

# **Colorado Trout Unlimited**

## **Youth Education Program**

2017 Fall Rendezvous Update

### **I. Summary**

#### **Highlights**

State Council youth education and outreach has historically been supported by part-time staff hours and CTU volunteers. In 2011, the first Youth Coordinator was hired expanding statewide outreach to chapters as well as other youth development programs. Budget constraints in 2016 required difficult expense reductions resulting in the elimination of the youth coordinator position and substantial reduction of youth education allocations. The current Executive Committee is committed to reestablishing a CTU Youth Program. It has formed a Youth Work Group whose goal is the creation of a mechanism whereby CTU facilitates program delivery, modeled on a Stream of Engagement, through interested Chapters and Partners.

In addition to program development, the Youth Work Group is charged with development of a supporting, revenue-neutral program budget that includes, ultimately, the hire of a full-time Youth Education Coordinator. You will note the budget for fiscal year 2017 – 2018 does not contain revenues and expenses for this planned program. The Executive Committee concludes a revenue-neutral budget for youth education will have no net effect on the CTU master budget thus it can be added as addenda at any time.

#### **Program Mission**

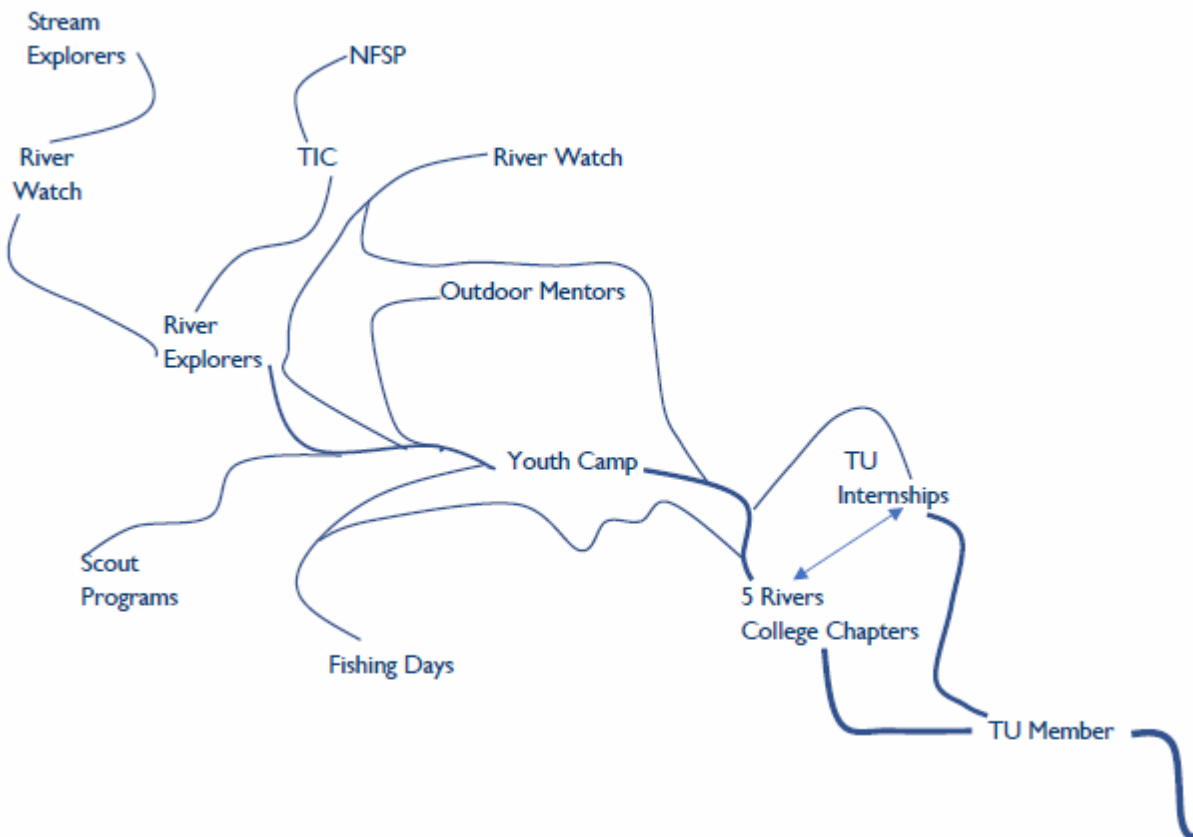
To build and foster the next generation of conservation-oriented anglers in Colorado

#### **Program Vision**

Colorado TU and its local chapters will provide Colorado youth with a diverse set of experiences, commensurate with age and ability, spanning watershed science, stewardship, and fly-fishing, to foster young adults who can be vigilant river stewards, competent anglers, and future leaders in Trout Unlimited.

## 2. Stream of Engagement

Summarizing youth education under CTU, is what we call the Stream of Engagement. It is a path for youth to follow across multiple years and multiple programs with a consistent Trout Unlimited message. Colorado Trout Unlimited has adopted this approach through River Explorers and hopes to use those lessons to transition kids from early age to teen programming in the form of the Youth Camp and the Nationwide TU initiative called TU Teens. From there the young adults in the 5 Rivers College Chapters have connections to local high schools and chapters but also to professional development for students through our intern programs and networking events. Ultimately, we hope that the youth education program translates to committed TU memberships and life-long advocates of resilient watersheds that provide for healthy, vibrant and sustainable cold-water fisheries.



### 3. Curriculum Description

**Chapter/ CTU Fishing Days** – Activities designed to build Chapter friendship, engage local communities, or act as a funding resource.

**Chapter/ CTU Internships** - Internships offered both through CTU and with local chapters have provided opportunities for college-age students to get real-world experience with conservation, outreach and education. Some internships have included a paid stipend, while others have worked through the students' universities to provide college credit for their work.

**Chapter/ CTU Youth Camp** – For 12 consecutive years the Colorado Trout Unlimited Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp has been a capstone to other programs for younger ages. All Chapters are encouraged to sponsor an individual. Graduates are often brought back as counselors, attend the TU teen summit, start college chapters, and eventually have begun to give back on a larger scale, the way one hopes for when putting these on year after year.

At the local level, mini-camps (preferably day camps) can be developed to provide similar experiences and educational content to the CTU Youth Camp.

**5 Rivers Collegiate Program** – In universities across the country, Trout Unlimited recognizes fly fishing clubs as charter chapters. Colorado has a growing number of clubs, with the potential for a huge hub of young adults to participate in Trout Unlimited's conservation ethic. A primary goal is to provide an outlet for college students to get in touch with something bigger than their clubs while also making potentially rewarding connections for their futures. These connections may come from a fellow 5 Rivers Chapter member, from leaders in their local TU chapter, or from an industry professional and a job out of school. At the very least participants will be exposed to a community of conservation anglers and the work that they do.

**National Fishing in Schools Program (NFSP)** - Utilizing the National Fishing in Schools Program curriculum and equipment, physical education teachers are trained and certified to teach fly casting in their gym via a unique target system that is proven to engage students, facilitate sound fly casting skills, and reinforce aquatic ecology concepts. Upon conclusion of the PE program, students will go on a fishing trip at a local stocked pond with the support of local Trout Unlimited volunteers.

**Outdoor Mentors** – CTU and chapter volunteers have partnered with local youth service groups focused on disadvantaged kids, such as Big Brothers Big Sisters and Denver Kids, Inc. These organizations connect youth with programs including adult mentors; we have added value by providing the youth and their mentors with outdoor opportunities that they may otherwise not experience. While most TU partnerships with these groups have involved fishing education events and trips, we have also worked with Colorado Parks and Wildlife on a multi-organization “outdoor mentors” day at Barr Lake State Park to allow kids to experience a range of outdoor activities over the course of a single day at the Park.

**Partnerships with Boy and Girl Scouts of America** - Collaborative programs designed to integrate within the BSA and GSA curriculum. Potential interactions are: Fly Fishing Merit Badge programs and STREAM Girls; other opportunities could be built around fly fishing as part of a Scout program’s camp program (instruction).

**River Explorers** - Geared for middle school students, this experience based learning program is designed to engage classrooms in watershed science through hands on experiences in their classroom and on local waterways. Developed by CTU and professional educators, this program is aligned to Colorado State STEM standards. Stream Explorers has multiple lesson plans included in the curriculum, and offers an incredible experience for a low cost.

**River Watch** - Building on a strong partnership, CTU brings River Watch to middle and high schools as well as chapters. This program has real world implications as the monthly water quality data is collected, reviewed and shared publicly. Teachers and students go through training to then record data on many different parameters monthly from a local water way. Although this task can be taken on by any group, including adults, we have found it most successful at the middle and high school age.

**TU Teens (In Development)** - A new program designed to fill a gap in programming. This program would be a pathway from River Explorers to more in-depth involvement with TU much like the summer youth camp, but for a larger audience on a more frequent basis. It would increase fly fishing skills alongside of life and leadership skills and provide community service hours as a connection to higher education and CTU’s college clubs.

**Trout In the Classroom** - A successful program nationwide, TIC faces unusual challenges in Colorado specifically due to disease testing requirements. Despite these obstacles there are currently 9 tanks in classrooms and 2 "Trout In the Community" locations. With constant interest across the state, this program has room to grow and foster delivery of high-value watershed education.