

Trout In The Classroom

The Mason Griffith Founders Chapter of Trout Unlimited is pleased to announce that we are once again sponsoring a “Trout in the Classroom” project at the Grayling Middle School. As they begin a new year, 6th graders at Grayling Middle School are gearing up for a very important and popular project - the third year of Trout in the Classroom. This project has become somewhat of a standard here in Grayling. Many of the students came to school this year and asked if they were going to raise fish again. A lot of their older siblings, cousins and friends have had the opportunity to raise the trout in the classroom and have passed on what an amazing experience it was to their younger peers.

Trout in the Classroom is a 6-month, hands-on project promoted by Trout Unlimited that involves raising trout from eggs right in the classroom. The program is designed to motivate students to take an interest in cold-water resource conservation by providing teachers with basic lessons involving biology, water chemistry, and conservation. It provides the basis for a real connection with the river and cold-water resources. To date, over 1,000 fry have left the classroom tanks and been given a new home in the Au Sable. Hopefully this year will bring many more wonderful experiences for the students and the trout that they will raise.

The project will began this January when 300-400 eyed brown trout eggs will be purchased from Cedarbrook Trout Farms in Harrisville. Once place into the aquarium, students will be able to observe the development of the embryonic trout. In the weeks to follow, students will learn more of the life cycle of the trout and what environmental conditions in our watershed can affect their survival. After hatching, the fry will be reared to a fingerling stage. From this point, students will end the project by releasing the trout into a designated location in the Grayling area. Throughout the few months between egg and release, many resource professionals will be visiting with the students to speak to the class on topics relating to the project. Guests from Trout Unlimited, USGS Water Division, and the Michigan DNR fisheries department will be coming in to discuss topics such as aquaculture, fisheries management, stream ecology, and conservation.

For many students, the river had never really entered their thinking. Now, for the several hundred who have been through the project, it has changed the way they view the river and what is “inside”. Several times parents of students who have released fish say that when they drive by the spot where they released the fish, it always is greeted with “and that’s where we put our fish”. We cannot help but feel that this creates a lasting feeling of stewardship for the river and the aquatic life therein. By making the project personal to the students, we hope to foster a life-long sense of stewardship for the river and its inhabitants.