



1. President's Letter

As I read through this newsletter, I couldn't help reflecting on how 2024 was another outstanding year for OBTU! We not only continued and grew our historic programs and activities but launched exciting new initiatives too.

Over the years, Oak Brook TU has built an excellent reputation, and other chapters and organizations continue to come to us with new ideas and opportunities. We were fortunate to collaborate with some new friends in 2024, including the Heart of Illinois Sierra Club, Forest Preserve District of Will County, North Central College, and the Frankfort Library. As highlighted in the newsletter, 2024 saw the completion of several projects where OBTU had made some of our largest contributions. Our grants, when combined with other TU contributions, and matching funds were instrumental in making a much bigger impact than could have been done individually. We are fortunate to have many great partners in conservation.

Strong leaders and dedicated volunteers are critical to the success of all our programs. Reading the Education Update section of the newsletter reminded me of just how many folks it takes to maintain (and grow) our exceptional programs. It's because of you that our Education Programs have been so extraordinary.

Thanks to the generosity of OBTU members and other supporters, our Fundraising Drive and Holiday Party were once again big successes. The chapter remains strong financially, with plans to grant support to several cold-water stream habitat improvement projects in our region. While OBTU is first and foremost a conservation organization, we like to have fun too! I personally recommend joining one of the chapter fishing outings. The outings are very relaxed and a great way to learn to fly fish or brush up on your skills, meet new people, and learn more about nearby places to fish.

Finally, one of our major goals in 2025 is to get more folks out and involved. Stay tuned, a calendar of events for 2025 will be out shortly. If you have been thinking about coming to a meeting, joining an activity or helping with a project, make 2025 the year you do it. Hope to see you soon!

Dave

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2. Conservation Update

Conservation Update

North Bear Creek Rehabilitation Continues in Iowa's Driftless Area:



Attendees at OBTU's fall Iowa fishing outing in the Decorah area were invited to an October 10 tour of recent stream improvement progress hosted by Mike Siepker, DNR Northeast Iowa Fisheries Supervisor. While several stream improvement sites were visited, the tour focused on North Bear Creek's ongoing rehabilitation efforts. As you remember, OBTU contributed \$5,000 to this work which was designated as the chapter's 50th Anniversary Commemorative Project. Impressive results from completed improvements as well as ongoing work-in-progress sites were visited. Some of the North Bear improvements located a short walk south of the 380th Street crossing are highlighted in the following picture:



- 1) Stone installed to stabilize bank at strategic points.
- 2) A Weir (underwater dam) installed to create a plunge effect over a partial vertical barrier to carve a deeper run to improve the trout habitat.
- 3) A previously "deep undercut & collapsing bank" was converted to a "flood plain shelf" which spreads & slows the flow to reduce damage during severe high-water events. A sculpted gently sloped bank is stabilized with deep rooted native grass.

Other improvements to this area included an occasional lunger structure, root ball, or "hide" to provide protected trout sanctuary in points less vulnerable to severe weather events. Another North Bear improvement included a shallow stream crossing stabilized with rock substrate to allow heavy equipment and livestock a stream crossing with limited environmental impact.

The North Bear includes approximately 10 miles of prime, contiguous trout water open to the public from end to end. Mike Siepker has told us most of this 10-mile stretch is now under perpetual public fishing easement with only 3 properties not under easement. Fortunately, the 3 land owners embrace a "handshake agreement" to permit public fishing on their properties.

North Bear Creek Rehabilitation Continues in Iowa's Driftless Area-continued:

North Bear Creek Work-in-Progress: Major North Bear work is continuing as shown by the heavy equipment and land sculpting activities photographed during our October, 2024 visit:



While a large percentage of the work is funded by government grants, OBTU plays an important role in making these projects happen. As you would expect, the budget for heavy equipment projects frequently involves hundreds of thousands of dollars or more. While this level of spending is beyond OBTU's capacity, OBTU typically provides "seed money" critical to making large projects happen. In order to win approval of a government grant, cost sharing requirements of land owners or local jurisdictions must be met. In addition, gaining approval of some grants requires demonstration of public financial support from the community. In other instances, a project may have specific costs that are not covered by government grants such as certain elements of project management expense. OBTU contributions typically fund expenses not covered by the Iowa DNR or a large federal grant. On the North Bear project, OBTU contributions have helped meet the landowner shares of the cost sharing.

When OBTU contributes money to a Driftless Area project, the money is held in a TU Driftless Area Restoration (TUDARE) account which is earmarked for the agreed project. These complex projects often have changes of project scope, budget, & timing throughout the project life. OBTU's contribution is controlled by TUDARE and made available to the intended project at the right time when the funds are needed. With OBTU approval, the earmarked funds can be applied toward future phases. Mike Siepker has made it clear that OBTU funding is reserved for costs which cannot be met by other available funding sources.

In return for TU project management assistance and financial contributions, TUDARE requires perpetual public fishing easements on the improved properties. OBTU helps fulfill the TU cold water conservation mission. OBTU also continues to enjoy excellent relationships with Iowa DNR, Iowa National Heritage Foundation, and the Northeast Iowa TU Chapter. It's all good!

Conservation Update-continued:

Wisconsin Driftless Area: Traverse Valley Creek Project completed.

Traverse Valley Creek

One of our most exciting recent stream improvement projects has been 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. Due to a delay in the receipt of a National Fish Habitat Partnership grant, the work on this project was started much later than OBTU had expected. The project is now complete!

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



The following correspondence between Peter Jonas, TU Driftless Area Partnership Specialist and Dave Carlson, OBTU President says it best:

From: Peter Jonas
To: David Carlson
Cc: Sara Strassman
Subject: Traverse Valley Project complete

Sent: Tuesday, September 10, 2024 2:18 PM

Dear David,

I think the final inspection still needs to happen, but other than that, the Traverse Valley Creek restoration project has been completed. I am attaching a few photos. The restored section of stream, along County Highway X 5.5 miles from the junction of X and Highway 93 contains vital spawning gravel & holding habitat for brook trout. Habitat improvements include bank shaping, riffle & pool forming rock weirs, cross-channel logs root wads, etc.

Just to review, because it was a long journey, we basically wound up doing the project in two phases because we had to accommodate county money that became available last year, and the federal money through our National Fish Habitat Partnership Grant that we were able to finally access this year through our partnership with River Country RC&D for accounting and grant management services. Your chapter contributions made the second phase possible, although I prefer to think of all of the partners contributing to the project as a whole. The chapters' financial contributions were matched by a National Fish Habitat Partnership grant awarded through the Driftless Area Restoration Effort. An education and outreach component was incorporated into the grant proposal, so that while trout are the primary, they are not the sole beneficiaries of this project.

Students from Arcadia, Independence and Whitehall High Schools visited the site on Sept. 9 to seed the project, learn about the habitat features and do an entomology survey. The students are taking an animal science class and gained valuable hands-on experience in scientific observation and resource management. In addition to my pics, WTCO public access TV filmed the event and we will have that footage available to us after they edit it. The contractor on the project, Rob Herman, has a great track record of collaborating with local school districts to do both educational days and actual work projects, so I am confident Traverse Valley will also host student groups in the future. We need to also take care of a sign on-site.

(continued on next page)

I intend on taking a few more pictures once the newly seeded grass pops up.
I want to thank you and your chapters for your work and patience on this project.

Peter Jonas,
TU Driftless Area Partnership Specialist, Ardaeia, WI

Pictures Attached to Peter Jonas's Traverse Valley Creek Completion Message:



An Installed Bork Stream Riffle to improve brookie habitat.



Students assisted in seeding the project work area.



A portion of the rehabilitated Bork Stream

Dave Carlson's email reply to Peter Jonas project completion message (many others were copied)

Special thanks to Peter Jonas! Oak Brook TU would never have been involved in this project without his help. We also received an email from Sara Strassman of TUDARE thanking us for our participation. Per Sara, there will be a short article on this project and the recent landowner event in Buffalo County in Wisconsin Trout Magazine and the next Driftless Area newsletter.

There were a lot of positive achievements with this project:

- Collaborating with TUDARE and a new project administrator - River County RC&D
- Partnering with another TU chapter - Clear Waters
- Utilizing a National Fish Habitat Grant
- Successfully incorporating youth engagement
- Publicizing OBTU's involvement to other TU chapters
- And most importantly, improving native brook trout habitat

Dave

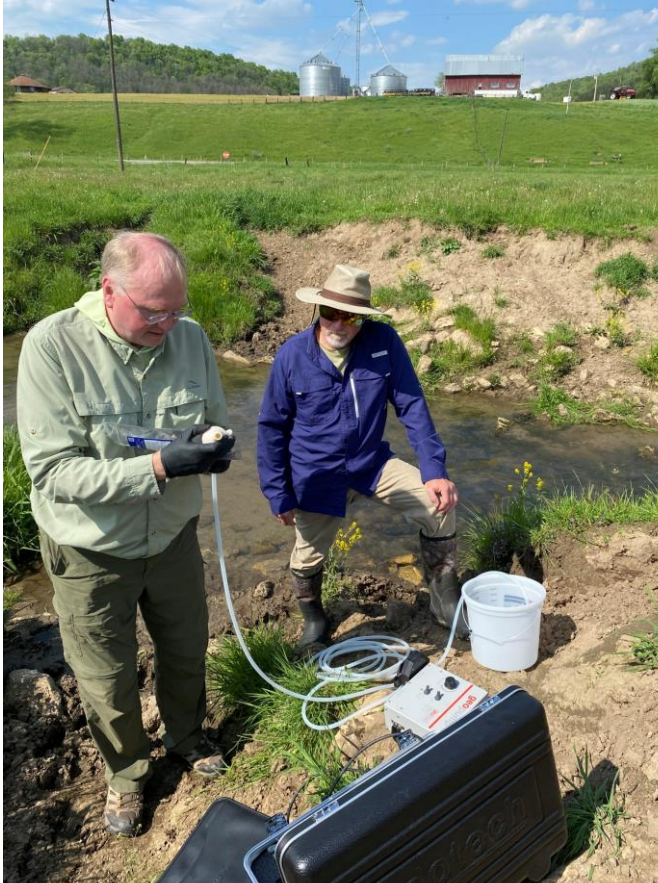
Conservation Update-continued:

Oak Brook TU hosts genetic sampling day in Driftless

Article authored by Sara Strassman, Driftless Area Program Manager,
TU Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE). (1st published Oct 21, 2024 on tu.org)

In May of 2024, the Oak Brook Trout Unlimited chapter traveled to the Driftless Area for a fishing visit. But in addition to the chapter's usual fishing and stewarding their section of highway near Viroqua, magnanimous chapter member Dave Carlson also offered to give TUDARE a preview of the eDNA methods the chapter has deployed to take samples.

The Oak Brook chapter has a sampling approach meant to help elucidate brook trout activity and history in Driftless watersheds. The approach can also shed light on the presence of other species of conservation interest for a slightly higher lab analysis cost. [eDNA sampling](#) at its most basic leverages existing DNA markers to discover DNA in a water sample that can be positively identified to a species or genus level. Being able to assess the presence of organisms from a simple water sample can be a rapid way to determine if a species is present without intensive sampling to capture the species.



Dave Carlson, OBTU President (left), is shown leading the eDNA brook trout sampling demonstration. Dave is assisted by Paul Krahn (right), Stream Restoration Specialist, TUDARE.

In the case of brook trout sampling, it is ideal for watersheds where brook trout have never been confirmed by agency sampling or where it is unclear how far up in a watershed there is viable brook trout habitat.

Oak Brook TU hosts genetic sampling day in Driftless-continued

The chapter purchased a peristaltic pump that filters a water sample without introducing water into machinery that could contaminate future samples. Operators record how much water is filtered and how long the filtering process took (15-30 minutes). They seal the filter into an individual bag and send it off to the Molecular Conservation Genetics Lab at UW-Stevens Point, where Jared Homola, processes the sample for brook trout presence or a more comprehensive meta-barcoding analysis that identifies other species.

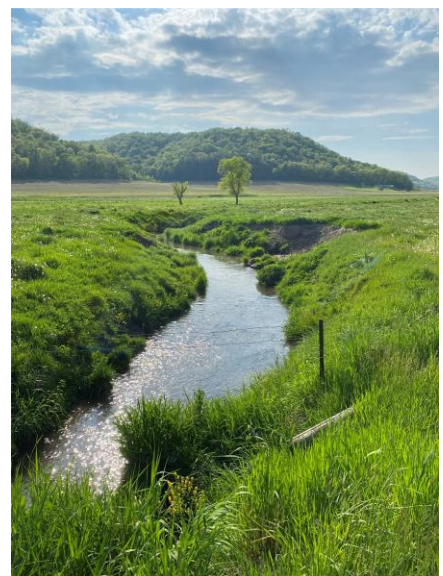
TUDARE staff and friends met with Carlson on Harrison Creek, a stream that has only had brown trout captured in the past by DNR, but where anglers have reported brook trout. The group collected a sample from the stream, which has a new DNR fishing easement, and hoped to confirm brook trout presence. In early September, results were reported by the lab for the brook trout DNA test.

Unfortunately, no evidence of brook trout DNA was found in the samples from Harrison Creek. Environmental DNA (eDNA) is not a foolproof approach and may be sensitive to lower population size and dilution so the lack of a positive ID from Harrison Creek does not rule out brook trout presence.



Front Row: Sara Strassman, Driftless Area Program Manager and Paul Krahn, Stream Restoration Specialist, TUDARE.

Back Row: OBTU members participating in the event from left: John Martyn, Robert Rowe, Dave Carlson, Dave Dial & Willie Beshire



Harrison Creek, the site of the eDNA test in the Wisconsin Driftless Area.

Conservation Update-continued:

OBTU keeps pace with recurring commitments to “Hands On & Wet Boots” Work Days:

Coldwater Creek Macroinvertebrate Survey, near Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 5

OBTU successfully completed the 2nd of 2024’s entomology 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 nearby Michigan rivers such as the Coldwater, Rogue, and Muskegon.



OBTU members who were part of Michigan’s Coldwater River October 5 work crew included John Martyn (far left), Phil Young (2nd from right) and Dale MacDonald (far right). Others pictured are from the local Schrems Chapter who OBTU has collaborated with for many years.

Tichigan Creek, SE Wisconsin work day, October 12: OBTU continues to join forces with SEWTU to work on trout streams that are within a relatively easy day trip for most OBTU members. The most recent work day included the installation of “Bio Logs” in Tichigan Creek. Over time, the Bio Logs are saturated with silt and become part of the bank. A narrower, deeper stream channel is formed resulting in improved trout habitat.



OBTU crew members included in joint Tichigan team include Keven Graham (far left), John Martyn (2nd from left), and Dave Carlson (back row: tall guy with light blue shirt)



SEWTU & OBTU Teaming to install Bio Logs in Tichigan Creek

DuPage River Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup, Naperville, October 26: OBTU continues to perform 2 river cleanups each year on the DuPage River. 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 within Pioneer Park, south of downtown Naperville, IL.



2024 was the 5th year of the chapter's Adopt-a-Stream service. We have never found a shortage of trash!



Rose Grumbine does some heavy garbage lifting on the DuPage River. Thank you Rose!

State Route 56 Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup, Viroqua, Wisconsin, September 14:

While not undertaken by the Conservation Committee, OBTU's Membership Committee led by Ken Krueger took the initiative to adopt a half mile section of Route 56 near Viroqua. This involves 3 highway cleanups each year near the road crossing with the West Fork of the Kickapoo River and provides another environmentally conscious activity for our members. The 3rd cleanup day of 2024 was completed in conjunction with the Sept OBTU Chapter Fishing Outing. Pictures from 2024 Adopt-a-Highway cleanup events follow:



OBTU volunteers admire the trash collected on Route 56, Viroqua, Wisconsin



Ken Krueger, founder of OBTU's Adopt-a-Highway event, grilled a hot breakfast for the team at the West Fork Sportsmen's campground during last spring's outing. Despite a few broken yokes, breakfast was great!

Was it a coincidence that a pub and pizza joint happened to be conveniently located at the end of the Route 56 beat that Ken selected for OBTU adoption?

3. Education Update

Trout-in-the-Classroom(16th Year):

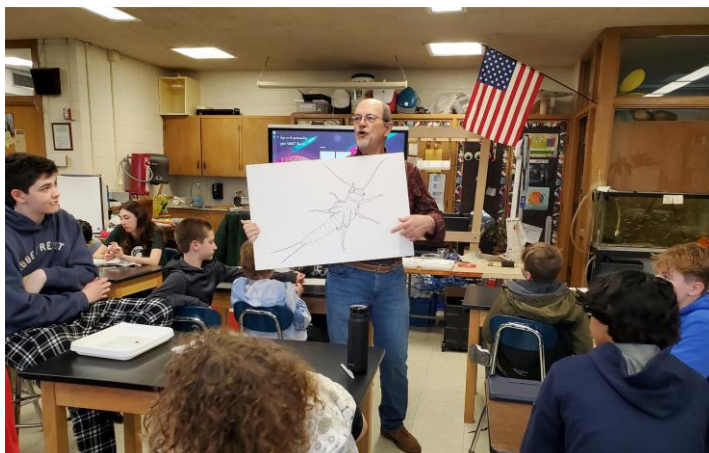
Trout-in-the-Classroom (TIC) gets bigger every year! On November 22, 2024, the 2025 Youth Education Program kicked off with the delivery of fertilized trout eggs to 19 schools. Reports indicate that the fish successfully hatched over the Thanksgiving break and are doing well.

2025 Trout-in-Classroom School (19 Schools served by OBTU)	Location
Bednarcik Junior High School	Aurora
Burroughs School	Chicago
Downers Grove North HS	Downers Grove
Gower Middle School	Burr Ridge
Grissom Middle School	Tinley Park
Gwendolyn Brooks	Oak Park
Kaneland HS	Maple Park
Lincoln Elementary School	Glen Ellyn
Northlake Middle School	Northlake
Prairie View Middle School	Tinley Park
Romeoville High School	Romeoville
Roosevelt Middle School	River Forest
St Patricia	Hickory Hills
St. John the Baptist	Winfield
St. Scholastica	Woodridge
The Children’s School	Oak Park
Tinley Park HS	Tinley Park
Sts. Bruno & Richard School	Chicago
Social Justice HS	Chicago

On a very brisk Nov 22, 18 OBTU volunteers gathered in the McDonald’s parking lot in Joliet where we were met by the Illinois DNR who delivered fertilized trout eggs to OBTU. Marvin Strauch assigned individually packaged 100-egg batches of eggs to each of OBTU’s 10 delivery teams who then delivered the eggs to assigned schools throughout our chapter’s portion of Chicagoland. Our volunteers safely planted the eggs within well-prepared aquariums at each school. Presentations were made to enthusiastic classrooms.

Perhaps you would like to participate in TIC at a school near you? There are many opportunities to help with amazing classroom sessions during our “Wet Bug Days” in April. ”Trout Release” field trips in May also need mentors. It takes a big team of volunteers to pull this off!

Please contact Marvin Strauch, Emeritus Board Member and OBTU Youth Education Chair, for more info or to volunteer for the TIC program: youthed@obt.org , 708-638-1318



Marvin Strauch engages students in the classroom with a magnified stone fly anatomy chart during a “Wet Bugs” day. Students then observe impressive live giant stone fly nymphs in cold water trays at their desks and record the bugs features on a worksheet. Note the trout cold water tank pictured to the right and below the U.S. flag.

3. Education Update-continued

Youth Fly Fishing Training (20th Year):

The 20th year of OBTU's "Youth Fly Fishing Training" included five well-attended sessions conducted one per month from May thru September, 2024. This program is available for young women and men aged 11 to 18. Successful participants who are also Scouts earn a fly-fishing merit badge in one day. The 2024 Youth Fly Fishing Flier including the class itinerary and other details can be viewed via the Education & Outreach tab on obtu.org. The program will continue to be offered for interested youth at no cost to participants during 2025. Registrations for the 2025 class will begin during the spring of 2025.

Contact: Mike Lesiak, OBTU Youth Fly Fishing Training Leader: mdlesiak100@gmail.com,

OBTU member Bob Eisenhart leads a fly-tying session at the June, 2024, Youth Fly Fishing Training class. As can be seen in the picture, Bob's ability to command the attention of these young boys is amazing. Every boy's eyes are pretty well locked in to what Bob is tying----except for the boy at the far left who is gazing upwards. What could he be thinking?



Bob demonstrated how to tie a "soft hackle" fly and a "foam beetle". After each demo, students returned to their desk to tie each fly using OBTU provided vices, tools, and a kit of materials needed for each fly. OBTU mentors coached each student to ensure student success!

Stream Girls(3rd year):

In June, OBTU successfully hosted the STREAM Girls program for the third year. This was the first time we had a group of all-women volunteers, and it was a pleasure to have women teaching girls. Many thanks to Kate Anderson, Alexa Cottrell, Lisa Gilmore, Rose Grumbine, Debbie Pohlmann, and Cheryl Vermillion for dedicating a beautiful summer day to inspire a young generation of outdoor enthusiasts. 2024's day-long program took place at Girl Scout Camp Dean in Big Rock with 10 girls participating, including one who attended the year before and enjoyed it so much she wanted to come back. All girls ages 11 to 14 are welcome to attend, even if they're not in GS. We're happy to work with troop leaders/organizers to plan a program date for a specific group (according to volunteer availability) and coordinate at a certain location.

Although the program has grown year to year, we can use everyone's help in spreading the word to reach more potential participants. If you know someone who'd like more info, please have them email Alexa (alexa.d.cottrell@gmail.com), and feel free to share any suggestions for where we can promote the program with Alexa.

Developed in partnership with Girl Scouts USA, STREAM Girls employs STEM education (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) plus Recreation and Arts to explore a local stream. The girls do this by examining macroinvertebrates, calculating water volume and speed, tying flies, practicing casting, and spending time at the pond. [LINK TO 2024 STREAM GIRLS FLIER](#)



A stream girl proudly showing a large blue gill she caught on a fly rod. Well done!



Stream girls shown collecting aquatic insects. Participants spend a lot of time in the water exploring the stream environment.

Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited Youth Camp (15th year):

The 15th year of the Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited's Youth Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp was held July 21-26. Teenage campers experienced 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 received an appreciation of cold-water conservation through various field studies and hands on stream work:



Campers and mentors pose in front of the Trout Fly Fishing History Museum in Lovells, Michigan near the Au Sable North Branch.



Beautiful Brook Trout on a camper's line during the Au Sable North Branch Trico Hatch.



Campers working on stream improvement under the watchful eye of Steve Sendek, Stream Biologist Contractor (Retired DNR).



Dr. Dan Hayes, Michigan State Professor, leading campers through a fish shocking survey.



Chris shows off his first trout on a fly, a brown taken on a small bwo.



Dr Dan Hayes, MSU Professor, leads camper discussion of macroinvertebrate survey results.



A case caddis emerges from its case. One of many cool aquatic insect species captured.



Connor was very focused during a fly-tying workshop.



Youth Camp Continued:

Thank you to the 2024 IL Council Youth Camp Leadership Team for your highly dedicated efforts:

Camp Director:

Dan LaFave, assisted by Willie Beshire

Camp Mentors:

Nick Anaclerio (Elliott Donnelly Chapter)

Randy Daniel (Gary Borger Chapter)

Lisa Gilmore (OBTU)

Rose Grumbine (OBTU)

Steve Grumbine (OBTU)

Carol Hennessy (OBTU)

Mark Wortsman (Gary Borger Chapter)

Lincoln, a 2024 camper, is shown landing a brook trout during the trico hatch on the North Branch of the Au Sable River near Lovells, Michigan. Each year the late July timing of the IL Council Youth Camp falls during the trico hatch. It's a Illinois Youth Camp tradition.



2025 Youth Camp Dates: July 20 thru 25

Location: Au Sable River, Grayling area, Michigan

Contact: Dan LaFave: dlafave@sbcglobal.net

Currently accepting applications for:

- Adults to serve as Youth Camp Mentors
- Youthful Campers (Girls & Boys aged 13 to 18)

2025 OBTU Youth Education Program Leaders:

OBTU's Youth Education programs continue to be among the best in Trout Unlimited as evidenced by the exceptional attention earned at the TU national level in recent years. OBTU is always in need of extra help from members.

We encourage you to contact any of the following 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

We also encourage you to visit our web site:

Check the <https://obtu.org/> web site for the most current information details on youth education events. Since this newsletter edition is early in the year, we are just in the process of scheduling the 2025 dates for our programs. Monitor the obtu.org web site "**Calendar**" for schedule updates. Check out the "**Education & Outreach**" Section of obtu.org for program flyers and descriptions that typically do not change much from year to year.

If you are aware of youth who may be interested in attending any of our programs, please let us know!

4. OBTU 2024 Holiday Party

OBTU's Holiday Party at Venuti's Italian Restaurant & Banquet Hall in Addison was held on the evening of December 11. This was the 2nd year OBTU held the Holiday Party at Venuti's and guests were treated to an excellent buffet dinner, a cash bar, 30 opportunities to win prizes through raffles & auctions and a very festive party atmosphere. Forty-eight party tickets were sold, and most of the ticket buyers showed up at the party. Attendance was on par with recent years. A big thanks to Jim Dickens, OBTU Fund-Raising Chair, who led the planning and execution of this event. Numerous members also pitched in to chase down prizes and help with party preparations. OBTU's net proceeds from the event were over \$8,500 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 for our 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 look like guys who will put their winnings to good use:



Rod Raffle Grand Prize: *Michael Ring of Oak Park, IL, won the Orvis Helios Rod which was delivered to his doorstep. Mike selected the Orvis Helios Distance model 9ft. 8wt. A serious rod to go after some serious fish! Thanks to the Orvis national organization that provided the rod to OBTU at a deep discount thru a program with TU National..*



Rod Raffle Runner Up: *Mike Pempek of Palos Heights, IL, was awarded the 2nd place prize of his choice of waders. As the Reddington waders of his choice were not available, OBTU arranged to keep Mike smiling with Orvis waders that filled the bill.*

A total of 286 grand prize raffle tickets were sold delivering \$2,860 of revenue to OBTU. Thank you to all contributors and congratulations to the winners!

4. OBTU 2024 Holiday Party-continued



Forty-five holiday party goers enjoyed a splendid atmosphere in one of Venuti's banquet halls. The room was spacious with a display of silent auction and bucket raffle prizes on the right. A full dinner buffet with generous food selections can be seen in the center of four banquet tables. A cash bar was also available (Can be seen in far-left corner of the ball room).

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 Donors & Donated Prizes	Winner
Small Mouth Kankakee Raft Trip donated by Steve Shapiro, OBTU Board Member and Raft Captain, in Steve's personal raft.	Patty Small
Jay Anglin Guide Trip on Michigan's St. Joe or Dowagiac	Dan Lafave
Kevin Feenstra Guide Trip on Michigan's Muskegon River	Mike Lesiak
Jay Allen Guide Trip on Michigan's Muskegon River Plus a Free Night's Lodging with purchase of a 2 nd night.	Dave Carlson
Kent Kleckner of Bear Creek Anglers Guide Trip on NE Iowa's Bear Creek	Jack Potts
Orvis Recon 9 ft 5 wt. (sold to OBTU at deep discount from Orvis national office)	Dale MacDonald
Dinner for 4 to 6 at your location. An elaborate gourmet dinner with wine pairings for each course procured, prepared, served and donated by Carol Henessey, OBTU Secretary and Board Member for many years.	Joe Vitti
Simms Sling Bag donated by Dupage Fly Fishing Company of Naperville	Craig Small
Ephemeras by Charles Gaidy (Mint Condition) donated from the collection of Ed Michael, OBTU Emeritus Board Member	Joe Vitti
Water Color painted and donated by Patricia Bock	Joe Vitti
Directors Basket A---Each board member donated a bottle of wine toward the silent auction (Basket A) and bucket raffle (Basket B) wine baskets	Joe Vitti
The total of all winning bids for the silent auction items contributed \$3,450 to OBTU Revenue. Thank you for your spirited bidding! Congratulations to the winners.	



4. OBTU 2024 Holiday Party-continued

At the party, it was plain to see that the buckets were crammed full of tickets. For the accountants: A total of 1069 bucket raffle tickets were sold at the holiday party at \$2 per ticket providing \$2138 of revenue to OBTU. Well done party guests!

Thank you to bucket raffle prize donors!

Bucket Raffle Prizes	
Donor	Donated Prize
Each Oak Brook Board member donated a bottle of wine to fill Basket A (for Silent Auction) and Basket B (for Bucket Raffle)	Basket B full of bottled wine.
Filson Store of Naperville	\$100 Gift Certificate
Flies tied and donated by Marvin Strauch, OBTU member	Michigan Fly Selection in a fly box accompanied by a Flies of Michigan book.
Flies tied and donated by Dale MacDonald, OBTU member	Driftless Area fly selection in a fly box
Flies tied and donated by Kevin Graham, OBTU member	Life cycle Collection of flies plus a highly artistic decorative streamer for display.
Donated by Carol Hennessy, OBTU member: Flies tied by Jurrasec of Blue Ribbon Flies in West Yellowstone	Small Flies for Big Trout
O Sullivan's Pub of Forrest Park	\$50 Gift Card
Spirits Donated by Carol Hennessy, OBTU member	Santa Pants Whiskey and Vodka
Patagonia of Chicago	Black Hole Day Duffel 55 L
Patagonia of Chicago	Black Hole Day Pack 32 L
Driftwood Grill of Oak Brook Terrace	\$50 Gift Certificate
DuPage Fly Fishing Company of Naperville	Simms wading belt with tool and attachments
Joe Vitti, OBTU member	Coffee Basket
OBTU purchased at a Orvis Discount thru national office	Orvis Comfy Grip Kit
Donated by Pau McCall, OBTU member	Anglatech Vest
Seasons 52 Fresh Grill & Wine Bar of Oak Brook	Seasons 52 Gift Certificate
Venuti's Italian Restaurant & Banquet Hall in Addison	\$30 Gift Certificate



5. Annual Fund Raising Appeal Report

OBTU's 2024 Annual Fund-Raising Appeal Again Achieved Strong Results

The OBTU Board expresses sincere gratitude to the membership for the success of the 2024 fund-raising appeal. We received an excellent response to our campaign primarily through mailing to our membership, email, and personal contact at meetings & events.

OBTU began conducting annual fundraising drives 9 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 \$11,000.



OBTU recognizes the following contributors to our successful fund-raising appeal conducted this past summer and concluded in early October. Your generosity is much appreciated. Thank you!

- | | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| Richard Anderson, MD | Virginia Engler | Michael Lahart | Pamela Roberts |
| James Baird | Keith R Gabriel | Michael Lesiak | Robert Rowe |
| Brendan Banaszak | Anthony Garreffa | Dave Lunardini | Henry Sledz |
| Thomas Banaszak | Charles Gartland | Craig Mankowski | Paul Stinsa |
| William Beshire | James Geraghty | Richard Marsan | Marvin Strauch |
| Walter Bird | John Gillo | Nancy Martin | Ronald Thompson |
| Walter Bock | Lisa Gilmore | John Martyn | William Thoms |
| Steven Bodenstab | Kevin Graham | John McKeVitt | Ronald Tompkin |
| David Carlson | Kurt Hall | Brian McPheters | Robert Oneill |
| Stephen Carlson | Jason Hall | Jack Mensching | Art Urban |
| Dwight Clarke | William Hancock | Ed Michael | Richard Velders |
| Edward Coffey | James Hohenberger | Ryan Nobis | Cheryl Vermillion |
| Alexa Cottrell | John Jewett | Robert Oneill | Joe Vitti |
| Arthur Cottrell | James Jones | Richard Palese | Walter Wahlfeldt |
| William Dallman | Walter Kinney | Norbert Perkins | Peter Wallers |
| Dave Dial | Michael Kohut | Jack Potts | James Watts |
| Jim Dickens | Raymond Kolak | Greg Prosen | Charles Weyhenmeyer |
| Ronald Dyslin | Ronald Koziol | Davod Rau | Ronald Wright |
| Janet Edman | Thomas Kribs | James L Risk | Phil Young |
| Robert Eisenhart | Dan LaFave | | |

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

-Thank you to Cheryl Galloway (formerly Cheryl Vermillion) Cheryl's printing business performed excellent printing & mailing services in support of the chapter's annual fund-raising campaign mailing to all of OBTU's almost 1,400 members. Cheryl's business provided this service "at cost" which resulted in a significant savings of OBTU expense compared to the previously used commercial printers at market rates. OBTU also thanks Cheryl for accepting the responsibility to serve as our chapter's Treasurer.

5. OBTU 2024 Annual Fund-raising Appeal-continued

-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 annual donation.



Laraway Plant Team

-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.

Marvin's donated bamboo rod earned raffle proceeds of \$1,800 to help fund the Illinois TU Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp held annually on Michigan's Au Sable River (The founding place of TU).

For many years, Marvin has donated large amounts of his time and expense through gifting his custom, hand-built bamboo rods to help fund the Illinois TU youth camp. And, Marvin always throws in a high-quality metal rod case, rod sock, and 2 rod tips-----what a guy! Oh, I almost forgot, Marvin also prepares 200 custom-designed, sequentially numbered, and printed tickets to facilitate the raffle.



2024 Bamboo Winner

This year's bamboo rod was won at raffle by Ralph Lessor, a member of the Lee Wulff TU Chapter based Northwest of Chicago.

Congratulations Ralph!

Thanks to all who supported OBTU by buying raffle tickets!

-Thank you to Bruce Otto. Bruce's father was an avid fly fisherman and fly tier who passed away in 2024 (We offer our sincere condolences to Bruce & his family). Thanks to Bruce for seeking out Oak Brook Trout Unlimited so that he could donate a treasure trove of fly-tying materials & tools including valuable tying vices and fly-fishing reels from his father's estate to OBTU. The donated items will be used for fund raising in support of OBTU's cold water conservation mission. We will help place the items where they will be put to good use.

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!

6. OBTU Fishing Outings

Each year OBTU conducts a number of open invitation fishing outings for members and their guests. These trips are a great way to get to know your colleagues, explore new fishing locations, share knowledge & develop skills, and above all enjoy a great time. The trips are well suited for all skill levels. If you are new to fly fishing for stream trout or unfamiliar with the area fished, this is an especially good opportunity to learn and connect with new or old friends. Depending on the trip, you can target anything from little brookies in small spring creeks up to massive steelhead, lake run browns and salmon in Lake Michigan tributaries. The trips are run as a service to members at modest cost. Neither the chapter nor trip organizers profit.

OBTU completed a total of 6 chapter-organized fishing outings in 2024. Trip attendance this past year's trips varied from 7 to over 20. 2024 trips included:

1. An April outing to the NE Iowa Driftless Area based in Decorah.
2. A May trip to the Wisc. Driftless near Viroqua combined with an Adopt-A-Highway work day.
3. An early June trip to Coldwater Creek near Grand Rapids Michigan which was combined with OBTU's semi-annual half-day macroinvertebrate survey work session.
4. A Sept trip to the Nature Nooks Retreat near Viroqua, Wisc. with a few people camping at the nearby Kickapoo Sportsman's Club (including a 2 hour adopt-a-highway work session).
5. An early October trip back to the Coldwater Creek to complete the 2nd macroinvertebrate survey of the year and do a little more fishing during the king salmon and early steelhead run.
6. A mid-October 2nd trip to the Decorah, Iowa driftless area (when Mike Siepker, Iowa DNR, led a tour of NE Iowa stream restoration sites for us).

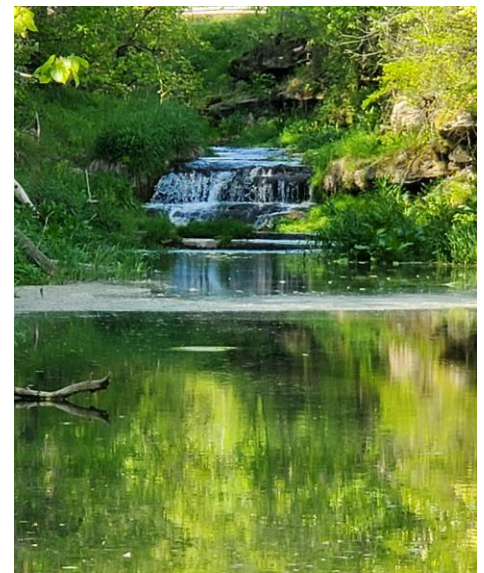
Let's do it again. 2025 trip planning is in process. Watch for trip announcements in your OBTU email. Trips info will also be posted on the obtu.org web site calendar (with details as they become available).



With his retirement, Tom Dorner has taken up fly fishing and was delighted to have a few pics to share with the grand kids! Tom expertly presented a size 18 bwo to fool the the pictured brown.



Paul Harding has begun his exploration of the Driftless Area. Paul extracted this little beauty and a few others from Iowa's North Bear Creek. He'll be back!



Yes, that's a trout rise in the pool. It turned out to be one of several nice browns taken from this idyllic stretch of the Wisc. Driftless. We'd love to take you there!



7. Upcoming Events

As we enter each new year, the Board and Committee Chairs undertake a process to schedule for the calendar year. Many event plans are in process, however, dates are not yet finalized. Please monitor the OBTU Calendar which will reflect key OBTU events, timing, and details as they become available. The Calendar is on our chapter web site: obtu.org

Date	Event
Jan 10-12	OBTU Booth at the Tinley Park Fishing Expo Location: Tinley Park Convention Center. Web Site Address: https://tinleyfishexpo.com/
Jan 15	Chapter Annual Meeting with Board Director elections. Speaker: Jake Marthaler, professional guide, will speak on fishing SW Michigan waters where he grew up and now specializes .Jake guides with Schultz Outfitters based in Ypsilanti, Michigan. Schultz Outfitters Web Address: https://schultzoutfitters.com/ Time: 7:00pm Location: Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West Building
Jan 23-26	Illinois Council of TU Booth at the Chicago Fishing Exposition Location: Schaumburg Convention Center Web Site Address: https://chicagoland.sportshows.com/
Feb 19	Chapter Meeting Speaker: Ike Rhoads, Illinois Fly Fishing Company Web Site: https://www.illinoisflyfishingcompany.com/ Time: 7:00pm Location: Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West Building
March 8	OBTU Train-the-Trainers Session Location: Sagawau Learning Center, Lemont Web Site: https://fpdcc.com/places/locations/sagawau-environmental-learning-center/ Great opportunity to be briefed on 2025 plans, get involved in youth programs, and review/practice teaching skills.
March 9	Earth Awareness Fair Sunday March 9 from 2:00-4:00pm. Frankfort Library: OBTU will be hosting a display table for the 2 nd year.
March 19	OBTU Meeting at Central Park West Aaron Snell to speak on Coldwater River, SW Michigan. (OBTU has partnered with the Coldwater River Watershed Council on conservation activities for many years.)



8. OBTU Social Media Activities

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. Let us know if you would like to help strengthen OBTU's presence by improving and increasing our online content. You can help attract increased traffic to our sites by visiting and "liking" our content. Please follow us on:

Facebook page: Trout Unlimited Oak Brook Chapter.

Instagram: tuoakbrook.

Web Site: obtu.org or <https://obtu.org/>

Note: There are close to 400 Trout Unlimited chapters and multiple internet search engines that are used by our audience. If you put in an internet search argument of "TU", you will likely be directed to the TU National web site which includes a brief page on OBTU with minimal information on our chapter. Or, you could accidentally arrive at the wrong TU chapter's web site. There are also 3rd parties out there that play off our good name to attempt to direct traffic to their commercial site. We occasionally get feedback from people who are confused by arriving at a site they didn't expect. Take care to confirm you have arrived at the correct site!

Please check the obtu.org calendar for information details on upcoming events. OBTU Calendar web address: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>

9. You are Invited to Join an OBTU 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.

A complete listing of OBTU board members and committee chairs is available on our obtu.org web site. Here is a web address to the OBTU 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.