



1. President's Letter

As I was reading through this newsletter, I couldn't help but be struck by the terrific partnerships that OBTU has developed over the years. Here is just a partial listing:

TU Great Lakes, TU DARE, numerous other TU chapters including SEWTU, SCHREMSTU and Clear Waters TU, Illinois DNR, Iowa DNR, Wisconsin DNR, Will County Forest Preserves, Cook County Forest Preserves, DuPage County Forest Preserves, The Conservation Foundation, Naperville Parks District, Oak Brook Park District, Coldwater River Watershed Council, MEANDRS, Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District, Frankfort Library, North Central College, Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and all the teachers who help make Trout in The Classroom a resounding success.

These partners make possible all the great things OBTU does!

Let's take a minute to give them a shout out - THANK YOU!

Dave Carlson

"The Flyer" 2024 Spring Edition Table of Contents:

- 1. President's Letter (see above)**
- 2. Conservation Update**
- 3. Education Update**
- 4. Committee Appointments & Annual Election Results**
- 5. OBTU 2023-24 Financial Summary**
- 6. Annual OBTU 2023 Holiday Party Results**
- 7. 2024 Fund Raising Appeal Announcement**
- 8. OBTU Outreach**
- 9. Chapter Fishing Outings**
- 10. Chapter Meetings**
- 11. Join an OBTU Committee**

2. Conservation Update



Recent North Bear Creek, Iowa, stream improvements. OBTU's 50th Anniversary Commemorative contribution is helping to fund continuing North Bear improvements.

The Conservation Committee continues its commitment to advancing conservation projects into many of the waters our members enjoy. OBTU has established numerous partners throughout Iowa, Wisconsin, and Michigan. Our 50 years of physical and financial efforts have resulted in projects to increase access, further the scientific knowledge, and improve & protect stream habitat. In the past year, OBTU has had a number of exciting projects and accomplishments to report.

OBTU contributed financially to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources where through our support two additional easements on Otter Creek have been realized and will now be protected. Our Celebration contribution to mark the 50 years of the chapter went to improvements on North Bear Creek. The stream work contracts have been awarded and work should be completed this year.

Active work in the Wisconsin Driftless continues to be a focus of the Chapter and the Conservation Committee. We should see stream improvement work and construction continue this year on Traverse Valley Creek. Traverse Valley Creek is a Brook Trout stream improvement project where OBTU is partnering with the Clear Waters Chapter.

OBTU will again be partnering 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 planting trees, removing invasive plants, cutting down buckthorn and clearing brush away from the stream corridor.



OBTU & SEWTU planted trees on Bluff Creek on April 20.

OBTU has long supported dam removal, stream improvement, and monitoring work on the Dowagiac River located near Niles, Michigan. This year we assisted in the installation of two solar-powered EnviroDIY Monitoring Stations that transmit real-time data across cellular networks to the web. Sensors in these stations will monitor water temperature, depth and conductivity allowing better understanding of the impact of development and agricultural activity within this predominantly cold-water system. Other organizations partnering on Dowagiac projects include MEANDRS, Kalamazoo & Donnelly TU chapters, St Joseph River Valley Fly Fishers (SJRFFF), Cass County Conservation District, Cass County Parks, and Trout Unlimited National.



Solar-powered EnviroDIY Station on Dowagiac & Coldwater Rivers transmit real-time data to the web.

Several years ago, OBTU was also instrumental in getting two EnviroDIY Monitoring Stations on the Coldwater River, located near Grand Rapids, Michigan. Data from stations on the Dowagiac and Coldwater Rivers can be seen at: <https://monitormywatershed.org/browse/>.



OBTU, along with volunteers from the Coldwater River Watershed Council and Schrems West Michigan TU, conducts macroinvertebrate surveys on the Coldwater each spring and fall. 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.

Identifying & Counting Bugs (Pictured at left.)

OBTU now has Environmental DNA testing equipment (eDNA). We have partnered with Dr. Jarod Homola at UW Stevens Point to establish a testing program using eDNA technology. Enabled by your contributions, OBTU purchased the required testing equipment including a specialized pump and filter system. To date we have run tests in southern Wisconsin and Iowa Driftless looking for the genetic marker for Brook Trout. Our TUDARE and state DNR partners are very enthusiastic and studying more opportunities to expand this testing opportunity. With this equipment we can support research in cold water streams and identify the presence of various Brook Trout strains. Through studying the presence of native strains, Dr. Homola's team hope to develop insights on how to best strengthen populations of healthier native brook trout strains. This should also help OBTU target our future brook trout conservation efforts.



OBTU volunteers pilot the chapter's new eDNA testing equipment.

What is next? OBTU's commitment to conservation of cold-water streams are the primary focus of our projects and the projects we as a chapter are involved in. Over the next few years, we will continue our efforts in the Driftless regions of Wisconsin and Iowa with our partner organizations. We will be continuing to look at opportunities to expand easement rights and contribute to stream restoration projects. We are planning for expanded eDNA testing and looking to continue to work with TUDARE and other TU chapters in the Driftless region. We are also exploring how the OBTU Chapter might partner with the local Forest Preserves and Counties with local stream projects to provide more local work day opportunities for current & future members to get engaged in our local environment.



OBTU members collecting trash at Pioneer Park in Naperville as part of the Adopt-a-Stream Program. on April 27. Fresh donuts and hot coffee hit the spot on this damp, overcast outing. Once again, there was no shortage of trash to be cleared.



3. Education Update:

OBTU Youth Education Programs are more than 20 years old and continue to make a significant impact:

This is the 20th year of OBTU's Youth Fly Fishing classes. There were earlier programs that set the stage for today's well-established program, so it's difficult to say precisely how long ago the chapter's initial training events started. You may ask, "How many students has OBTU trained?" Well, we know this about the current program: (5 classes a year) x (15 students per class) x (20 years of classes) equals a maximum of 1500 students. We're sure there would have been a few empty seats over the years. However, it's safe to say well over 1,000 students have been through the current training. Openings for 2024 classes for the June through September sessions are currently available for young women and men aged 11 to 18. Successful participants who are Scouts earn a fly-fishing merit badge in one day. Refer to registration details via the following link to the OBTU web site: [LINK TO 2024 YOUTH FLY FISHING FLIER](#)

This is the 16th year of OBTU's "Trout-In-The-Classroom" (TIC) program. OBTU started the first TIC School in Illinois and now has 17 active schools in the program. In addition, OBTU provided assistance to the 3 other Illinois chapters over the years which has helped enlist a total of 30 TIC Schools in Illinois. With a number of classes from each school participating, we are confident of connecting with at least a thousand students each year. Please contact Marvin Strauch, Emeritus Board Member and OBTU Youth Education Chair if you would like to participate in the TIC program: youthed@obtu.org, 708-638-1318

This is the 15th year of the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited's Youth Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp. This camp provides teenagers an opportunity to obtain an intensive week-long introduction to fly fishing for wild stream trout on Michigan's Au Sable River, the founding place of Trout Unlimited. Students also receive an appreciation of cold-water conservation through a series of field studies and hands on stream work. We estimate that about 180 campers have attended this program. A number of our campers have gone on to environmental studies and careers. **The camp team could use an extra mentor or two---let us know if you are interested.** [LINK TO 2024 YOUTH CAMP INFO](#) including a flyer, a presentation describing all key activities at camp, and an application for young men and women aged 13 to 18. At this writing a few openings for young women and men are available.

This is the 3rd year of OBTU's Stream Girls program. Progress continues to be made on this day camp on a stream designed for young ladies. Through teaming with the girl scouts, several successful Stream Girls events have taken place. A strong OBTU faculty of talented women lead the program to help youth gain appreciation of a stream environment, STREAM Girls employs STEM-education (**S**cience, **T**echnology, **E**ngineering, **M**ath) plus **R**ecreation and **A**rts to explore a local stream. Campers also learn a little bit about fly fishing. The program is open to girls 11 to 14 years old. [LINK TO 2024 STREAM GIRLS FLIER](#)

The “Train-the-Trainer” event formally kicked off the youth education year on March 1.

The event included a review of each youth education program and orientation to help prepare OBTU youth mentors. With about 50 OBTU members in our youth mentoring network, the event once again attracted a full classroom of participants. Don't fret if you were unable to attend. If you want to get involved, please feel free to contact any of the youth program leaders listed below. They will advise you on how you can get connected and help out. If you want to see our programs in action to assess how you might fit in, members are welcome to observe.

Youth Program Leaders:

Marvin Strauch, OBTU 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/>

Sheryl Vermillion is shown leading a fly-tying review session at this year's Youth Education Train the Trainer Day:



Spring is prime time for OBTU's Trout in the Classroom (TIC) Program

During April 2 thru 10 our team conducted "Wet Bug" lessons for a total of 28 participating classes as requested by nine of OBTU's TIC schools. As in the past, Dean Hansen, SE Minnesota-based Entomologist, captured the aquatic insects for us including large stone flies, hexagenia mayfly nymphs, hellgrammites, case caddis nymphs, as well as clinging and swimming mayfly nymphs. Dean does a wonderful job of capturing exceptional specimens. With Dean's retirement, Marvin Strauch travelled north to pick up and transport the live bugs which must be kept in separate cold water, oxygenated storage vessels to keep them in a lively state for hands-on, live bug study in the classrooms for a two-week period. About 25 OBTU volunteers assisted with mentoring in the 2024 wet bug classrooms. Some of the stars of the wet bug program are pictured:



Hellgrammite (up to 3+ inches)
A Dobson Fly Nymph.



Hexagenia Mayfly Nymph,
A burrowing mayfly.
Note the "digging" mouth parts.



Giant Stone Fly Nymph

Students & school teachers love this program. Pictures describe better than words:



Marvin hands out each bug to a "volunteer". A student from each small study group transports the bug to their group's cold-water observation tray. By end of class, most students confidently handle squirmy bugs.

Students closely examining stone fly nymphs.



Marvin engages energized students regarding the poster board depicted anatomy of a hex nymph. Oh say can you see the U.S. Flag still flying over the trout aquarium?



Note the 36-day countdown till “Trout Release Day”. OBTU leads field trips with a stream study program culminating with a release into the stream ceremony. Release field trips took place May 6-10 this year.



Students record Hellgramite observations on the assigned worksheet.



At times Science can be distressing!



OBTU member Jamie Vaughn (standing) mentors a group that admires aquatic macro invertebrates.

2023-24 OBTU Trout In The Classroom Participating schools:

School	Location	School	Location
Bednarcik Jr High	Aurora	Prairie View Middle School	Tinley Park
Burroughs School	Brighton Park, Chicago	Romeoville H.S.	Romeoville
Downers Grove North High School	Downers Grove	Roosevelt Middle School	River Forest
Gower Middle School	Burr Ridge	St. Patricia	Hickory Hills
Grissom Middle School	Tinley Park	St. John the Baptist	Winfield
Gwendolyn Brooks	Oak Park	St Scholastica	Woodridge
Kaneland H.S.	Maple Park	The Children’s School	Oak Park
Lincoln Elementary	Glenn Ellyn	Tinley Park H.S.	Tinley Park
Northlake Middle School	Northlake		

17 Schools currently participate in OBTU’s Trout In the Classroom. All schools have an assigned student trout team to manage the fish and the cold water tank environment. Fertilized eggs are delivered in November. The programs are tailored for each school. Schools may select various activities such as egg delivery presentations, cold water conservation lessons, hands on wet bug days in April, and May trout release field trips.

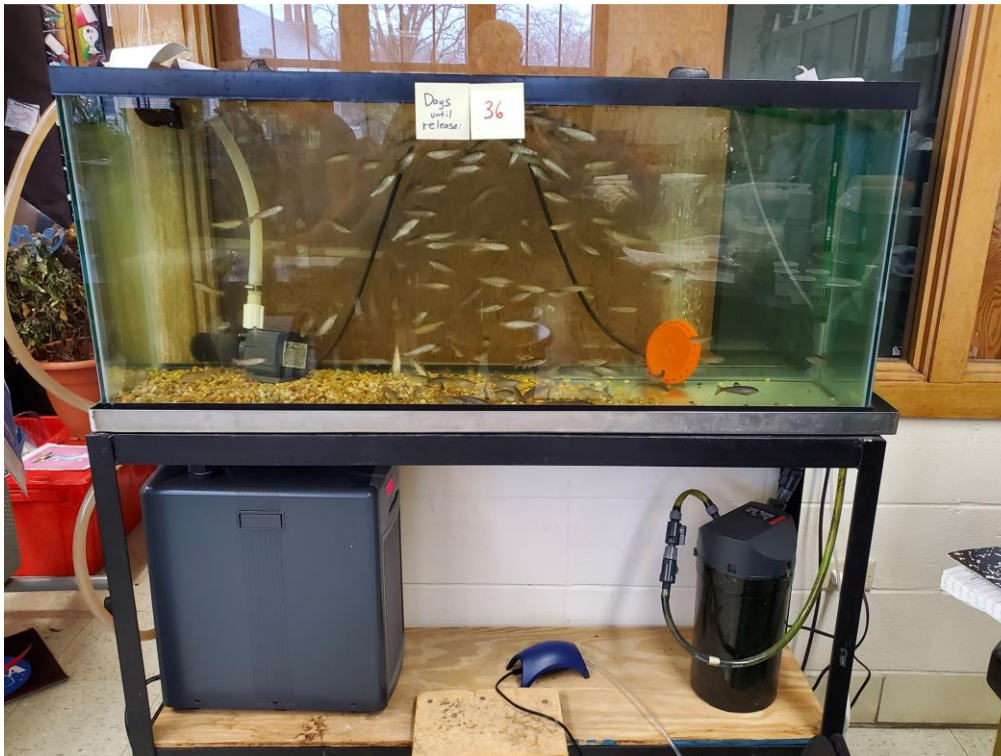
Hexagenia Mayfly Hatches from Trout In Classroom Nymph.



Breaking News:

A Hex hatch has occurred at the undisclosed Wheaton residence of an OBTU TIC volunteer. Wet bugs were receiving tender loving care in cold, oxygenated vessels in the volunteer's garage. One of the hexagenia nymphs hatched prematurely. This could be the 1st Wheaton Hex hatch ever recorded. We thought the hex hatch didn't occur until June???

Classroom Aquarium Setup



Each TIC school requires a quality cold water environment capable of raising over 100 fertilized trout eggs to 3 inch fry over the duration of the school year. The setup includes a 50 gal tank, a chiller to keep the tank at 50 degrees, a filter & aireator. Cost is about \$1,500. Depending on a school's needs, OBTU often contributes to the setup cost of a new school. OBTU also maintains backup equipment that can be used in emergencies. Student trout teams frequently measure water temperature and chemically test for impurities such as ammonia and nitrates that build up from waste products. Clear, cold water is oxygenated water is vital.

4. Committee Appointments and OBТУ Annual Election Results

New Committee Chairs: We congratulate & thank the following distinguished OBТУ members who have accepted chairmanship appointments for two very important committees:

Keven Graham is OBТУ's new Conservation Committee Chair. Keven replaces Dave Carlson, OBТУ President, who is now freed to focus on overall leadership of our chapter. Thanks to Dave for his outstanding leadership of OBТУ's conservation efforts over the past several years. Dave has done a great job of helping us stay engaged in a high level of conservation project participation in four states. He has upheld OBТУ tradition as a chapter with a long list of impressive conservation achievements.

Jim Dickens is OBТУ's new Financial Development Committee Chair. Jim replaces Carol Hennessy, OBТУ Treasurer, who had been doing double duty by also leading chapter fund raising for the past several years with consistently strong results. Carol has put tremendous effort into OBТУ's annual funding appeals and holiday parties personally grinding out much of the hands-on work required to keep the wheels of our fundraising machine well-greased.



Keven Graham, Conservation Chair working The TU Show Booth in Schaumburg.



When not fund raising, Jim Dickens, Financial Development Chairman is also known to wet a line.

Keven & Jim both bring impressive skills & experience to these roles. You may recall that Keven and Jim served as co-chairs of OBТУ's very successful 50th anniversary celebration event held on August 8, 2023. Keven has also been a strong contributor to the Conservation Committee for several years. Jim authored our successful "Embrace a Stream" grant application back in 2019 which enabled the rehabilitation of Conway Creek in the Wisconsin Driftless Area. Jim has also led our pilot of an online sweepstakes when OBТУ was awarded a \$1000 prize for being the first chapter in TU to run an EventGroove sweepstakes (system selected by TU national).

We are fortunate to have volunteers of their caliber. Be sure to thank Keven & Jim for the significant commitments they have made to OBТУ. Help them where you can!

Annual Board Member Elections: The OBTU chapter held its annual meeting on Wednesday, January 17th. Carol Hennessy reported to the membership that the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee had nominated the following members:

John Martyn: John was nominated to serve a full 3-year term which fills a board position previously held by Lisa Gilmore. Due to the demands of Lisa's career which involves extensive travel, Lisa chose not to seek another term at this time. However, Lisa remains active at board meetings and continues to contribute to several chapter initiatives.

Keven Graham: In 2023, Keven was elected to fill a one-year term created by a board vacancy. With the expiration of his 1-year term, Kevin was nominated to serve a full 3-year term.

There were no additional nominations from the floor and both candidates were elected to the OBTU Board by a vote of those in attendance.



Newly elected OBTU Board member as of January, 2024.
From left: John Martyn and Keven Graham

Annual Election of Officers: After the Annual Meeting, the directors met for a special meeting to elect the chapter's officers for the upcoming year. The current officers were re-elected:

Dave Carlson, President

Dan LaFave; Vice President

Jack Potts; Treasurer

Carol Hennessy, Secretary

Thanks to each of these leaders who volunteer extensive amounts of time to help lead OBTU, as well as provide "hands on" work for the many tasks that need to be done.

A complete listing of Officers, Board Members, and Committee Chairs is included on OBTU's web site: [LINK TO OBTU LEADERSHIP](#)



5. OBTU 2023-24 Financial Summary (As of March 31, 2024, Fiscal Year End)

OBTU financial results are summarized below. The chapter is in a strong financial position with \$122,000 in assets as of the March 31, 2024 fiscal year end. Overall, net assets increased by \$6000 during the past year due to continued fund-raising success as well as strong growth of the chapter’s mutual fund investments. The chapter made a much larger than normal investment in membership engagement this past year associated with OBTU’s 50th anniversary celebration. The celebration provided a great opportunity to raise OBTU’s profile on many levels and was a way to give something back to our members. As a not-for-profit, OBTU plans to maintain the chapter’s financial strength while maintaining break-even net income over the long term. OBTU is targeting aggressive delivery of our conservation and education programs during the upcoming year which may result in a planned net decrease in assets for fiscal year 2024-25.

**OBTU Income Statement: Fiscal Year 2023-24
(period of 04/01/2023 to 03/31/2024)**

Account Name	YTD Amount	Budget
Statement of Activities		
Support & Revenue	FY 2024	FY 2025
Contributions from Annual Fundraiser Appeal	10,000	10,000
Other Contributions	5,000	1,000
Chapter Meeting Raffles	2,000	1,000
Holiday Event and Auction	12,000	12,000
Investment Income	15,000	2,000
Total Support and Revenue	44,000	26,000
Program Services Expense		
Conservation	11,000	22,000
Youth Education	6,000	6,000
Member Engagement	11,000	5,000
General & Administrative	2,000	2,000
Fundraising	8,000	9,000
Total Expenses	38,000	44,000
Increase (Decrease) in Net Assets	6,000	(18,000)

OBTU Statement of Financial Position as of 3/31/2024

Assets	Balance
Cash and Cash Equivalents	58,000
Investments	63,000
Prepaid Assets and other assets	1,000
Total Assets	122,000
Liabilities	-
Net Assets	122,000

6. Annual OBTU 2023 Holiday Party Results

A festive atmosphere was enjoyed by over 50 guests who attended the December 7, 2022 Holiday Party at Venuti's Italian Restaurant & Banquet Hall in Addison. Venuti's proved to be an excellent venue and plans are being made to do it again on December 11, 2024. [LINK TO VENTU'S](#) A special thanks once again goes to Carol Hennessey, OBTU Secretary & Fund-Raising Chair, who planned, supervised, and contributed more than her share of the hands-on effort. Numerous members also pitched in to chase down prizes and help with party preparations. OBTU's net proceeds from the event were about \$8,000 which was in line with recent OBTU holiday party outcomes. Funds raised from the Holiday Party go to the OBTU Operating Fund to meet operating costs including communications technology, meeting facilities & speakers, insurance, promotions, trade shows & other administrative costs. After meeting these operating expenses, surplus operating funds will be periodically transferred to the OBTU Conservation and Education Fund to support our delivery of mission aligned services.

OBTU continued the tradition of a holiday raffle with a few weeks of online and in-person ticket sales leading up to Grand Prize drawings at the Holiday Party. This year's Grand Prize winners:



Rod Raffle Grand Prize:
Michael Moster of River Forest, won the Orvis Helios Rod. Mike was presented the rod at the February OBTU chapter meeting. Thanks to Orvis who provide rod at a deep discount.



Rod Raffle Runner Up:
Ty Clark was awarded the 2nd place prize of a Lamson Light Speed G5 Blackout Reel. Thanks to Lamson for making the reel available to OBTU at a deeply discounted price.



50th Anniversary Custom Fly Box Raffle
Peter Wallers of Montgomery, Illinois, won the special commemorative 50th Anniversary curly maple fly box with inlaid 50th anniversary pin hand crafted & donated by Carl Hueter, former Michigan TU Council Chair. The prize was sent to Peter in December.



Over 50 2023 holiday party goers enjoyed a splendid atmosphere in one of Venuti's banquet halls. The room was spacious with a large display of 45 silent auction and bucket raffle prizes on the left. A full dinner buffet with generous food selections can be seen on the right. A cash bar was also available (not pictured). Plans are underway to return to Venuti's on December 11, 2024.



6. Annual OBTU 2022 Holiday Party-continued

OBTU also thanks many organizations and individuals for their contributions which provided entertainment and enabled successful fund raising for OBTU. Donors and donated prizes are recognized below:

Silent Auction Prizes		Bucket Raffle Prizes	
Donor	Donated Prize	Donor	Donated Prize
1. Dennis Wisnosky	3-nights at Gateway Lodge	1. Patagonia	Day Pack 30L Retail \$129
2. Jay Anglin(Prior year trip rolled over by Dave Carlson/Steve Carlson)	Guide Trip (St Joe/Dowagiac Area)	2. Patagonia	Black Hole Duffel 55L \$169
3. Jay Allen (Prior year trip rolled over by Jack Potts)	Guide Trip (Muskegon) + 1 night Muskegon River Inn when pay for 1st night.	3. Filson	\$100 Gift Certificate
4. Kevin Feenstra (Prior year trip rolled over by Jack Potts)	Guide Trip (Muskegon)	4. Costco/Gullivers/Driftwood Inn	Trio of Gift Cards
5. Hardy	Hardy Greys Rod (retail \$289)	5. Willie Beshire	Assortment of Flies (Retail \$75) in 50 th Anniversary Box
6. Matt Jennings	½ Day Hosted Steelhead Outing on Wisc. tributaries	6. Tied by Dale MacDonald	Assortment of Flies
7. Steve Shapiro	Full Day Kankakee Raft Trip for 1 (or half day for 2)	7. Tied by Dale MacDonald	Assortment of Flies
8. Rod & Rivet - Decorah Iowa	\$400 Retail Guide trip with lunch and flies provided	8. Dave Carlson	Eco Fly Fishing Reel
9. Root River Rod Company	1/2-day guided float trip - Lanesboro MN \$450 Retail	9. Donated by Ken Krueger & Bob Eisenhart	Ann Miller Book
10. The Driftless Angler		10. Orvis Fund Raising Program thru TU National	Orvis Chest/Hip Pack
11. Directors' Wine Basket	OBTU Board members donate 1 bottle each.	11. From OBTU Inventory	Orvis Sling Pack
12. Fogo De Chao	Lunch or Dinner for 2	12. From OBTU Inventory	Large Fly Reel
13. Keven Graham	Artwork	13. Donated by Carol Hennessy & Steve Stricker	Hammock Camp Chair
14. Carol Hennessy	Dinner Party for 4 or 6	14. Ray Setzke	Cape - Jungle Cock
15. Patagonia	Black Hole Duffel 70 L Retail \$199.	15. Rush Creek Distillery	Liquor basket including tasting and gift certificates retail \$123.
16. Dupage Flyfishing Co	Simms Fall Pull-Over (\$149)	16. Quincy Street Distillery	Liquor basket including one bottle of bourbon two tastings Retail value \$60
17. Ed Michael	Wooden Fly Boxes with assorted flies	17. OBTU (procured by Carol Hennessy)	Set of Wine Glasses/Wine tools
18. Renzetti Vise	Ray Setzke	18. Marvin Strauch	Cabela's Switch Rod
19. Angler Package	LL Bean	19. OBTU Inventory	Two Fly Tying DVD's
		20. Cheesecake Factory	\$50 Gift Certificate
		21. Keven Graham	LL Bean Mousing Kit
		22. Orvis Fundraising Program	Loaded Lanyard
		23. Anonymous	Old World Christmas Ornaments
		24. Vitti Family	Angler's Breakfast Basket
		25. Mike Lesiak	\$100 Boneyard Fly Gear Cert
		26. Ed Michael	Wooden Fly Box

7. 2024 Fund Raising Appeal Announcement

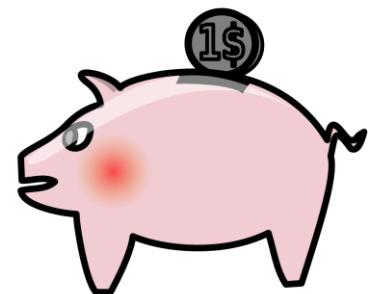
For 2024 the OBTU board decided to return to the 2 major fund-raising events that have been productive for OBTU for the past eight years:

1. An annual spring fund-raising drive.
2. A holiday party in December with the typical bucket raffles & silent auctions along with exciting prize drawings at the party.

Announcing the OBTU 2024 Fundraising Campaign:

Please expect to receive a mailing soon that will further detail the 2024 campaign and seek your support. The mailing will include a summary of how donated funds are planned to be spent on our conservation and education programs. As in the past, you may mail your donation to OBTU. If you prefer the convenience of donating online, please watch for our online fundraising messages. The annual campaign represents OBTU's largest fundraising event of the year.

Trout Unlimited membership dues benefit the national organization, but local chapters must raise their own funds. Your OBTU donations are needed to fund local projects to improve the cold-water environment (and fishing) close to home. Your generosity will enable OBTU to continue to make a significant impact by fulfilling our mission to conserve, protect & restore North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds.



8. OBTU Outreach

Outreach Events: Since January, OBTU has been very busy participating in several outreach events. These events are key to recruiting new OBTU members, developing partnering opportunities with other like-minded conservation organizations, and strengthening OBTU's presence in our local market place. Thanks to many OBTU members who helped lead and staff display booths or tables at the following events:

- 1) **Chicagoland Fishing, Outdoor and Travel Exposition in Schaumburg.** OBTU actively participated in the Illinois Council of TU booth.
- 2) **Tinley Park Fishing Outdoor and Travel Exposition at the Tinley Park Convention Center.** The expo doubled its floorspace this year.
- 3) **Partnered with the Sierra Club to jointly host a fly-tying event in Peoria.** The event attracted 24 participants in 2 hands-on fly-tying workshops with 12 students each.
- 4) **Bass Pro Shops Spring Promotional Days in Bolingbrook and East Peoria.** OBTU staffed a display table in the Fly-Fishing area.
- 5) **North Central College "For the Love of our Waters" Filmfest in Naperville.** OBTU participated as a named sponsor in this high-profile event and participated in the premiere showing of "Mussel Matters: Serving Critical Species in DuPage County".
- 6) **Earth Fair at the Frankfort Public Library.** OBTU and 16 other local conservation organizations hosted display tables at the Frankfort Public Library.
- 7) **Lake Forrest Fly Fishing Filmfest.** OBTU helped setup and staff the Illinois Council of TU display booth at the Gorten Center. Among many connections made, 37 bamboo rod raffle tickets were sold to help fund the Illinois Council youth camp.



Ken Krueger, Membership Chair and Wally Bock, Emeritus Board Member, attempt to recruit OBTU's tallest member at Tinley Park. (The big one got away)



Randy Daniel, Art Cottrell, Mike Lesiak and Nicholas Anaclerio staffed the Illinois Council table at the high-profile Lake Forest Film Fest. (Booth workers Bill Davis & Willie Beshire not pictured.)

8. OBТУ Outreach-continued



SUN. MARCH 24 2-3:30PM

EARTH AWARENESS FAIR

ALL AGES

Our 2024 Earth Awareness Fair brings together organizations and individuals to showcase and encourage Earth stewardship, resilience, sustainability & community. "WHAT SHOULD I DO?" is the most common question from those who want to contribute. Visit our fair to discover how you can lend your skills and passion to support local organizations dedicated to promoting a healthy environment for all of Earth's inhabitants.

Visit with our participants:

Chicago Bird Collision Monitors	Lake Katherine Nature Center & Botanic Gardens
Citizens Climate Lobby / Citizens' Climate Education	One Earth Film Festival
Citizens Utility Board (CUB)	Openlands
Friends of Illinois Nature Preserves	Orland Grassland Volunteers
Illinois Bat Conservation Program	Pachamama Alliance
Illinois Beaver Alliance	Chicagoland CoHearts
The Illinois Environmental Council	Sierra Club (Sauk Calumet Group of Illinois)
Illinois Mycological Association	Trout Unlimited (Oak Brook)
Joliet Junior College (JJC) Office of Sustainability	Will County Green

frankfortlibrary.org 815-534-6173
21119 S. Pfeiffer Rd. Frankfort, IL 60423



For the Love Of Waterways (FLOW) Film Festival

Showcasing eight independent short films examining human connection to water – from basic sustenance to recreation to pollution to mental health.

Featuring the public premiere of *Mussel Matters: Saving Critical Species in DuPage County!*

Films Featured:

- Red - The Colorado River
- The Worth of Water
- Restoring Our Rivers
- How "Forever Chemicals" Polluted America's Water
- Road Salt: Street to Stream
- The Studio
- Alice's Garden - Solutions for Clean Water in Milwaukee and Beyond
- *Mussel Matters: Saving Critical Species in DuPage County*

Friday, March 22nd
7:00 PM – 9:00 PM
Pfeiffer Hall, North Central College Campus,
310 E. Benton Ave, Naperville, IL

Free Admission!

Funded through a grant by CUAHSI Presented by NORTH CENTRAL COLLEGE, The Morton Arboretum, THE CHAMPION OF TREES, OAK BROOK CHAPTER, Naperville Park District, Naperville, Illinois

Two recent event fliers recognizing OBТУ as a participant and sponsor along with a number of other notable conservation organizations within our local region.

Frankfort Library Earth Fair on the left and North Central College Filmfest on the right.

OBТУ Social Media Outreach

The Oak Brook Trout Unlimited Chapter is continuing to increase our social media presence within external audiences in our market place. You can help! We would welcome members to join our Communication Committee and assist in posting news on OBТУ's Facebook and Instagram pages. We would also welcome assistance setting OBТУ up on any other relevant platforms. Interested members can contact Willie Beshire: wbeshire@aol.com

We also ask that members follow us on Facebook and Instagram:

-Our Facebook page is: **Trout Unlimited Oak Brook Chapter.**

-Our Instagram page is: **tuokbrook.**

Your participation in posting OBТУ newsworthy items and "liking" other posts will help draw more followers to OBТУ.

9. OBTU Chapter Fishing Outings

OBTU April Fishing Outing in Decorah, Iowa Debrief

There was an outstanding turnout for the April, 2024 OBTU fishing outing with 22 anglers, 3 added family members, and Mike Siepkner & Caleb Schnitzler from the Iowa DNR joining dinner. Fishermen formed small teams and spread out on the many streams in NE Iowa. Fishing was reported to be good (as it usually is in the Driftless Area's spring season). A few members focused on collecting eDNA test samples on some of the waters (which was given as an excuse for individuals' not reporting a big catch!). OBTU is collaborating with the DNR's in Iowa and Wisconsin to implement a fish eDNA testing program to build understanding of the presence of various brook trout strains in the Driftless Area watersheds. Group dinners on Friday & Saturday night were a good time for all:



Friday Night Dinner at
Toppling Goliath's
Restaurant & Brewery



Saturday Night
Dinner at Mabe's
Pizza----It took two
pictures to capture
the party. Lots of
people sharing a
good time!



2024 OBTU Chapter Fishing Outings:

April 2024 Decorah, Iowa There was an outstanding turn out & good fish'n as reported above.

May 16-19 Viroqua, Wisc. This OBTU Fishing outing will be based at the West Fork Sports Club and Campground. For those who prefer more refined accommodation, please make your own reservation at a Driftless Area lodging of your choice. This outing will include a conservation cleanup on Saturday morning, part of the Wisconsin Department of Transportation "Adopt a Highway" program. For more information and to register your attendance, please contact Ken Krueger: kenkrueger62@yahoo.com

June 1, Grand Rapids Area, Michigan Fishing Outing Combined with half day OBTU entomology survey to be conducted on the Coldwater River, Saturday morning June 1. Options to fish on Saturday afternoon and Sunday or arrive early and fish Friday before the entomology survey on Saturday a.m. For more information and to register your attendance, please contact Marvin Strauch: mjstrauchjr@gmail.com

September 13 through 15, Viroqua, Wisc. This is the 6th annual fishing outing based at Nature Nooks Retreat on the banks of the West Fork of the Kickappo. Those preferring to camp usually stay at the nearby West Fork Sports Club and Campground. For more information and to register your attendance, contact Willie Beshire: wbeshire@aol.com

October, 11-13 Decorah, Iowa Attendees will make arrangements for the lodging of their choice in the Decorah area with many options for motels, camping, AirBnb, etc. For those interested, efforts will be made to arrange for ride and/or lodging sharing, For more information and to register your attendance, please contact Willie Beshire: wbeshire@aol.com

Fall 2024, Grand Rapids Area, Michigan Fishing Outing Combined with half day OBTU entomology survey to be conducted on a Saturday (date to be determined). Options to fish on Saturday afternoon and Sunday or arrive early and fish Friday before the entomology survey on Saturday a.m. For more information and to register your attendance, please contact Marvin Strauch: mjstrauchjr@gmail.com

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

Don't hesitate to contact the event leader if you want to register your interest in attending or discuss what to expect if you participate!

10. Chapter Meetings:

OBTU's final chapter meeting of the season took place on Wednesday May 15.

Following the customary summer break, monthly chapter meetings will resume in September 2024.

OBTU May 15 Chapter Meeting:

Speaker: *Dr. Jerad Homola, Director of the Molecular Conservation Genetics Laboratory at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.*

Topic: Driftless Area Brook Trout Populations:
Dr. Homola will present two recent genetic studies that have analyzed over 130 brook trout populations from across Wisconsin. He will discuss how the findings from these studies are informing management strategies aimed at restoring natural patterns of genetic variation and ensuring the long-term persistence of healthy brook trout populations in Wisconsin.

OBTU Collaboration with Dr. Homola: Jared's lab will be conducting the genetic analysis of the e-DNA samples collected by OBTU. Sample data is expected to provide an important tool for the Driftless Brook Trout Conservation Portfolio being developed by Trout Unlimited. The Conservation Portfolio is a scientifically based approach to be used to identify specific actions that advance brook trout conservation.



Dr. Jerad Homola, Director of the Molecular Conservation Genetics Laboratory at University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.



A Pilot Study has begun:

- 1) OBTU is helping to collect e-DNA samples from Driftless Area Streams
- 2) Dr. Jared's Conservation Genetics Laboratory at University of Wisconsin will analyze samples.
- 3) Various native strains of Driftless Area Brook Trout will be located and assessed.
- 4) How to restore natural genetic variation to support healthy brook trout populations will be investigated.

Stay tuned to the OBTU calendar for information on upcoming meetings and events.

LINK: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>



11. Looking to become involved in a chapter committee?

Do 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 Jim Dickens. In the past year this committee organized the Spring Solicitation Drive, the Rod Raffle, and the Annual Holiday Party Fundraiser. If interested please email Jim at: james.dickens@me.com

The Communication 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 & marketing software. Our chapter is working on improving our public relations and outreach efforts and welcomes anyone that can assist in this work. Contact: wbeshire@aol.com

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 Keven Grahan and meets monthly via zoom.

The Education Committee is chaired by Marvin Strauch with Mike Lesiak handling Youth Education, Alexa Cottrell in charge of Stream Girls, and Trout-In-the-Classroom led by Marvin.

A more complete listing of committees, leadership & contact info 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.