickapoo at sunrise as viewed from deck of our Nature Nooks Retreat lodge.



Early fall colors surround the red barn cabin at NNR near Viroqua, Wisc. This is one of the three units rented for our group.



9. OBTU Social Media and Internet Presence

The Oak Brook Trout Unlimited Chapter has an active social media presence. Our primary objective is to extend OBTU's outreach to external audiences within our market place. You can help! Please follow us on the **Facebook page: Trout Unlimited Oak Brook Chapter**. Your initiative to submit postings or "like" a submission will help increase our traffic. **Our Instagram is tuoakbrook. Our web site is obtu.org.**

Please check the obtu.org calendar for information details on upcoming events. Link: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>

10. Looking to become involved in a chapter committee?

Do you believe that you have time and talent to offer your chapter? Would you like to get more involved in helping OBTU to improve and grow? We welcome new committee members, especially in the areas of Financial Development, Communications, and Cold-water Advocacy.

The Financial Development Committee is currently chaired by Carol Hennessy. In the past year this committee organized the Spring Solicitation Drive, the Rod Raffle, and the Annual Holiday Party Fundraiser. If interested please email her at clhennessy84@gmail.com

Willie Beshire chairs our Communication Committee. This committee is responsible for the WordPress website, our Instagram Account, our Facebook Page, and our newsletters and announcements which are usually sent out via Constant Contact email/customer relationship management software. Our chapter is working on improving our public relations efforts and welcomes anyone that can assist in this task.

Our cold-water conservation advocacy efforts are led by Ed Michael. There is much advocacy work to be done and Ed is always seeking help.

The Conservation Committee is currently chaired by Dave Carlson and meets via zoom.

The Education Committee is chaired by Marvin Strauch with Mike Lesiak handling Youth Education, Alexa Cottrell in charge of StreamGirls, and Stan Zarnowiecki taking a key role in Trout in the Classroom program operations.

A more complete listing of committees and leadership is available on our obtu.org web site. Here is a link to the Leadership page: <https://obtu.org/about-us/leadership/>

If you have an interest, please do not hesitate to reach out to the OBTU Board member or committee leader of your choice.