



2026 CONSERVATION & EDUCATION PROGRAMS



CONSERVATION PROJECTS

OBTU's conservation activities include financial and volunteer support for projects in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Oregon this year. Here is a quick overview of some of what's happening this year:

ILLINOIS DuPage River Cleanup Workdays are part of the DuPage County Adopt-A-Stream program. This will be the 8th year we have partnered with the Conservation Foundation to conduct spring and fall clean ups on our assigned section of the DuPage River in Naperville.



IOWA As planned, the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation recently finalized the purchase of a 21-acre property just downstream from the confluence of North & South Bear Creeks. OBTU's contribution helped make this land public in 2026. At the April celebration event, a new project to acquire a strategic 192-acre tract including Spring Branch Creek (pictured at right) was announced along with a \$250,000 fundraising goal. OBTU has already made an initial pledge to help acquire this land which is the water source for Iowa's Manchester Hatchery.



MICHIGAN OBTU collaborated with Schrems West Michigan TU and the Coldwater River Watershed Council on various stream projects since 2005. OBTU's will again conduct macroinvertebrate surveys twice this year (OBTU's Spring 2026 team is pictured). On the nearby Dowagiac River, OBTU continues to support monitoring and signage initiatives thru our membership in MEANDRS. In Michigan's Upper Peninsula, OBTU also made a contribution to help acquire a section of the Yellow Dog River. OBTU's contribution helped this pristine area avoid proposed commercial development while making new friends in the U.P.



WISCONSIN The Southeast Wisconsin TU Chapter has once again invited OBTU to join them for three workdays on streams located in nearby southeast Wisconsin. With Wisconsin DNR funding cuts, OBTU has stepped up to help purchase the bio-logs to be installed during our Southeast Wisconsin work days. In addition, OBTU continues to provide financial assistance to the Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE). OBTU also continues to complete 3 "Adopt-a-highway" work days each year near Viroqua, Wisconsin.



OREGON OBTU has pledged funding to a TU National study of the Alvord subspecies of Cutthroat trout (pictured). Due to interbreeding with introduced rainbows, Alvord Cutthroat are considered extirpated in their pure form in larger streams. Researchers hope to document that fish exhibiting the classic, unadulterated physical characteristics of the Alvord Cutthroat still persist in remote, isolated headwaters.



EDUCATION PROGRAMS

OBTU has spent the last 53 years building an education program that is nationally recognized within Trout Unlimited. As a result, OBTU has built community support for Trout Unlimited's mission across thousands of participants. OBTU focuses on the future through our chapter's extensive youth programs in addition to a number of adult oriented public outreach events each year.



TROUT IN THE CLASS ROOM OBTU introduced TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM to Illinois in 2008. We now coordinate 22 of the 38 Illinois school programs interacting with over 1000 students from 3rd through 12th grade each year. TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM is a cooperative program between Trout Unlimited, the Illinois DNR and local schools that allows teachers and their students to learn about the natural world by raising trout from egg to fingerling and then releasing their fish into the wild. OBTU provides funding for at least one new school each year, as well as guidance in maintaining the aquaria and enhancing the program. Students at left are displaying giant stonefly nymphs as part of our wet bugs classroom session which is always a big hit!



YOUTH FLY FISHING The Chapter's Youth Fly Fishing Program is now in its 21st year! We offer one-day classes to boys and girls 11 to 18 years. OBTU supplies all equipment, fly tying materials, and instruction free of charge. This program has now introduced over 1000 young people to the sport of fly fishing. We hope this program also alerts young people to TROUT UNLIMITED and our conservation work. OBTU also provides major financial and volunteer support of the Illinois Council Trout Unlimited Youth Conservation & Fly-Fishing Camp.



STREAM GIRLS OBTU'S STREAM Girls program, employs STEM with recreation and arts to explore a local stream. Every person is a citizen of her watershed, and OBTU has partnered with Girl Scouts of Northern Illinois to show what that means to us. By visiting a local stream as scientists, anglers, and artists, girls will get the complete picture. Women OBTU members guide the participants in observing the stream, sampling macroinvertebrates, and learning to tie flies. This year we plan to offer 2 program dates and are eager to add more.



FLYFISHING PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS Recently, OBTU embarked on a number of programs targeted to adults interested in learning about the sport of flyfishing. Last year, we taught flytying at Kane County Forest Preserves. This year, we began a multi-class introduction to flyfishing with the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County including covering basic tackle discussions, flytying, and a casting and fishing morning on Salt Creek at Fullersburg Woods. We also began a more intensive OBTU exclusive "Flyfishing-for-Trout-in-the-Driftless" program. (A Saturday night OBTU class dinner during the Driftless Area trout fishing field trip is pictured.) We are continuing to expand these offerings to draw more people into flyfishing and TU's conservation mission.