

# Opinion

## Ohio Insider

### WHEN THE STUDENTS AT BENJAMIN LOGAN SCHOOLS

released rainbow and brown trout at West Liberty Park into the Mad River on May 18, it marked the culmination of a long process to bring the fish to bear.

That process was set in motion back in December when the students received eggs from the state's fish hatchery in London as part of Trout Unlimited's Trout in the Classroom project.

In total, about 35 schools in Ohio participate in TU's Trout in the Classroom, said Don Dean, Ph.D., a retired professor from Ohio State University and one of the organizers of the program for Trout Unlimited's Madmen chapter.

"There were a couple of schools up around Cleveland that were actually the first in the state (to participate) in 2009," Dean said. "I got involved in 2010 and we rapidly started adding and recruiting more schools. It's been a very active program."

Ohio is home to five Trout Unlimited chapters that help administrate Trout in the Classroom.

"We deliver the eggs to the schools when they come in, they hatch, and then go through all of the life stages," said Dean. "Then they grow, and the rainbows grow a lot faster than the browns. Toward the end of the school year, about now, the students release (the trout) into (area waterways)."

The rainbow and brown trout at the time of release are just a little over 2 inches long.

"Some years, we have exceptional survival," Dean said.

Trout in the Classroom runs the gamut in Ohio, involving elementary, middle, high schools, and career centers, Dean said.

"We have a very active group," he said. "Some have been with us in our watershed since 2010 ... they're mostly elementary schools, though."

The students, according to Dean, work very hard to ensure the viability of their fish. The aquariums used to raise the trout have to be filled with non-softened, non-chlorinated water, which is of paramount importance.

"Well water or stream water works very well," he said. "As long as it doesn't go through a softener somewhere. We've found out the hard way that will kill fish. It will kill eggs, every stage, really. They don't like the chemicals that are in the softener."

Dean comes to the program with a lot of expertise in the field. Before he retired from Ohio State, he had appointments as a professor of entomology, chemistry, and bio-chemistry.

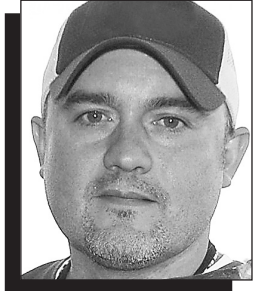
"I got interested in Trout in the Classroom through my fly fishing," he said. "One of the main things about Trout in the Classroom is to get students interested in their watersheds, water quality, and outdoor activities. That's one thing you don't need to brainwash kids about. Get them into the streams and it just seems to come naturally."

The project is perfect for forming future trout anglers.

"When fly anglers see what macroinvertebrates these trout are feeding on it really opens their eyes to what their flies really need to look like," Dean said.

Teachers interested in participating in Trout in the Classroom can e-mail Dean at dean.10@osu.edu or Tom Allen at ptalen111@insight.rr.com. Both are members of Trout Unlimited's Madmen chapter in Central Ohio.

"We encourage teachers from all around the state to get involved," Dean summed.



MIKE MOORE  
EDITOR



"WE DON'T MIND YOU PLAYING YOUR LITTLE TURKEY HUNTING GAME DURING LUNCH HOUR, PEARSON. HOWEVER..."

## Commentary

### A foundation in the outdoors always a worthwhile pursuit

By Tom Kirker

The wonders of nature and the outdoors are full of opportunities for learning and instructing. Both aspects have been a part of my life for over five decades. As mortals, all of us learn and teach throughout our lives. I've been an educator for more than 40 years, but I had to learn how to hunt at a relatively late stage compared to most hunters. So, from cradle to grave, we all do both.

For some people, a traditional classroom is where a good deal of "learning" takes place. For me, in many respects, the great outdoors has been my most enlightening classroom. I revel in its intricacies, and have only wanted to learn more and more over the years. And as a teacher and parent, I rejoice in passing on my experiences, knowledge, and quests for more learning.

I grew up in a suburb of Columbus that was not a place particularly conducive to learning about the outdoors and nature. However, my parents encouraged my fervor with literature that

they thought I would enjoy, and gave me the freedom to explore my neighborhood alleys, trees, and gardens to discover the world of the outdoors. They permitted me to explore creeks and ponds that were in our urban environs when I was a preteen, and I began fishing and catching frogs, turtles, and fish and bringing them home to study further. In high school and college, I had aquariums that contained native fish.

Upon receiving a driver's license in the fall of 1976, I was off and running, except during the next blizzard winters. Alum Creek, Deer Creek Lake, Big Darby Creek, and the Atlantic Ocean were my haunts for angling. We would wade the creeks, ply the spillways for walleyes, and attempt to ice fish in farm ponds. I learned a lot from North Carolina locals as to how to conduct myself and catch fish on coastal piers, absorbing the knowledge while learning when to speak and ask questions, and when to be quiet and just listen.

After graduating from college in Central Ohio, I began to work for the ODNR as a fisheries creel clerk in northeastern Ohio on the lake and rivers that had trout and salmon runs. Shortly thereafter, I began teaching elementary school in northeastern North Carolina. Thus, my educator days began in earnest. After a year, we returned to Columbus, and I taught school in the largest district in the state for the next 29 years. It was soon learned that 8- to 11-year-olds, especially those in disadvantaged situations, had tremendous curiosity and yearning to learn about nature. I had multiple aquariums, always containing native fish, turtles, frogs, snakes, toads, and salamanders, as well as some small mammals and birds. It was a lot of work to maintain these organisms year after year. Students would take some home for me over the summers, and I would release those that could be released. All of that was well worth it. Former students, some in their 40s and even early 50s

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## Letters to the Editor

Commentaries and letters are the opinions of the writers, not necessarily those of *Ohio Outdoor News*.

### Please give a hoot and don't pollute our Ohio natural areas!

Well, spring has sprung and everything is coming out, including the litter bugs. This is a sad bunch that no insecticide will get rid of – you know who you are. I would hope that everyone reading this letter is not a litter bug, but sadly even some hunters and fishermen are among this group. We Americans are a self-righteous bunch and don't like lectures, but this is a serious matter.

### Online Opinions

#### This issue's question

How would you rate your spring turkey experience?  
Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory

#### Last issue's question

Have you seen many gobblers during the spring season?  
Yes 18% No 82%

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P.O. Box 1010, Delaware, OH 43015  
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That fast food bag you don't want in your car or even a cigarette butt becomes so much litter. It takes seven years for a butt to degrade and go away. Newer cars make it so tempting to throw out a butt because there's no ash tray. Put one in. Save the planet.

It doesn't hurt to pick up after a thoughtless litter bug. Well, I should say it *does* hurt because litter hurts us all. If you won't do it for yourself, think about the mess we're leaving for our kids and grandkids.

Plain and simple, get your head out of your rear end and don't litter!

Jeff Russell  
Long Bottom

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