



## 1. President's Letter

The winter newsletter provides a great opportunity to reflect on the past year's achievements and acknowledge key contributors. Within its pages, you'll find many of the exceptional conservation and educational activities we've undertaken, along with some new initiatives.

I am particularly pleased that this edition highlights some of the strong leaders that have made extraordinary contributions to our chapter. Over the years, Oak Brook TU has been very fortunate to have dedicated volunteers like Wally Bock, whose efforts have been crucial to our success.

As highlighted in the Special Thanks section, we deeply appreciate the generous donations of fishing equipment and books made by David George and Tom Wilhelm this year. We are currently developing an online system to raise money from donated items like these; while ensuring they reach individuals who truly appreciate them. To date, we have raised over \$2,500 by auctioning off two collectable bamboo fly rods!

Thanks to the ongoing generosity of OBTU members and other supporters, our Fundraising Drive and Holiday Party were once again major successes. The spring newsletter will include a Financial Review with more details on fundraising efforts and the chapters' strong financial condition.

Looking ahead, the next newsletter will feature our exciting plans for 2026. We welcome your ideas for new initiatives and future growth opportunities. With your continued support, we can achieve even greater impact together.

Dave Carlson

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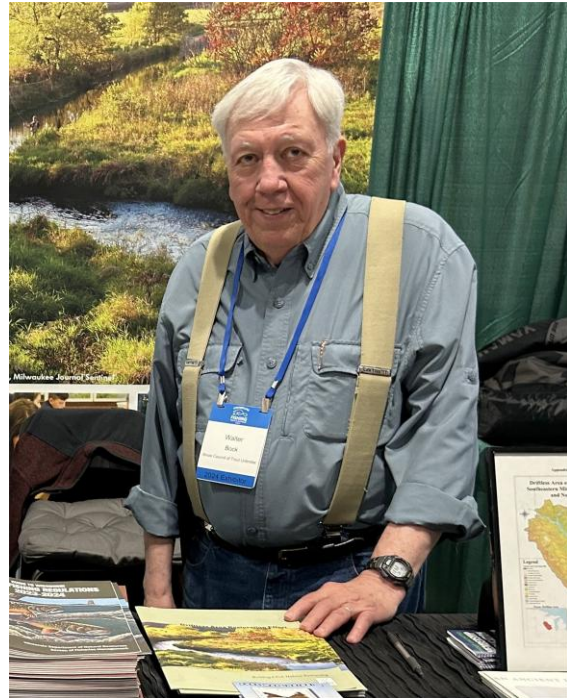
## 2. Wally Bock – A Remembrance

Oak Brook Chapter Trout Unlimited lost a leader and longtime member this summer when Wally Bock passed away on July 25. We lost a dear friend.

Many of us have worked with Wally over the years, but many more of you may not have known him.

He held virtually every chapter and Illinois Council role in over 30 years of TU membership.

Wally Bock had always been an enthusiastic angler. Eventually he found fly fishing for trout, and of course, that led to TU. Wally joined TU in 1995. He very quickly became involved in the chapter activities, becoming chapter president in 1998. Wally was one of OBTU's longest serving presidents. He remained as a board member and was named an Emeritus Board Member in 2011.



*Wally promoting TU at the Illinois Council booth, Chicagoland Fishing Exposition, January, 2023.*

Wally's leadership of the National Conservation Banquets was notable not only for the funds they raised, but for their movement out of traditional banquet facilities to Brookfield Zoo. He, and his wife Pat, graced these and other OBTU fundraisers with prizes running the gamut from fishing gear to paella dinners to Pat's wonderful watercolor paintings. He was an organizer and leader of many of the Chapter's annual outings to the Upper Peninsula and to Wisconsin's Wolf River where he and Pat significantly elevated the culinary and social dimensions of Oak Brook's typical stream forays of the time.

Wally was ever present at OBTU's education events, including the Orvis/TU Fly Fishing 101 program, our Youth Fly Fishing program and Trout in the Classroom where he transported trout eggs, helped with the entomology sessions and participated in the trout release events for the TIC program each school year since 2008.

Wally extended his support of Trout Unlimited to the Elliott Donnelley Chapter during the late second and early third decade of the 2000's where he served as Youth Chair and Trout in the Classroom Coordinator. He was honored with the first ever EDTU Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023.



## **Wally Bock Remembrance - continued**

Wally served as Illinois Council Chair for 2 years, its Treasurer for many more, and was an active, ardent supporter of both its organizational and its conservation initiatives. He was a part of the working group that started the Conservation and Fly Fishing Camp, a participant in partner coalition fundraising events, and – as Chairman of the Council’s Joint Activities Committee – the organizer and most dedicated participant in informational booths at local, regional and more distant fly fishing and outdoor events.

As the Illinois Council’s Representative on the National Leadership Council, he was active in workgroups dealing with rechartering of chapters and developing other organizational policies. Wally Bock always had a deep love for the Driftless Area, especially in southwest Wisconsin. He loved fishing these streams, silently and expertly working his soft hackle flies to many a brown trout. Wally was “that guy from Illinois” that one would almost expect to run into when they fished the Wisconsin Driftless.

An ardent supporter of Trout Unlimited’s earlier Kickapoo Home Rivers Initiative, Wally helped to arrange, and was on hand for the Illinois Council sponsored meeting in Galena where representatives of the four Driftless Area Councils proposed creating TUDARE, a TU driven, landscape scale, stream restoration effort in the Midwest Driftless Area. Wally was subsequently the Chair of the National Leadership Council’s TUDARE Working Group, served on the steering committee for and assisted with the logistics of the annual TUDARE Symposium, helped with the TUDARE volunteer training events and generally promoted the initiative at every opportunity in its critical early years. He was proud of the effort that arose from those early efforts and continued to be a promoter, and proponent of the Driftless Area and TU’s restoration efforts.

But most important for us, Wally was our friend.

Wally and I (Ed) fished together, attended conservation events together, and dissected most of the world’s problems together from Portland Oregon to Portland Maine – and more than a few spots in between. An intuitive connection based on shared aspirations made it all so easy and so satisfying. I will miss him.

Wally was one of the first people in TU that I (Marvin) met, and helped me to meet and feel comfortable with the other members. He encouraged me to become more involved. He was a sounding board over myriad phone calls or “meetings after the meetings”. His humor was nice and dry. And he was my fishing buddy. I miss him.

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OBTU thanks long-term colleagues, Marvin Strauch and Ed Michael, for preparing this thoughtful remembrance of Wally Bock, one of OBTU’s most consequential leaders.



### 3. Conservation Update

#### Advocacy – Your Opportunity to “Take Action”

Advocacy is a major component of achieving the TU mission. OBTU would like to draw your attention to the “Take Action” button on the home page of TU National’s web site: [tu.org](http://tu.org). The “Take Action” button enables you to sign a petition; send your senators & congressmen a letter; or donate to a campaign in minutes with minimal effort.

If you go to [tu.org](http://tu.org) and click on the “Take Action” button, you will find about a half dozen major TU advocacy campaigns. At the time of this writing the advocacy campaigns include:

- 1. Protect Roadless Rule:** The USDA is rolling back protections on 45 million acres of National Forest lands. These Roadless Areas provide irreplaceable fish and wildlife habitat, recreation opportunities, and clean water.
- 2. Support Clean Water:** Because we all live downstream. We are working across the country to restore the thin blue lines abandoned by the USEPA in enforcing the Clean Water Act and raising our voices to defend the state and federal clean water laws that protect these streams.
- 3. Protect Bristol Bay:** Multiple lawsuits threaten to overturn the hard-fought safeguards currently preventing the proposed Pebble Mine from causing irreparable harm to Bristol Bay’s salmon fishery. Join us in seeking long-term, widely supported permanent safeguards for the region.
- 4. Reconnect the Snake River:** The Snake River basin boasts some of the best salmon and steelhead habitat in the Pacific Northwest, and yet it is seeing a dramatic drop in salmon and steelhead populations. The solution is to remove four dams on the Lower Snake. If we do not act, these iconic fish will face extinction.
- 5. Support Oil and Gas Reform:** We need to modernize oil and gas leasing and permitting on federal lands. We can bring balance back to public lands by discouraging energy speculation and ensuring that companies clean up after themselves.
- 6. Protect Public Lands:** Efforts to sell, dispose, or divest public lands undermine our outdoor traditions and threaten rural economies. These lands belong to all Americans and provide vital access for hunters and anglers.

#### **CALL TO ACTION:**

For each of the above campaigns, the TU National website ([tu.org](http://tu.org)) provides an excellent executive summary of each of these environmental issues. In addition, each campaign may include “action(s)” that you can take now or at an appropriate future time. We encourage you to study the issues and take action as you see fit.

You can also register to receive alerts notifying you of the ideal time to act.

**Sign up for TU’s advocacy feed at: <https://www.tu.org/champions/advocate/>**

**Why is Illinois support of issues in other parts of the country important?** Illinois is a major state with influential votes in the senate and quite a few votes in the house. Illinois political leaders need to hear from their Illinois constituents that these issues are important to the people of Illinois. Imagine Senator Dick Durban receiving 1000 letters from Illinois TU associates. It may get his attention.

## Advocacy – Your Opportunity to “Take Action” - continued

Ed Michael has been a tireless TU advocacy champion since the early years of OBTU. Ed has held various leadership positions at TU National, the Illinois Council, and all of the officer positions within OBTU including president.

Most recently, Ed has been proactive in terms of taking action related to TU efforts to protect the “Roadless Rule” and also to prevent the sale of public lands. While the recent comment periods for these issues have ended, it is expected that a second public comment period will begin within the new year. **Please stay tuned for the next comment period likely to open in the spring. Be prepared to take action.**

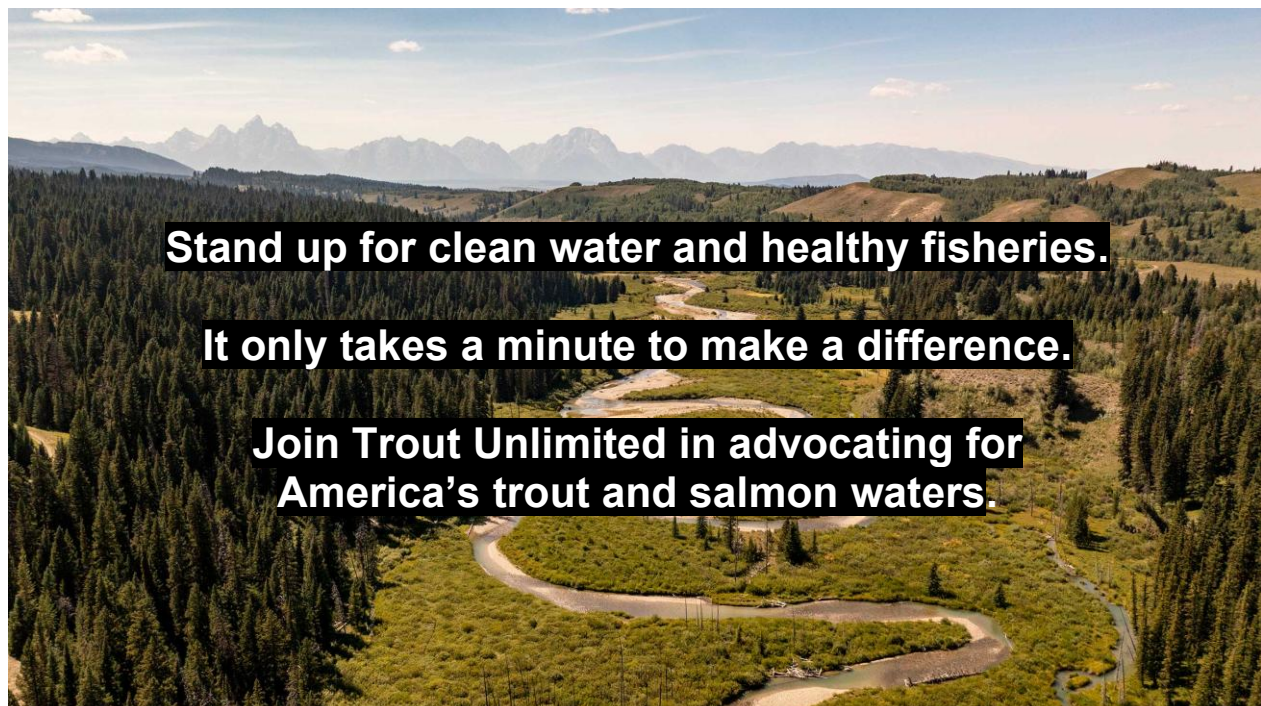
During the first public comment period, TU submitted over 7,500 comments in favor of keeping Roadless Rule protections in place. **Will you submit a comment next period?**



*Ed Michael is shown enjoying the environment for which he fights so vigorously to protect.*

Recently Ed collaborated with TU National to organize an OBTU effort to mail 500 letters of acknowledgement & a commemorative sticker to the first 500 signatories of TU’s recent petition. Thanks to Ed and the OBTU volunteers who helped get the job done: Keven Graham, Conservation Committee Chair; Steve Carlson, Carol Hennessy, Ken Krueger, and John Martyn.

## KEEP THE PUBLIC LANDS PUBLIC! KEEP ROADLESS AREAS ROADLESS!

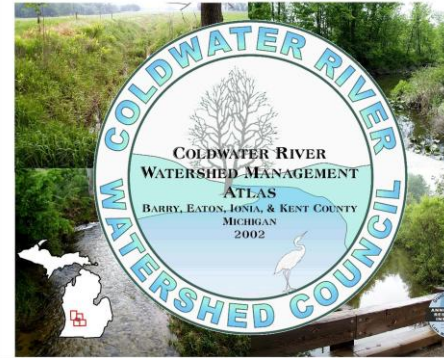


### 3. Conservation Update – continued:

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

##### **Coldwater Creek Macroinvertebrate Survey, near Grand Rapids, Michigan, October 11**

OBTU successfully completed the 2<sup>nd</sup> of 2025’s entomology surveys. 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 fish on nearby rivers such as the Coldwater, Rogue, and Muskegon.



**Whitewater Creek, SE Wisconsin work day, October 18:** OBTU continues to join forces with SEWTU to work on trout streams that are within a day trip for many OBTU members. The most recent work day included the installation of “Bio Logs” in White Water Creek, a tributary of Bluff 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.



*Joint SEWTU and OBTU crew.*

*Thanks to Dale McDonald & John Martyn for making the trip to represent OBTU despite uncertain weather.*



**Bio-logs were installed on a significant stretch of Whitewater Creek’s bank.**

### 3. Conservation Update – continued:

**DuPage River Adopt-a-Stream Cleanup, Naperville, October 18:** 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.



*2025 was the 6<sup>th</sup> year of the chapter's Adopt-a-Stream service. We have never found a shortage of trash!*

*Thunderstorms threatened our October 18 cleanup. The team braved the elements to show up despite dicey conditions. (Or was it the promise of donuts & coffee with colleagues that brought them out?) As luck would have it, the weather cleared and the mission was accomplished. The orange "hard hat" and "traffic cone" uniquely distinguished this cleanup.*

### Illinois RiverWatch

OBTU now has a connection with Illinois River Watch. This past Sept 20, OBTU participated in the Illinois RiverWatch 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration held at Kankakee River State Park. Thanks to Dennis Wisnosky & Dave Carlson for manning the OBTU table. OBTU's eDNA test equipment was displayed.

The Illinois RiverWatch program was established by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources in 1995 with the goals of providing consistent, high-quality data for use by scientists; to educate community members about the ecology and importance of Illinois freshwater resources; and to provide an opportunity for anyone to participate in the stewardship of Illinois' freshwater.



*Dennis Wisnosky & Dave Carlson  
Man the Booth.*



**ILLINOIS  
RiverWatch**

  
The National Great Rivers  
Research & Education Center

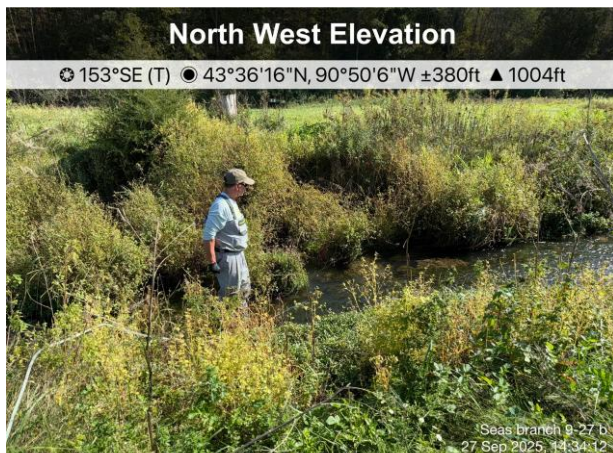
If you have interest in how to become a citizen scientist by becoming an Illinois "River Watcher", check out the IL RiverWatch web site:

<https://www.ngrrec.org/outreach/community-science/riverwatch/index.html>

### 3. Conservation Update – continued:

#### OBTU Environmental DNA (eDNA) Testing Update:

OBTU continues to pilot eDNA testing to identify the presence of a selected trout species within a selected stream. Our most recent test was conducted in September to confirm that our testing protocol is able to detect the presence of brook trout within a tested stream. The test was conducted on the Seas Branch, a tributary of the West Branch of the Kickapoo River, which is known to have a brook trout population. The objective is to confirm that our test is capable of detecting the population of brook trout that are known to be in the stream. Our test sample has been sent to the eDNA lab for analysis. Stay tuned for the result.



*eDNA testing site on the Seas Branch*



*eDNA testing team from left to right: Keven Graham, Steve Shapiro, John Martyn and Steve*

#### State Route 56 Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup, Viroqua, Wisconsin, September 27:

Wisconsin DOT's Adopt-A-Highway program is the official coordination system for the generous volunteer efforts to remove trash, recyclables and litter from Wisconsin's roadsides. 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 3<sup>rd</sup> cleanup day of 2025 was completed during the Sept OBTU Chapter Fishing Outing.



*Look for OBTU's Adopt-a-Highway sign on Route 56 west of the intersection with County Road S in Vernon County, Wisconsin.*

#### 4. Education Update

##### **OBTU Fly-Fishing Adult Education Program is Being Developed:**

If you have been tuned in to OBTU, you are probably well aware of our chapter's education programs which have received significant national recognition within Trout Unlimited. Most of these programs have targeted youth. Our chapter has long recognized the need for more comprehensive adult education offerings.

OBTU has started a planning process to develop an adult fly-fishing education program that the chapter would run on a recurring basis. A working group has been formed including Dave Carlson, Mark Stoll, Marvin Strauch, and Phil Young. Stay tuned for developments.

##### **Trout-in-the-Classroom(17<sup>th</sup> Year):**

On November 14, 2025, the 2026 Youth Education Program kicked off with the delivery of fertilized trout eggs to participating schools. Reports indicate that the fish successfully hatched over the Thanksgiving break and are doing well.



**Photo of eyed eggs delivered to our schools. The appearance of an eye shows the egg is fertile.**



**Recent photo of an alevin from one of our schools.**

**Alevin: a newly spawned trout still carrying the yolk.**

<b>2025-26 Trout-in-Classroom Participating Schools</b>	<b>Location</b>
Bednarcik Junior High School	Aurora
Burroughs School	Chicago
Downers Grove North HS	Downers Grove
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
Tinley Park HS	Tinley Park
Sts. Bruno & Richard School	Chicago
Social Justice HS	Chicago
York High School	Elmhurst

**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!

**Contact Marvin Strauch, Emeritus Board Member and OBTU Youth Education Chair, for more info or to volunteer for the TIC program: [youthed@obtu.org](mailto:youthed@obtu.org) , 708-638-1318**

#### 4. Education Update-continued

##### Youth Fly Fishing Training (20<sup>th</sup> Year):

The 21<sup>st</sup> year of OBTU's "Youth Fly Fishing Training" included five well-attended sessions conducted one per month from May thru September, 2025. 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 2026. Registrations for the 2026 class will begin during the spring of 2026.

**Contact: Mike Lesiak, OBTU Youth Fly Fishing Training Leader: [mdlesiak100@gmail.com](mailto:mdlesiak100@gmail.com),**

##### Stream Girls(4th year):

STREAM Girls returned to Girl Scout Camp Dean in July. Although the forecast predicted rain all day, we lucked out with overcast skies turning into a perfectly sunny afternoon. We had a great group of engaged kids who especially enjoyed the macroinvertebrate collection/identification and fly tying. They even caught fish!



**Entomology Study of wet bugs**



**Fly Tying**



**Fly Fishing**



**OBTU's version of Steam Girls has been a big hit with girls who have attended!** Our challenge is to scale up the program to reach more girls. 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](mailto:alexa.d.cottrell@gmail.com)). We welcome any suggestions for how, who & where to promote the program. Let us know if you have connections with any girl's youth group who may have interest.

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. Find the most recent Stream Girls flyer on obtu.org under the "Education & Outreach" tab.

#### 4. Education Update-continued

##### Illinois Council of Trout Unlimited Youth Camp (16<sup>th</sup> year):

The 16th 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:

##### 2025 Youth Camp (Year 16)

Thanks to the 2025 IL Council Youth Camp Leadership Team for your highly dedicated efforts:

**Camp Director:**  
Dan LaFave

**Camp Mentors:**  
Daniel Cochran (OBTU)  
Rose Grumbine (OBTU)  
Carol Hennessy (OBTU)  
Mia Martinez (OBTU)  
Dan Postelnick (EDTU)  
Mark Segraves (EDTU)  
Bruce Watkins (OBTU)



Professor Dan Hayes, Michigan State University, leads a stream-side fish dissection biology lesson.

##### 2026 Youth Camp (Year 17)

##### 2026 Youth Camp Dates:

Sunday July 19 thru Friday July 24

##### Location:

Au Sable River, Grayling area, Michigan

**Contact:** Dan LaFave: [dlafave@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dlafave@sbcglobal.net)

##### Currently seeking:

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

##### Link to Youth Camp Information:

- Camp flyer (1 page overview)
- Camp presentation
- Camper Application form

<https://obtu.org/youth-outreach/youth-camp/>



Mia Martinez, OBTU Youth Camp Mentor, leads a fly-tying workshop. This year's campers were enthusiastic fly tyers. Thank you Mia!



## **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](mailto:youthed@obtu.org) , 708-638-1318

**Mike Lesiak**, Youth Fly Fishing Training Leader, [mdlesiak100@gmail.com](mailto:mdlesiak100@gmail.com), 630-300-4997

**Alexa Cottrell**, Stream Girls Leader, [Alexa.d.cottrell@gmail.com](mailto:Alexa.d.cottrell@gmail.com), 847-651-2818

**Dan LaFave**, IL Council of TU, Youth Camp, [dlafave@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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 2026 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. (Last year's fliers will be updated in the upcoming months.)

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

**-Continue to Next Page-**

### 5. Further introducing: Cheryl Gallaway, New Treasurer (elected January, 2025)

I've been fishing all my life. As a youth, our family would vacation in northern WI and catch bluegill and walleye.

My daughter went to college at Colorado State University. Since fly fishing is so popular, I decided I wanted to learn. So, I took a class at College of DuPage. Our final was a camping trip to the Driftless. I actually caught a small brook trout and was "hooked"

I've always believed in conservation and as I started working less, I wanted to volunteer for a good cause. Trout Unlimited meets that need while providing a blend of conservation and fishing.

I still work full time as half owner of an envelope manufacturer and a print shop. I am the CFO and work also with technology and human resources.

I recently purchased a cabin on a lake in the Colorado mountains near Wyoming. The fishing is great. The lake is stocked with Rainbows and Palomino trout, and there are also wild Browns and Brookies. It's fed by the Cache La Poudre River, so there is ample river/creek fishing as well. If I'm not working, that's where I'll be. Other hobbies include fly tying, crochet, hiking, and reading.



**Cheryl showcasing a palomino trout caught in the lake in Colorado where she has a cabin.**

### Further introducing Palomino Trout:

The palomino trout is a genetically mutated rainbow trout, bred in hatcheries for its striking golden hue and lack of dark spots. Palomino trout are bred for angling events and thrive in a variety of stocked freshwater habitats. Palomino trout were developed cross-breeding selected rainbow trout with unusual color variations. Palomino trout originated in West Virginia circa 1950's.

Palomino trout are not to be confused with "golden trout". Golden Trout are naturally occurring and native to California's high-altitude freshwater habitat. Golden Trout face conservation challenges due to their specialized environment. Golden trout tend to have spots and/or parr marks and are typically more limited in size.



## 6. Annual Fund-Raising Appeal Results

### OBTU's 2025 Annual Fund-Raising Appeal Again Achieved Strong Results

The OBTU Board expresses sincere gratitude to the membership for the success of the 2025 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 10 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 successful once again with monetary donations in excess of \$9,800.



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!

Morgan Anderson	Ronald Dyslin	Richard Marsan	Kathy Seiwert
James Baird	Janet Edman	John Martyn	Steven Shapiro
Thomas Banaszak	Robert Eisenhart	Taras Masnyk	Mary Shubert
Elayne Bednar	Virginia Engler	John McKeivitt	John Sparrow
Walt Bird	Keith Gabriel	Brian McPheters	Barry Steinmetz
William Beshire	Lisa Gilmore	Chris Mehuys	<i>Mark Stoll</i>
Wally Bock	Keven Graham	Jack Mensching	Marvin Strauch
David Carlson	Michael Grempp	Edward Michael	Ernest Stryiak
Stephen Carlson	Kurt Hall	Richard Moldenhauer	David Sutterfield
Jackson Cates	William Hancock	Ryan Nobis	Cheryl Vermillion
Dwight Clarke	James Hope	Mark Palo	Walter Wahlfeldt
Edward Costin	Donald Jackson	Kevin Peralta	James Watts
Alexa Cottrell	James Jones	Norbert Perkins	Col Charles Weyhenmeyer Jr.
Art Cottrell	Cory Kadlec	Jack Potts	Tom Wilhelm
William Day	Ronald Koziol	Greg & Sheila Prosen	Dennis Wisnosky
David Dial	Kenneth Krueger	James Risk	Ronald Wright
Jim and Lori Dickens	Michael Lahart	Pamela Roberts	Phil Young
Thomas Dorner	Mike Lesiak	Julia Francesca Santos	Francis Zbylski

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

**-Special Thanks 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 & friends. 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 serving as the new OBTU Treasurer (about to complete her 1<sup>st</sup> one-year term).



## 6. OBTU 2024 Annual Fund-raising -continued

**-Special thanks 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*

**-Special Thanks 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 \$2,000 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! Marvin also prepares 200 custom-designed, sequentially numbered, and printed tickets to facilitate the raffle.

### 2025 Bamboo Winner

**This year's winner was Greg Keeling.**

Greg is an OBTU member from downstate Mulberry Grove, Illinois. That's between Kaskaskia and St Louis. Most of his trout fishing is in Missouri. He's a life member of TU and responded to the e-blast with a purchase of one ticket (out of the 200 tickets sold). Congratulations Greg!

Thanks to all who supported OBTU by buying raffle tickets! OBTU limits the number of tickets sold to 200 each year. Your chances of winning are much better than the Illinois Lottery!

**-Special Thanks to Dave George.** Dave was an early leader of OBTU serving as Chapter President back in 1977 among his other varied leadership roles. Dave donated a valuable personal library of angling books as well as his collectible bamboo fly rods and fly-tying tools & supplies.

**-Special Thanks to Tom Wilhem.** Tom is an active OBTU member who has made significant financial and leadership contributions over many years. Tom recently donated 11 high end fly rods of leading brands including: G Loomis, Sage, St Croix, Winston, Orvis and White River. He also has given the chapter a collection of 10 fine fly-fishing reels.

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**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!**

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## 7. 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 5 chapter-organized fishing outings in 2025:

1. An April 11-13 outing to the Wisconsin Driftless Area based near Viroqua was combined with an Adopt-A-Highway work day.
2. A late May trip to Coldwater Creek near Grand Rapids Michigan which was combined with OBTU's semi-annual half-day macroinvertebrate survey work session.
3. A Sept 27-29 trip took place at 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).
4. The trip back to the Coldwater Creek during the weekend of Oct 11 was held to complete the 2<sup>nd</sup> macroinvertebrate survey of the year, providing another fishing opportunity during the king salmon and early steelhead run.
5. An early November Steelhead trip to Newaygo, Michigan. This was OBTU's first open invitation chapter steelhead trip in recent years and was attended by 6 members and 3 guides led by Jay Allen. All 6 spots were filled. A good time was had by all. Discussions about next year's trip have begun! A glimpse of some of the team's success:



**Jim Dickens celebrates this beautiful 12-pound buck caught on his last cast of the trip! The fish went on multiple long runs before being brought to the boat.**



**Willie Beshire landed this very fresh-from-the-lake, chrome hen. While smaller, she put up an energized fight with several acrobatic high jumps.**



## 8. 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 for updates and details as they become available.

OBTU web site calendar page: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>

Date	Event
Jan 21	Chapter Annual Meeting with Board Director elections. Speaker: Jake Lemon, TU Eastern Angler Science Coordinator Topic: Coaster Brook Trout Status and Conservation Efforts Time: 7:00pm Location: Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West Building
Jan 22-25	Illinois Council of TU Booth at the Chicago Fishing Exposition Location: Schaumburg Convention Center Web Site: <a href="https://chicagoland.sportshows.com/">https://chicagoland.sportshows.com/</a>
Feb 13-15	TINLEY PARK FISHING, TRAVEL & OUTDOORS EXPO Tinley Park Convention Center OBTU Display Booth Web Site: <a href="https://tinleyfishexpo.com/">https://tinleyfishexpo.com/</a>
Feb 18	Chapter Meeting Speaker: Jake Marsteller, Southeast Michigan Multispecies Fly-Fishing Guide Time: 7:00pm Location: Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West Building
March	OBTU Train-the-Trainers Session Date: To Be Determined – stay tuned. Agenda: Provide orientation on OBTU Training Programs. Great opportunity to be briefed on 2026 plans, get involved, and review/practice teaching skills. Location: Sagawau Learning Center, Lemont Web Site: <a href="https://fpdcc.com/places/locations/sagawau-environmental-learning-center/">https://fpdcc.com/places/locations/sagawau-environmental-learning-center/</a>
March 18	OBTU Meeting at Central Park West Speaker: To Be Determined Time: 7:00pm Location: Oak Brook Park District, Central Park West Building
March 22	Frankfort Public Library's third Earth Awareness Fair slated for Sunday, March 22, 2026, 2-4pm. Frankfort Library: OBTU will be hosting a display table for the 3rd year.



## **9. 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](http://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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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](http://obtu.org) calendar for information details on upcoming events. OBTU Calendar web address: <https://obtu.org/obtu-events/>**

## **10. 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](http://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.**