

The Stream of Engagement program is to provide youth with a diverse set of experiences that are appropriate for age and ability college in conservation, fishing and community and available for kids in first grade through college.

Being able to go outdoors and enjoy the quiet and the beauty that surround us is something that many take for granted. When we go fishing, we are not always successful in catching a fish but we may see a duck with her ducklings, a Great Blue Heron on the edge of a stream, maybe see a deer crossing the stream ahead of us, seeing a bald eagle swoop down and pick a fish from the water, or just sitting on the stream bank listening to the birds and watching the wildflowers and plants sway in the breeze.

There is so much more to fishing than catching fish. We are only able to enjoy these things because of the work that Trout Unlimited, and its many like minded partners and individuals have done. If we can introduce kids to this, and have them involved in small conservation projects, we are hopeful that this will ignite a spark inside them that they will carry the rest of their lives.

Our Chapter has recently reactivated our Youth Committee and program and look forward to seeing what these amazing youth can do. At the present time our youth Committee has the following members:

Adult Leader and Advisor: Gary Hockenberry ([ghock26@gmail.com](mailto:ghock26@gmail.com))

Youth Co-Chair: Carter Hockenberry

Youth Co-Chair: Samantha Harvey

Youth Co-Chair: Wes Harvey

Youth Member: Asher Ulmer

It is our hope that kids involved in Trout Unlimited become excited and passionate about protecting our Cold Water streams and are able to enjoy great Trout and Salmon fishing throughout their lives. We want the things that they learn as kids to become a lifelong passion.

### **Stream Explorers**

TU's future conservation work will be recruiting the next generation of Coldwater stewards. With each passing year, kids have less free time, spend more time inside in front of screens and are more disconnected from the habitats that sustain trout." *Stream Explorers* was introduced to assist parents in connecting their kids with the importance of healthy stream habitat and the impact that this has on future generations of trout and salmon.

The Stream Explorer membership is for kids 13 years old and younger and costs \$12 a year. With this membership, your child will receive 4 issues of Stream Explorers magazine, an official TU membership card, and a TU Stream Explorer sticker. They will also be part of our youth committee and will be able to participate in fishing outings with other kids, have the chance to help recruit their friends and teach others kids about fishing and why keeping our waterways clean is important and they will be able to have their pictures, stories, drawings or anything they want published in the to the Chapter newsletter, the Susquehanna Ripples.

## **TU Teens**

TU Teens provides a more in depth involvement in Trout Unlimited. As teens, they are able to participate in more activities with the Chapter and take an active role in teaching and guiding the younger kids.

The TU Teens membership is for kids 13 years old and older and costs \$14 a year. With this membership, your child will receive 4 issues of Trout Magazine, an official TU membership card, a TU Teen sticker, and opportunities to participate in fishing camps and other teen outings held around the State and Country. They will also be part of our youth committee and will be able to participate in fishing outings with other kids, have the chance to help recruit their friends and teach others kids about fishing and why keeping our waterways clean is important and they will be able to have their pictures, stories, drawings or anything they want published in the to the Chapter newsletter, the Susquehanna Ripples.

## **5 Rivers College Clubs**

College and Universities across the country have Outdoor Clubs and Fishing Clubs. Trout Unlimited recognizes fishing clubs as charter chapters affiliated with an established local Chapter. At the present time, there are over 100 Trout Unlimited affiliated college fishing clubs around the Country. Through their affiliation with TU, clubs plan and participate in events and activities in conjunction with their local TU Chapter. Our Chapter is currently working to establish a 5 Rivers College Club with Lycoming College and Penn College of Technology.

There are 5 key aspects to the 5 Rivers College Program

1. Conservation
2. Community Outreach
3. Costa Ambassador (representing Costa sunglasses)
4. Fundraising
5. Trout Unlimited Connection

I asked the teens what Trout Unlimited could do to become more relevant and interesting to people their age. The question is not idle. Over the past five years, the average age of a Trout Unlimited member has increased from 58 to 62 years old. Getting younger, and getting more women and people of color engaged in Trout Unlimited is not a politically-correct thing. It is vital to our future success. The country is becoming more diverse. If we cannot follow suit, we will become less relevant.

So, I will share with you some of the feedback from the teenagers at the teen summit. If you are a chapter leader, I hope you will consider their counsel. I, and the rest of the team at national Trout Unlimited, are taking their recommendations very seriously.

Most teenagers cannot attend midweek meetings at 7 or 8 p.m. If we want to attract teens, make a special effort for them on weekends, especially with activities (see below).

- Teenagers are less interested in meetings than they are service projects such as stream clean-ups. And, while micro-breweries are great places for millennials to meet, they are not so great for teens.
- Host more family-friendly events such as fishing days or weekend barbecues.
- Gift a membership to every person under 21 that wants to be a member. Then, use the course of the year to convince them of the value of renewing their membership.
- Allow people to use Apple pay, Venmo, PayPal or other electronic services to make gifts/become members of TU.

Host two-day teen fishing trips.

- Encourage teens to recruit their peers to join TU through fishing shows, or fun activities that help their communities while also allowing them a chance to experience the outdoors.

But, if we can follow the counsel of our Youth Leadership Council, and make TU more attractive to a younger and different demographic, we will ensure that trout and salmon and the watersheds upon which they depend are protected long after we are gone.

River Conservation and Fly Fishing Camp:

Our Chapter is fortunate to have Gary Hockenberry as the Adult Leader for the Youth Committee. His role is to make contacts in the community and introduce Trout Unlimited and the many things that we can do to get kids

involved with the outdoors. He also actively works with the 3 youth co-chairs in coordinating activities. What a great way to introduce a kid to fishing than by another kid.

The kids love it.

Currently our youth members range in age from 10 to 17 years old. Trout Unlimited has 2 different memberships available to youths.

Educating our next generation about cold water fisheries is one of the most important tasks facing Trout Unlimited today. We need a new generation of sporting conservationists so that all our work to date will not have been in vain. To this end, Trout Unlimited has developed programs to engage youth from kindergarten to college. Our challenge and responsibility at the chapter level is to make use of these youth education programs in order to attract and educate the next generation.

The first is the Stream Explorer which is for kids under 13 years old and the TU Teen is for 13-to-18-year old's. Each membership has its own benefits, and they get a membership card showing they are members of Trout Unlimited.

Click [HERE](#) to find out more about the different memberships available with Trout Unlimited. We welcome all genders and this diversity is what makes Trout Unlimited and our Chapter so successful.

For more information, please let us know. You can reach us at [susquehannatu@gmail.com](mailto:susquehannatu@gmail.com) or contact Gary Hockenberry at [ghock26@gmail.com](mailto:ghock26@gmail.com)