

# TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

## “HOW TO RAISE VIRGINIA TROUT”



**Virginia Council  
2010 / 2011**

**Date last Revised: August 19, 2010**

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Information in this “How To Raise Virginia Trout” manual was obtained from the Trout In The Classroom website, Commonwealth of Virginia TIC coordinators, various aquarium books, and the personal knowledge and experience of many individuals. It is not represented to be the final authority on raising trout in Virginia, but is presented as a help guide. This manual is always available to be updated/modified as new information or techniques are received. Your input is always appreciated.

*Let it be said that there are only two things that really matter when raising*

*Trout in Virginia:*

- 1. test and record your water chemistry daily, and*
- 2. clean the gravel and change 10% - 20% of the water weekly.*

*How everything else is done does not really matter. There is no right way or wrong way. If it works, it works!*

**Section I. Equipment Needed**

**Suggested Equipment List:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Year Set-Up</b>	<b>On Going Set-Up</b>
<b><u>Items from ThatPetPlace.com</u></b>	<b>KIT #1</b>	<b>KIT #2</b>
Fluval 405 Filter	X	
Mag Drive 700 Water Pump w/ 10' cord *	X	
Whisper 20 Air Pump	X	
Battery Operated Digital Thermometer	X	
BioZyme or PondZyme	X	X
Freshwater Master Testing Kit	X	X
20' ½" I.D. tubing *	X	
Dechlorinating Solution	X	X
¼" Check valve	X	
6" Aquarium Net	X	
Foam Block for Aqua Clear for use as prefilters	X	X
12" Air Stone	X	
10' ¼" airline tubing	X	
1 Tube of Aquarium Sealant	X	
Large Gravel Vacuum	X	
Battery Operated Weekend Feeder	X	
3 Piece Brush Set	X	
<b><u>Other Source Items</u></b>		
55 Gallon Tank	X	
Chiller	X	
Turkey Baster	X	
Metal or plastic "In Box" for egg basket	X	
Containers for water changes and fry release **	X	
<b><u>Home Improvement Store</u></b>		
Foam Board Insulation	X	
5 Outlet Surge Protector	X	
SS clamps	X	
Pea Gravel – nickel/quarter in size	X	
Lava Stone and Plexiglas	X	

**The first year set up costs will be about \$1,050 with ongoing annual expenses about \$50.**

**\* - Not needed if you use the Tradewinds drop-in chiller**

**\*\* - The buckets you will need for water changes can be from any source as long as they are clean. As strange as it sounds, plastic kitty litter containers are great as they can hold about 4-5 gallons and have a lid.**

All of the recommended TIC equipment (except the tank, chiller, and items from a home improvement center) are now available in a kit, which can be purchased through the online company <https://www.thatpetplace.com>. When ordering any of the kits, please reference the quote number associated with each kit. The person to contact for ordering information is:

Stephanie Welsh  
 Senior Business Account Representative  
 That Fish Place/That Pet Place  
 237 Centerville Road  
 Lancaster, PA 17603  
 Phone: 717-299-5691 x1288  
 Local Fax: 800-786-3829 Direct Fax: 717-381-2266  
 email: [stephanie.welsh@thatpetplace.com](mailto:stephanie.welsh@thatpetplace.com)

**If you don't need any of the recommended equipment in a particular quote, please tell Stephanie to omit the item(s).**

**KIT #1A - Recommended Equipment List for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Set Up Using Tradewind Immersion Chiller**

<b>Quote Number: 881 / KIT# 1A for Immersion Chiller</b>		
<b>Quote Date: 08/04/2010</b>		
Tap Water Conditioner - 16 oz. Item #: 199664	1	\$4.15
Siphon Kleen - X-large Item #: 214013	1	\$10.69
Sandstone Airstone - 12 in. x 3/4 in. x 3/4 in. Item #: 196870	1	\$2.32
Flexible Airline Tubing - 8 ft. Item #: 212445	1	\$1.20
Check Valve - 1 pk Item #: 204235	1	\$2.11
Battery Operated Digital Thermometer Item #: 209362	1	\$6.03
Freshwater Master Test Kit Item #: 199591	1	\$18.82
405 Fluval Aquarium Canister Filter - up to 100 Gallon Item #: 214941	1	\$166.53
Biozyme for Freshwater - 8 g Item #: 209009	1	\$3.79
Flexible Tubing - Clear - 1/2 in. (Sold per foot) Item #: 204154	20	\$35.80
Net - 6 in. Item #: 212723	1	\$2.89
Aquarium Sealant - 2.8 oz. Item #: 211988	1	\$4.69
EKOMIXO Fish Feeder - Battery Operated with Air Connect	1	\$29.99

Item #: 205199		
Aquarium Brush Kit - 3 pk Item #: 214963	1	\$4.99
Foam Block for Aqua Clear 110 and 500 - 1 pk Item #: 214855	1	\$6.89
Motor Seal Ring for Fluval 304 and 404 Canister Filters Item #: 215131	1	\$5.29
Whisper 20 Aquarium Air Pump Item #: 205960	1	\$7.00
	Total Items:	36      \$313.18
	Shipping & Handling:	\$16.99
	<b>Sales Tax:</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>
	Total:	\$330.17

## KIT #1 - Recommended Equipment List for 1<sup>st</sup> Year Set Up Using Flow-Through Chillers

**Quote Number: 878 / KIT# 1 for FLOW THROUGH CHILLER**

**Quote Date: 07/20/2010**

Tap Water Conditioner - 16 oz. Item #: 199664	1	\$4.15
Siphon Kleen - X-large Item #: 214013	1	\$10.69
Whisper 20 Aquarium Air Pump Item #: 205960	1	\$7.00
Sandstone Airstone - 12 in. x 3/4 in. x 3/4 in. Item #: 196870	1	\$2.32
Flexible Airline Tubing - 8 ft. Item #: 212445	1	\$1.20
Check Valve - 1 pk Item #: 204235	1	\$2.11
Battery Operated Digital Thermometer Item #: 209362	1	\$6.03
Mag Drive 700 Water Pump with 10 ft. Cord Item #: 206397	1	\$58.58
Freshwater Master Test Kit Item #: 199591	1	\$18.82
405 Fluval Aquarium Canister Filter - up to 100 Gallon Item #: 214941	1	\$166.53
Biozyme for Freshwater - 8 g Item #: 209009	1	\$3.79
Flexible Tubing - Clear - 1/2 in. (Sold per foot) Item #: 204154	20	\$35.80
Net - 6 in. Item #: 212723	1	\$2.89
Aquarium Sealant - 2.8 oz. Item #: 211988	1	\$4.69
EKOMIXO Fish Feeder - Battery Operated with Air Connect Item #: 205199	1	\$29.99
Aquarium Brush Kit - 3 pk Item #: 214963	1	\$4.99
Foam Block for Aqua Clear 110 and 500 - 1 pk Item #: 214855	1	\$6.89
Motor Seal Ring for Fluval 304 and 404 Canister Filters Item #: 215131	1	\$5.29

Total Items:	37	\$371.76
Shipping & Handling:		\$16.99
<b>Sales Tax:</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$388.75</b>

## KIT #2 - Recommended Equipment List for On Going TIC Setups

**Quote Number:** 879 / **KIT# 2**

**Quote Date:** 07/20/2010

Freshwater Master Test Kit Item #: 199591	1	\$18.82
Tap Water Conditioner - 16 oz. Item #: 199664	1	\$4.15
Aquarium Sealant - 2.8 oz. Item #: 211988	1	\$4.69
EKOMIXO Fish Feeder - Battery Operated with Air Connect Item #: 205199	1	\$29.99
Foam Block for Aqua Clear 110 and 500 - 1 pk Item #: 214855	1	\$6.89
Motor Seal Ring for Fluval 304 and 404 Canister Filters Item #: 215131	1	\$5.29

Total Items:	6	\$69.83
Shipping & Handling:		\$10.99
<b>Sales Tax:</b>		<b>\$ .00</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>\$80.82</b>

### Kit #3 – Designed for Chapters as an Emergency Supply

**Quote Number:** 880 / **KIT# 3**

**Quote Date:** 07/20/2010

Replacement Test Tubes with Caps - 24 pk Item #: 199666	1	\$14.99
Fresh Lab pH Low Test - 100 Tests Item #: 207441	1	\$4.99
Fresh Lab pH High Test - 100 Tests Item #: 207447	1	\$4.99
Ammonia Liquid Test Kit - Freshwater and Saltwater - 130 Tests Item #: 199677	1	\$7.39
Fresh and Marine Nitrate Liquid Test Kit - 90 Tests Item #: 199539	1	\$7.49
Nitrite Test Kit - Freshwater and Saltwater - 180 Tests Item #: 199533	1	\$5.69
Foam Block for Aqua Clear 110 and 500 - 1 pk Item #: 214855	1	\$6.89
Motor Seal Ring for Fluval 304 and 404 Canister Filters Item #: 215131	1	\$5.29
Total Items:		8
Shipping & Handling:		\$9.99
<b>Sales Tax:</b>		<b>\$.00</b>
Total:		\$67.71

It is recommended that at a minimum, you order the Replacement test tubes as these are the most likely things to get broken during the year. Additionally, have at least 1 “O” gasket and 1 Aqua Stop Valve available.

## Chiller Options

You will need a chiller to keep the tank's water temperature at about 50° to 55° Fahrenheit. Most chillers are only designed to chill aquarium water to around 60°-70° Fahrenheit. Therefore, for our program, we must purchase chillers that are rated for a larger size tank--for example, for a 55-gallon TIC tank; we purchase at least a 1/4 horsepower chillers, which are technically designed for 100-125 gallon tanks. By using a more powerful chiller, we decrease our chances of burning our chiller out after only a year or two. Additionally, all chillers except the TradeWind DI-25 need a submersible pump to push the water through. The pump from That Fish Place will work with all those chillers. If you get a different chiller, check the GPM requirements for that pump.

Here are the four of most popular chiller options listed in alphabetic order:

1. Arctica Titanium Chiller– a nearly silent, a flow-through from Marine Depot 1/4 Horsepower - 2 year warranty – flow through type (water is cooled when it is pumped through the cooling chamber) –This unit is UL listed- and purported to be the most quiet of all comparable chillers, which is of great importance to teachers. This chiller MUST be used with insulation, or it will wear out too quickly. This unit requires a separate pump, such as the Mag Drive Water Pump.
2. Polar Bear Chiller - available through BE Cooling, 4451 Cleveland Avenue, Stevensville, MI 49127, email: sales@aquastealth.com. The price for their model # CC50 is \$425 plus \$30 for shipping. This unit requires a separate pump, such as the Mag Drive Water Pump. This is a larger unit than previously listed – better capacity and less cycle time.
3. Prime Tower Chiller -- an efficient fairly quiet flow-through available from That Fish Place. With insulation, this chiller comes on only a few times an hour. It can be purchased from That Fish Place, but is rather expensive. This unit requires a separate pump, such as the Mag Drive Water Pump. If you order this chiller, make sure you include it in your list of equipment to ensure you receive any applicable discount.
4. TradeWind DI-25 drop-in chiller – This is a drop-in the tank chiller that we have found to be very good and is recommended for all tanks. The price is \$505 including the \$20 upgrade of a "U-tube" so the hoses do not kink when draped over the tank edge. Shipping is about \$45 per chiller. Multiple chillers shipped to the same address will save money. Contact Hal Collier, twchillers@sbcglobal.net; the website is: <http://www.tradewindchillers.com/>. Hal can be reached by phone Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at 760-233-8888, or by fax at 760-233-8889. One benefit of this chiller is the elimination of the Mag Drive 700 pump and tubing (cost saving of \$81.80).

**NOTE ABOUT CHILLERS – During a power outage chillers shut down and must be manually turned back on. It is vital that custodial staff be included in training of how chillers operate ESPECIALLY during winter breaks. Tanks can heat up to 70's within a day. Have a plan before you start!**

## **Section II.**                    **Tank Set Up**

Locate a suitable place in the classroom for the tank setup. It should be away for direct sunlight, as sunlight will increase the water temperature putting a greater strain on the chiller and will promote the growth of algae increasing the tank cleaning time. A lab-type counter or bench is preferred. The surface must be stable and capable of supporting a tank, 55 gallons of water, and gravel (approximately 500 lbs).

### **Activities your students should do before your eggs arrive**

#### **Making the Lava Stone Bioboard**

Lava stone (the purplish kind you find bagged at Lowe's or Home Depot) makes an outstanding "home" for the bacteria necessary to convert ammonia into harmless compounds. It's large surface area due to the fissures and cracks provide ample area for the bacteria to grow.

1. After obtaining the lava stone, rinse it well to remove the dust and other loose material and let it dry thoroughly (usually a day in the sun). While at Lowe's or Home Depot, also obtain a 12" x 12" piece of 1/4" Plexiglas.
2. Using Aquarium Sealant (found in your kit), glue enough pieces of Lava Stone to the Plexiglas to cover as much of the Plexiglas as possible.
3. Lay it flat and let it cure for 48 hours.
4. Install in tank by placing it against the end wall opposite your filter outflow tube with a slight lean and position some gravel to hold in place. By putting it at the other end of the tank from the filter outflow tube, the lava stone will receive a constant flow of water thereby remaining productive.
5. Do not remove the Plexiglas sheet until you break the tank down for the year. Any debris that may accumulate on the bioboard during the year may be suctioned off when you are cleaning the tank.

If you choose, you don't have to make the bioboard. You can simply scatter about 3 cups of rinsed lava stone on top of the gravel.

Don't buy a full bag as you will only need about 3 – 4 cups.

**NOTE:** Do not use any of the 100% silicon sealants found at any home improvement store to make the bio-board. While they may say they are 100% pure silicon, they may contain anti-fungal compounds that are guaranteed to kill your fish. It's worth the couple extra dollars to use sealant especially made for aquariums.

#### **Making an Egg Basket**

While using a commercially available egg basket is acceptable, you may find that the overall size and shape is both too small and too cumbersome when it comes time to remove diseased eggs. Additionally, the close confines of commercial egg baskets allow diseased eggs to transit fungus and bacteria quickly increasing the possibility of infecting all your eggs.

One type of egg basket that can be made utilizes a plastic tub and fiberglass screening. Instructions for it are currently available as a video at the Virginia Council TU's YouTube channel: <http://www.youtube.com/VACouncilTU>.

An alternative egg basket can be made from a metal or plastic office style “In Box” (see picture next page). To prevent the alevins slipping through the holes in the bottom of the “In Box” after they hatch, adhere some nylon window screening, using aquarium sealant, to the bottom of the “In Box”. Let it dry at least a day before putting it into the tank. Some of the advantages to this type of basket are that the eggs have more room so they are not touching each other thereby reducing the possibility of contamination if an egg becomes diseased; easier access to diseased eggs with less potential movement of the “good” eggs; better water flow around the eggs to promote better hatching rates; and another chance for the students to start getting involved with the tank by making a “home” for the eggs. If space permits, it would be fine to install two of the baskets in your tank. This is one case where more is better.

The basket can be attached to the tank in any manner that will work for you – sometimes something as simple as bent large paperclips will do the trick – as long as the eggs themselves are at least 2”-3” beneath the water’s surface.



### **Starting the Tank Set Up**

Position the tank on the foam board (cut to fit the bottom of the tank with about ½” overhang on all sides). Cut the remaining foam pieces to fit the back, front, and sides of the tank. Attach the back and sides with duct tape. Some programs take this opportunity to have their art students draw a mural either on the piece of foam going on the back of the tank or paper that can be put between the tank and the foam insulation. Attach the front section so it can be easily removed for viewing of the eggs/fish during the day, but can be put back on at night.

Carefully add the rinsed pea gravel (approximately ½” to 1” deep, but do not pour it in) and lava stone bioboard at this time or scatter the lava stone across the tank bottom. Fill tank about half full of clean water. Clean buckets are best used for this purpose. Using a hose from the sink is not recommended unless you can ensure the hose is properly attached – you don’t want to flood the room just yet! Tap water can be used for the initial setup, as there will be no fish put into the tank within the next 24 hours. But later, when changing water in the tank, it must be “aged” to allow the chlorine to dissipate unless you are adding a de-chlorinating solution. Chlorine will naturally dissipate within 24 hours. If tap water must be used in an emergency, a de-chlorinator solution should be added as directed.

**Flow Through Chiller connections.** Now, install the pre-filter on the submersible water pump intake opening. There are extra parts with the pump that are not necessary and can set aside and saved or given back to the tank set up person. There will be a hose barb fitting provided with the pump for connecting the vinyl tubing. This is a hose barb on one end and a threaded connection that screws into the top of the pump. The vinyl tubing is then pushed down onto this hose barb and a stainless steel clamp is used to secure the hose to the fitting. This tubing will need to be cut to fit from the pump to the intake port on the chiller. Place water pump inside tank on the bottom.

The chiller should be positioned as close to the tank as possible to minimize any strain on the water pump. Find the best location for the chiller, one where it can be easily accessed for maintenance and temperature adjustments, but located out of the way of the tank (off to one side or below the tank works best). The following are generic instructions. Please follow your chiller specific directions for set up.

The vinyl hose from the water pump outtake is then connected to the chiller intake port. The vinyl tubing pushes down onto the port inlets, lubricating the inlet barb helps (saliva works best). Push the tubing all the way onto the port and make sure it is well seated.

Next, if using the UVS, connect a separate length of tubing from the chiller outtake port to the UVS intake. It's best to lay the UVS on a table when connecting the tubing. The UVS canister has locknuts that operate similar to the chiller port barbs. Push vinyl tubing onto UVS barbs and screw the locknut counter clockwise to lock down the tubing.

*Aqua chillers require "elbow" barbs attached to the intake ports. The "IN" port is on the back left when facing the chiller. Use SS clamps on the tubing as necessary.*

The last section of tubing returns the water to the tank. This section is attached to the outflow port of the UVS and then run directly into the tank. Use enough hose, about a 3-4 foot length, so it hangs across the back of the tank and can be tied down to the center support. The outflow tube should extend about 2" below the surface of the water, flowing in the same direction as the outflow tube from the filter. You will need to adjust the flow when you get your eggs so that there is not a direct current over the eggs.

Tighten all the tube connections. Install and tighten the hose clamps to prevent any of the tubes coming off accidentally.

### **Drop-In Chiller**

Put the main unit on the floor as close as possible to the tank on the opposite end from the Fluval filter but in a location where the ends of the chiller can be reached for cleaning. Place the chiller coil at this same end sliding it over the back edge of the tank so that it is about 3" or 4" from the side or back wall of the tank. Follow the Trade Winds instruction for preparing and attaching the temperature probe. Follow the steps to program the chiller. Do not turn it on until you turn on the Fluval filter.

### **Air Pump connection:**

Place the small air pump behind the tank. Attach tubing from air pump then use scissors to cut line and add the check valve. The check valve will prevent water from returning to the air pump in the event of a power outage. Blow in the check valve to ensure you install it with the air flow direction coming from the pump. Run the tubing from check

valve to air stone. Air stone is very fragile and should be removed from package with knife or scissors. Let air stone remain submerged for at least overnight minutes before plugging in air pump. This will allow the stone to become saturated and provide even airflow. After 24 hours, plug in air pump and verify airflow to stone.

**Now fill the tank with water to within 1 inch of the bottom of the black plastic lip of the tank.**

### **Main Filter Pre Filter:**

Cut a section of the Aqua Clear foam block that is about 1” longer than the intake strainer basket. Hollow out a hole the diameter and depth (plus about ½”) of your filter intake strainer basket so the slots in the intake strainer are completely covered. Insert the intake tube into the foam. **This pre filter will help keep your main filter cleaner, but it must be rinsed out weekly (in dechlorinated water) to keep the pre filter clean and allowing free water flow into the main filter. Additionally, it will prevent the Alevin or fry from getting sucked into the filter and becoming sushi!**

### **Water Filter:**

The dual compartment water filter (Millenium or Marineland) hangs on the outside of the tank; if you are using a Fluval filter, it can sit next to the tank or on the floor within close proximity of the tank. The filter should be located on the other end from the chiller. But both the chiller output line (if not using the Tradewind) and the filter outflow line must flow in the same direction down the tank. This way, there is a constant water flow across the tank and bioboard.

If you are placing the Fluval filter on the same surface as the tank, attach a board that extends about 4” above the height of the tank to the side of the tank. This is the platform where you will attach the inflow and outflow “U” shaped tube holders. Sometimes the distance between the top of the filter and the top of the tank is so close that the inflow and outflow tubes are put at an angle making it difficult to remove the Stop valve when cleaning the filter. Additionally, it puts a strain on the tube connections. By putting the “U” shaped tube holders higher, the inflow and outflow tubes can run in a more vertical line.

Tubes at too much of an angle



Tubes more vertical



**If you are using the Fluval filter, practice removing the Stop valve and filter top a few times before you install the filter. Remember, the way to open the Fluval filter is to unclip the side clips then using the clip handles, PUSH DOWN on the clip handles. The filter top will pop off.**

Remove the filter components from their plastic bags and rinse them under running water. Place them in the filter compartments as directed in the manufacturer's instructions. Install intake and outflow tubes as per the manufacture's instructions. Install the pre-filter on the slotted part of the intake tube. You can cut the outflow flexible tubing (make it about 2" below the final water level) to length; the bottom of the intake slotted tube should sit about 2" from the top of the gravel.

For the Fluval filter, use the built-in primer pump to prime. You will hear air being forced out the outflow tube as the filter body fills with water. When the bubbles have stopped, the filter is primed. If you hear what sounds like rattling coming from the pump, it means that there is still air trapped in the filter. Continue priming until the rattling sounds stop.

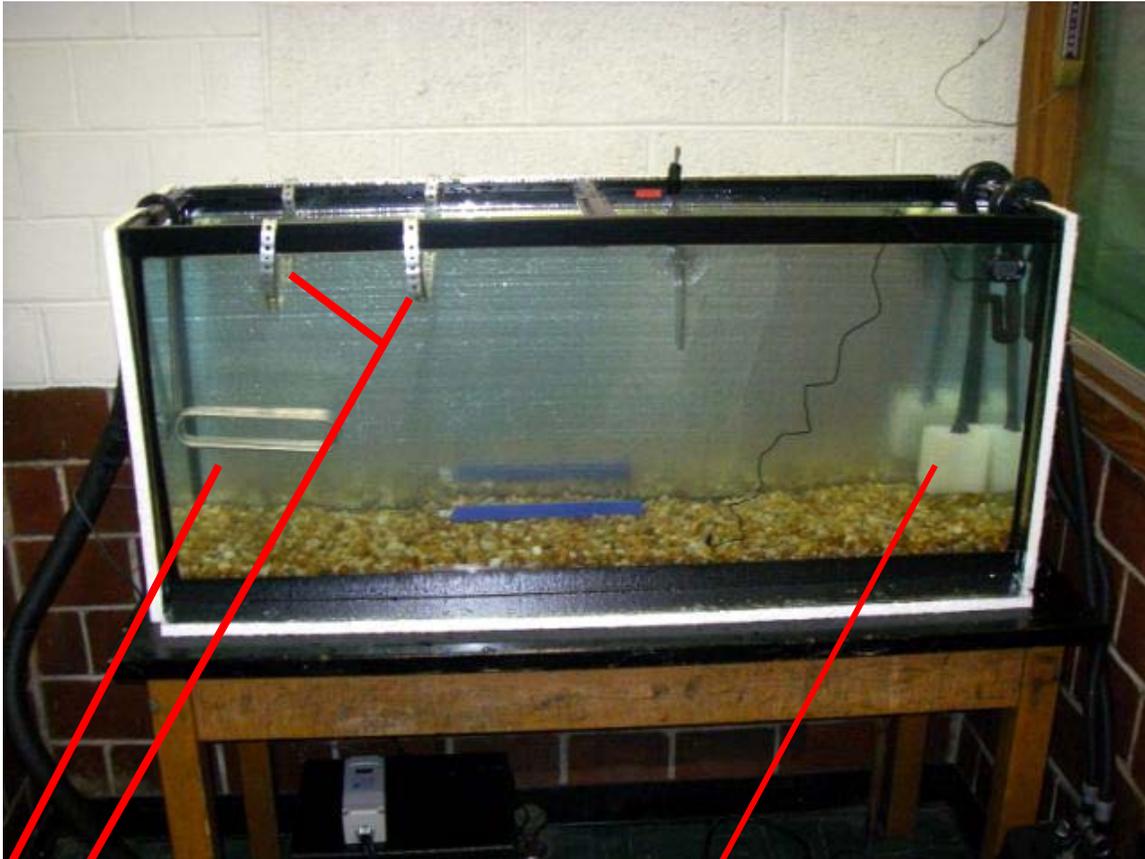
The hanging water filter must be primed by pouring water to fill the compartments before plugging in the filter.

**Plug in the main filter, submersible water pump (if not using the Trade Winds chiller), then the chiller and air pump into the power strip.**

## **YOUR TANK IS NOW READY!!!!**

One final note: As it has happened in the past, the accidental unplugging of the power strip supplying electricity to the air pump, filter and chiller on the trout tank caused a major die off of fingerlings in the tank before the error was recognized. Since it's so easy for this to happen, one suggestion is to attach a brightly colored tag to the plug end of the power strip that says "DO NOT UNPLUG" (and you might consider doing the same for any component that's plugged into a separate wall socket).

## A Typical Tank Set Up



Trades Wind Chiller Coil.

Note the pre filter on the intake line of the Fluval

The metal straps are used to support the egg basket (photo on P. 11).

Thanks to Clintwood High School in Clintwood, VA for the photo

### Section III. “Decorating” Your Tank

Now for the great debate on how your tank should look. In nature, trout live in streams that have rocks, plants, and sunken tree branches. Why not make your tank resemble nature? Besides being helpful to the health of the tank (which we discuss in a moment), it can provide your students with a look at the real habitat of trout – not a sterile looking tank.

We have already put gravel in the bottom of the tank to resemble the streambed, so let's complete the picture.

#### Plants

While the water exiting from the filter/chiller lines and air stone provides some opportunity to re-oxygenate the water, plants are submerged oxygenators. Additionally, they are another biological filtering agent. The easiest way to introduce plants into your tank is to fill a clean 4” tall clay pot with pea gravel and insert the plant directly into the gravel. Two pots of plants are sufficient. Recommended aquatic plants are:

- Anacharis can be found in most pet stores or pond supply places. It is an inexpensive plant and easy to obtain.
- Hornwort is more expensive and difficult to find, but you get lucky.

If you buy the plants from a pet store, make sure the plants are in a “Plant Only” tank to reduce the possibility of introducing a disease from aquarium fish into your tank.

#### Driftwood

The introduction of driftwood into a tank will add a more natural look to your tank as well as introduce yet another biological home for good bacteria. However, you can't just pick up a piece of wood and put it in your tank. Find an interesting piece of wood from a stream, not too large or too small, without any bark. Boil it for about 1 hour to kill any bacteria. Let it air dry in the sun for a couple of days. It will probably float initially when you put it in the tank so use some aquarium sealant to adhere it to a rock. But if you use the aquarium sealant, let it cure for 48 hours before you put it in the tank.

Please understand that, while the introduction of plants and driftwood will very slightly increase the tank cleaning time, the value of your students seeing trout in a “native” habitat greatly outweighs the additional time to clean around the plants and wood.

## Section IV.

### Getting Ready for Your Eggs

During the summer, the Regional TIC coordinator will gather the information on number of tanks and type of trout eggs requested from all the chapter TIC coordinators. She/he will then coordinate with Paul Bugas, DGIF, as to which hatchery locations will provide the eggs and develop a preliminary delivery date and pick-up point for each school. When the school year begins, the chapter TIC coordinator will notify each teacher the details of their egg pickup date and location.

A definite pickup date at the VGIF office in Verona will be established usually by mid September.

The area coverage for egg distribution for this year will be as follows:

The Verona office of VGIF (517 Lee Highway, Verona) will handle the distribution of brook trout eggs and food for the area of Central and Northern Virginia defined as all locations NORTH of Route 460. This will include Lynchburg across the state to Petersburg. IT DOES NOT INCLUDE ROANOKE. **All programs in this area will raise Brook Trout.** Specific egg distribution information will be provided at least 3 weeks prior to egg distribution.

For TIC programs in Roanoke and south, the TIC coordinators will need to coordinate a pickup date with Brian Beers, manager of the Paint Bank hatchery. If you are so inclined, a possible hatchery tour could be arranged if you want to make a field trip with your students. If you choose, you can also arrange egg pickup with either the Wytheville or Marion hatcheries

#### **30 Days Before Eggs Are To Be Picked Up**

1. Assemble all parts for aquarium setup (see suggested equipment list) and fill the tank with water.
2. Turn on the filter.
3. Make the egg basket(s) if you are not using commercially purchased baskets and Bioboard (if using).
4. Practice water changes. An efficient water change can take anywhere between 15-30 minutes once students know what they are doing. Practice before eggs arrive.

#### **1 Week Before Eggs Are To Be Picked Up**

1. Turn on the chiller, setting the chiller thermostat temperature to register around 52 degrees. Please note – **you should always rely on your digital thermometer for an accurate water temperature reading.** After one day, readjust the chiller thermostat as required to have the water temperature register around 52 degrees.
2. Test the water parameters and record the reading on the results worksheet (see P. 50 for sample). Do not worry if the pH is around 8. (see Water Testing in the next section for more detailed information)

#### **1 Day Before Eggs Are To Be Picked Up**

1. Verify water temperature down to 50-52°F (10-11°C) – **rely on the digital thermometer, not the temperature reading from the chiller.**

2. Position the egg basket(s) in the tank. Make sure that the basket(s) are at the opposite end from the water flow. There should not be a strong direct flow of water directly on the egg basket(s).
3. The air stone should be placed near the egg basket(s), but not underneath them.

## Section V.

## Trout Care

With the trout in place, keeping the tank system clean and keeping the tank bacterial colonies happy are the most important jobs. That means regular water changes, bi-weekly or more often, using aged tap water (at least 48 hours) or dechlorinated water. If there is slime on the walls of the tank, clean it off with a sponge on a long handle. You can also agitate any precipitate and allow the filter to take in the debris. With a cleaner tank, your trout will have a much higher chance of survival.

The nitrifying bacteria in the tank change trout waste (ammonia) into nitrites and then further into nitrates. While ammonia and nitrites are fairly toxic to the fish, nitrates are not very toxic at all. The nitrifying bacteria are surface dwellers. They live on all the surfaces of the tank and equipment, and especially on all faces of the gravel, lava stone, and wood.

### **Cleaning/Water Changes:**

Water changes should be done with fresh clean water, no chlorination. “Aging” your water in jugs or buckets for at least two days will allow the chlorine to dissipate or you can use a dechlorinating solution to have your water ready immediately. First, clean the sides of the tank as described above. To save time and energy, do a water change right after you clean the gravel and bottom of the tank. Prime and use the Gravel Vacuum according to the manufacturer’s instructions. To ensure a thorough cleaning, make sure the gravel cleaner tip goes all the way to the glass bottom of the tank. Make sure you have a large enough discharge bucket – a 5 gallon plastic bucket should suffice. Clean one half of the tank at the beginning of the week and the other half at the end of the week. Cleaning the tank twice a week will be more than sufficient. As you clean the aquarium using the gravel cleaner, you will be removing about 5 gallons of water. When you have finished cleaning the gravel, add new water to the same level it was before cleaning. Add the water slowly, trying not to create a disturbance. Additionally, wring out the chiller and filter pre-filters once a week in dechlorinated water to remove the surface crud and waste. Make sure you record your water changes in your daily log.

Imbalances in pH or spikes in ammonia readings indicate that the number of water changes should be increased. If fish behave strangely or start dying in large numbers, poor water quality is often the root of the problem. If an emergency water change is needed, no more than one third of the water should be changed and it should be chilled close to the correct temperature before addition by floating ice containers (see Q and A section for details).

The removal of dead fish is also very important. Many fish start to get lethargic, or have problems swimming. Eventually, they simply float around the tank. These fish are sick, and they will never get better. One dead fish body, if left too long, can spread the disease to the other fish causing damage to the whole population.

### **Daily Check List:**

1. Monitor and record the tank temperatures; an increase in temperature might indicate a chiller problem.
2. Feed trout (after they have hatched) per the chart in Section VIII.

3. Check and remove any dead fish or debris from the tank.
4. Test the water parameters (Ammonia, pH, Nitrites, and Nitrides) and record the readings in a log. Also enter any water changes and other events into the log.
5. Ensure that water is flowing from the chiller and the filter and that the air stone is still working.

#### **Weekly Check List:**

1. Clean the gravel (you will be performing water change at the same time) on both halves and wipe down all sides of the tank – usually Tuesday and Fridays are good days and record the amount of water changed. ***It should be noted that as the parr grow, you will need to increase the cleaning schedule to at least three times per week.***
2. Remove and clean the pre-filters by squeezing them out in a bucket containing dechlorinated water.
3. Check all hose connections and tighten if any are loose.

#### **Bi-Weekly Check List:**

1. Rinse out the filter components using dechlorinated water once the fry are free swimming and eating.
2. Remove dust and lint from the fins of the coolant tubing (those black thin metal slats on the side of the chiller). This can be accomplished using a small vacuum cleaner, dusting cloth or soft bristle plastic dust brush.

#### **Water Testing: Use Kit provided with set-up**

The test kit provided has solutions for testing for ammonia, nitrate, nitrite, and pH. While testing for all four is a good practice, the two key tests are for **pH** and **Ammonia**. All test results should be kept in a log on a daily basis for review as well as providing “real” data for the students to graph. **If your initial pH reading is 7.6, use the HIGH pH test chemicals as you may be at the upper limit of the lower pH chemical test solution.**

**pH:** Depending on your water source, you will have pH readings from 5.0 to 8.0. In the ideal world of raising trout, you should strive for a pH reading of about 7.0. **However**, tests done during TIC trout releases have shown that stream water pH varies from 7.0 to 8.0. As long as the pH stays fairly constant, usually within .3 of the base reading you took when you established the tank, your trout will be fine. Do not worry about having too high a pH unless you get into the 8.3 or higher range. If you get a pH reading above 8.3, contact your TIC coordinator quickly. It may be necessary to get a supply of Discus buffer – a chemical that will lower and buffer water to a more neutral reading or you can follow the following suggestions on changing your pH naturally.

The following are instructions on how to naturally raise or lower the pH in your tank if the pH reads above 8.3 or below 6.5 if you don't want to add chemicals to your water.

**If the water is too basic (above 7.5)**, gather about 2 or 3 handfuls of **OAK** leaves and put them into a mesh bag or stocking. Let the bag float in the water or weight

it so it sinks. The tannic acid in the leaves will naturally lower the pH. You may have to replenish the oak leaves after a couple of weeks.

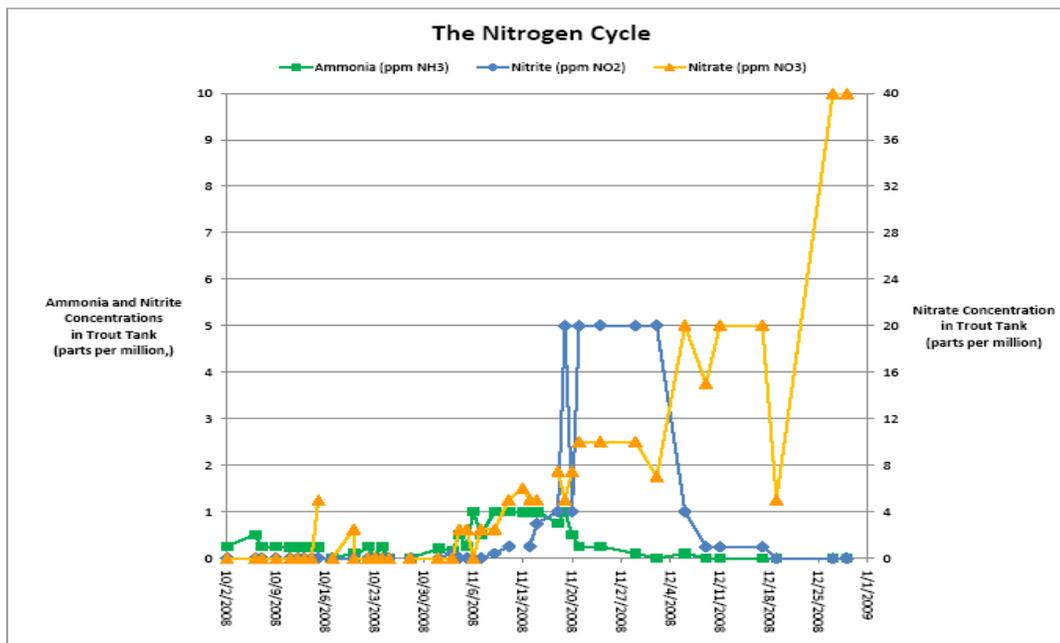
**If the water is too acidic (below 6.5)**, usually adding a total of ½ cup of rinsed coral chips in a 55 gallon tank will raise and maintain a pH of about 7.0 depending on the existing water chemistry. Aquarium hobbyists have used coral chips for many years in lieu of chemicals that are on the market. As with anything that alters the chemistry of aquarium water, it must be done in slow steps in order not to adversely affect the fish. Divide the ½ cup of chips into 3 equal portions, spreading a portion every 3 or 4 days across the bottom of the tank over a 2 to 3 week period. If at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week, if the pH is still lower than required, add another 1/2 cup of rinsed coral chips over another 2 to 3 week period. Coral chips can be found in most pet stores.

Using coral chips exclusively instead of gravel will result in a pH off the measurement scale and will be harmful to the development of the fish.

***DO NOT change*** the pH level more than .1 or .2 IN A DAY.

**Ammonia:** Major water changes will be needed if the ammonia loads become consistently too high for the biological filtration to handle. This usually occurs when the fish are over fed, the tank is not cleaned on the suggested schedule, or there are too many fish in the tank and the bacteria colony has not been fully established. If the problem is frequent, some fish may need to be removed to reduce the daily levels or the number of weekly water changes increased to 3 or 4 a week. Re-dose the tank with BioZyme to add additional bacteria to convert ammonia into harmless compounds. Fairly quickly, your ammonia readings will drop to 0.0 or 0.1 and stay there as long as you faithfully clean the gravel and do the bi-weekly water changes.

The Nitrogen Cycle – on average, how your water chemistry readings should look.



A Potential Emergency Care routine (from Brian Beers, Paint Bank Hatchery)

**DO NOT USE THIS UNLESS YOUR TIC COORDINATOR APPROVES**

Except from a poisoning, extreme chemical spikes, or loss of oxygen, fish usually die slowly, such as getting weak, acting lethargic, labored breathing, loss of appetite, degrading of overall appearance such as color and weight, open sores can form, and fungus.

If mortality increases, a recommended treatment a 2% salt bath. It is like giving a person 2 aspirin; it's not antibiotics but it helps. Transfer the fish to a bucket with a 2 % solution salt water. Make sure that the salt is non iodized and contains no trace minerals. Dissolve the salt into the water add the fish and aeration to the bucket. Keep the fish in the solution for 1 hr per day for 3 consecutive days. A new salt bath should be made each day.

Here is a calculation example.

4 gallons of water weigh 31.4 lbs. 31.4 lbs equals 502 oz 1 % of 500oz equals 5 oz. For a 2% solution, mix 10 oz of salt with 4 gallons of water. The water quality of the salt solution water has to be good, just like a tank water change.

### **A Note About Enthusiastic Help:**

Every year, many schools enlist the assistance of security and maintenance staff to feed the fish on the weekends and holidays. These well meaning helpers, often become great fans of the fish, and are soon spending their break periods watching...and yes...feeding the fish. People with different schedules, feed the fish unaware that others are doing the same. You might not want to just warn these fans about over-feeding, but have a sheet of paper near the tank so they can track how often the fish have been fed.

### **CRISIS NOTES—READ BEFORE TROUT TRAGEDY OCCURS**

- Always have buckets waiting with tank-ready water - dechlorinated by sitting 48+ hours or use a dechlorinating solution for instant readiness). If you come in and all fish are lethargic – **do a 20% WATER CHANGE every day for 2 or 3 days.**
- If you come in and all fish are unmoving at the bottom of the tank – **do a 20% WATER CHANGE every day for 2 or 3 days.**
- If you come in and your fish don't respond to food – **do a 20% WATER CHANGE every day for 2 or 3 days.**
- During the first few weeks after the alevins hatch, initial ammonia spikes from overfeeding are likely until the bacterial colony is established. During this time, water changes to remove the ammonia are the only solution. **DO NOT ADD ANY CHEMICALS THAT CLAIM TO NEUTRALIZE AMMONIA. WHILE IT WILL NEUTRALIZE THE AMMONIA, IT WILL ALSO ROB YOUR GOOD BACTERIA OF THE FOOD IT NEEDS TO GROW.**
- If you change your filter media (non Fluval filter systems), only change one section at a time. This allows the bacteria from the remaining section to colonize the new media.

### **Other Helpful Notes**

- All water in tank must remain extremely clean. Everyone **must** rinse hands of all contaminants including lotions, soap, etc, before working with tank.
- If chiller runs continuously, contact your TIC coordinator, as it may need more refrigerant or insulation.
- It is better to have slightly hungry fish than to over-feed the tank and have too much waste.
- **Have about 6 – 8 frozen 2 liter jugs of dechlorinated water on hand. In the event of a power outage, float one or two of these at a time in the tank to keep temperature down. All labels and glue should be removed from jugs before use. In an emergency, ice cubes in a zip lock type of bag can be used.**

## Section VI.

## Egg Stages

### **Getting Eyed Eggs**

You will be receiving approximately 200 – 300 Brook or Brown trout eggs, wrapped in a mesh, paper, or cloth packet. To ensure proper care and a good hatch rate, for those picking up a single batch of eggs you will need the following items:

1. a small cooler filled with ice,
2. a small plastic container (container A) that is about 6” x 6” x 6” - a packet of eggs is about ½ the size of a flatten baseball,
3. a larger plastic tray that container A can fit in with room around the sides,
4. another plastic container (Container B) with lid that will hold a sack of lava rock the size of a grapefruit,
5. a small clean towel, and
6. a small, clean, empty water bottle that will be filled with water that the egg delivery person will bring. For long trips or for eggs that will be delivered the next day, you will use this cold, fresh water to keep the eggs nice and moist.

For those of you picking up multiple egg packets or keeping the eggs overnight before delivery, the supplies needed be sized up. The important thing is to keep the eggs cool – not cold. The cooler needs to be efficient enough for ice to still be in the cooler in the morning. Do NOT store the eggs in a refrigerator – that is too cold.

Container A is placed in the tray which is then placed on top of ice cubes or cold packs with crumpled newspaper between and around the tray. Basically you are making a small nest of newspaper that the tray can sit in. This way, the eggs can be maintained at a cool, not cold, temperature by not being in direct contact with the ice. Additionally, by putting crumpled newspaper between the tray and the ice, the container should have minimal opportunity for any jostling or sliding around, which can hurt the eggs.

Container B will be filled with water and does not need to be kept cool.

When you get to your tank, the eggs will need time to acclimate to the temperature and water chemistry of your tank. Let container A in the tank for about 30 minutes, adding approximately a ¼ to ½ cup of your tank water every 10 minutes. After about 30 minutes, you can remove the eggs from the bag and gently pour the eggs into the hatching basket. Unwrap the egg packet over the hatching basket. It is recommended that you turn off your filter while you pour the eggs into the basket so they don’t get blown by any current into the tank. If that happens, DON’T PANIC!! All it means is that your eggs will hatch in the bottom of the tank instead of the egg basket. **DON’T FORGET TO TURN YOUR FILTER BACK ON!!!**

Along with your egg packet, you will also receive a packet of BioZyme. Additionally, you could also receive, depending on available quantities, a stick on tape measure to put on the outside bottom edge of your tank to help you easily measure the size of your fish, a packet of lava rock that has been inoculated with the “good bacteria”, a bag of food, and a brochure on the hatchery your eggs came from.

After you put your eggs in the hatching basket, check your eggs and remove any solid white or “fuzzy” looking eggs. They will not hatch.

### Eggs and fungus:

Do your best to keep the dead eggs removed and you will not have a problem. However, most all tanks experience some fungus issues. No big deal...so does the hatchery. The fungus covered eggs must be removed as they clump together with the good eggs and spread the fungus and can kill the good ones. Just do your best to get rid of all the white creepy stuff !

If you have eggs that clump together, you can gently squirt them with a turkey baster to separate the bad ones from the good ones. If you still have problems, you can gently scoop up the clump in your hand, while keeping it in the water at the surface, then gently separate the eggs, allowing the good ones to drop back into the basket. You will see that at this stage, just before hatching, the good eggs are quite firm.

But, use caution, be gentle, and don't do this unless you have too. It is best to just use the turkey baster to squirt the bad ones away then remove them.

At this stage, the eggs go through a bit of transformation and will become opaque just before hatching so don't confuse them with bad eggs. The bad ones will be white or have fungus. If in doubt, leave them in the basket until you are sure. Take a close look with a magnifying glass, you will notice you can see into the good eggs and actually see the trout all curled up, but other ones may have a dull or opaque look.

Also, now is the time to do an accurate count on the number of eggs you received. DGIF would like us to keep accurate records on the number of eggs received, the number of eggs that did not hatch, and the number of fry released so they can do some statistical measures. It is also good measure for us to determine how we are doing. This information can be logged in your daily water chemistry log.

### **Hatching**—(no more than 2-3 days from first egg to last)

- The eggs will not all hatch at exactly the same time. The eggs will hatch over about a 2-3 day period from the first egg hatching.
- Some eggs will not hatch properly and should be picked out after a couple of days.
- Alevin may not come all the way out of the egg.
- Any leftover eggs must be removed or isolated—these likely will not hatch).
- The leftover shells float to the top of the tank or in the basket. Fish enzymes will break down these shells and create a foam—this is normal. You can scrub the sides of the tank to loosen this foam.

### **When your eggs start to hatch, it is time to add Biozyme:**

**\*Important\* If you are using a UV Sterilizer (UVS), UNPLUG it before adding Biozyme, but make sure your filter and chiller are running.**

You probably are already familiar with the nitrogen cycle and the importance of biological filtration. The nitrobacter & nitrosomona species that are part of this cycle are the primary bacteria responsible for the consumption of excess ammonia that will be produced from the fish waste. They break down the fish pee and poop

into a harmless chemical. While we talk about the bacteria colony and its growth, you will not be able to see them

The container of Biozyme in your kit will be in a powder form. It contains the bacteria needed to help start the process of bacterial growth in your filtration system. Follow the directions on the package for the amount to use.

1. Turn off **water filter** and the UVS, but leave the chiller/underwater pump on.
2. Open the water filter and add the biozyme directly into the filter compartments. Pre mixing the suggested amount in a cup of tank water is helpful – if using the powder form.
3. Close the filter and **TURN IT BACK ON** – **leave the UVS off for a week.**

Once the eggs develop into fry and they begin to consume food, the nitrogen cycle will begin due to the waste being produced. The bacteria will continue to increase grow on its own until the colony is sufficient to process the ammonia load. At that point the bacteria will maintain a fairly constant.

You may want to add an additional dose about 1 or 2 weeks after the first dose to make sure the bacteria are firmly established and ready to take on the task of converting ammonia into harmless chemicals. Follow the above steps again, including turning off the UVS for a week.

The reason for turning off the UVS is that while the nitrobacter & nitrosomona species are surface dwelling bacteria, until they are established on a surface they can be found free floating in the water and are thereby subject to be killed by the UVS.

## Section VII.

## Fry Stages

### **Just after hatching**

- During this alevin phase you may see a jelly-like fungal growth. Check for this around the inside tank surfaces. Also check for this growth on the surfaces of the hatching basket. If you find this, wipe or scrape the surfaces with a sponge or other tool.
- Loosening this growth will send it through the sterilization and filtration system.

### **Alevin (sac-fry)—(1-3 weeks)**

- The length of time at this stage depends on the water temperature. In warmer water, fry develop faster.
- A digital thermometer is the most reliable method of checking the tank water temperature as **the Chiller consoles are notoriously inaccurate. Check your digital thermometer daily.**
- Look for your odd trout (two-head, three-head, etc.). This is a good lesson in survival of the fittest—these odd trout don't usually survive until release.
- Look at heart development, etc.
- Alevins can survive in a Petri dish under a microscope or hand lens for a short period of time (2 to 3 minutes) if you want to let your class observe the Alevins more closely.



### **Swim-up stage— (one week or less)**

- As yolk sacs disappear, some trout will start swimming around looking for food. These trout must have food available for them immediately when they are hungry.
- When you see the first one swim up in hatching basket box, feed them! To feed, put a small pinch of food near the swimming fish (in basket or otherwise).

- Lower the basket(s) so the lip of the basket is about 4” below the water surface level.
- Start by spreading a miniscule amount of food near any swimming trout. Turn off the filter system for a few minutes when you are feeding the trout for the first couple of times. Not having a strong current will make the food more visible and more likely the trout will begin to feed. **MAKE SURE YOU TURN THE FILTER BACK ON!!!!!!**
- Now is a good time to “boost” your tank’s nitrifying bacteria with another infusion of BioZyme as described in Section VI.
- Once all fry are swimming up and have been eating, it is time for the next step.
- Unhook the basket(s) and lower it gently to the bottom of the tank.
- Strong, adventurous fish will swim out. The more timid, weaker fish will hide for a few more days, until they are stronger.
- You can now remove the basket(s) for the year.

#### **Fry stage**—(6-8 weeks)

- Feeding less more often is a better method for feeding. Use the feeding chart in Section VIII to determine the feeding amounts.
- Some trout never learn to feed, and will die. These non-feeding fish are called “pinheads”—big heads, little bodies. These trout should be removed, as they will not develop.
- Every TIC classroom sees a mortality spike with the pinheads—it is VERY normal.
- Continued leftover food means that you are over feeding your fish. Overfeeding can cause problems with ammonia levels. If in doubt, feed less until you are fairly certain the fish are eating everything you are feeding them.

#### **Parr stage**

##### **Parr**—(the rest of the time)

- Look for parr marks on the trout – the vertical stripes. Additionally, as they get older, some of the adult coloration will start to appear.
- Vacuum the bottom of the tank twice a week using the gravel cleaner doing one half of the tank each time. Once your trout at 2” or more in length, adjust the cleaning schedule to at least three times per week to adjust for the increased waste being generated by the fish.
- Always keep track of your water chemistry. If any levels seem too high, do a big water change (20% or more). Be careful to watch the temperature as you do this. Don’t let the tank temperature fluctuate more than 5 degrees or so. In an emergency, clean water is more important than temperature stability, though.
- Cannibalism can occur—the big fish do eat the little fish. If cannibalism is becoming an issue, then feed more often, so as to assuage hunger.

A Beautiful Brook Trout Parr



Many thanks to Bobbi Poats, Beverly Manor Middle School

## Section VIII.

## Feeding Chart

Trout should be given small amounts of food. Over feeding the fish can pollute the tank environment. Having said that, you do want your trout to have fat, round stomachs (see the picture below). Divide the total daily amount and feed a portion 2-3 times per day. The trout will seem “hungry” all the time; remember that they are wild animals, and their instinct is to eat any food presented to them, no matter how often. These trout can survive over a weekend without any food, but during vacations it is best for someone to check on the tank, conduct water changes, and provide a small amount of food on a regular basis if you are not using a weekend feeder.



First feedings: With the fish still in egg basket, feed them very little food

<b><u>Food Weight in Grams</u></b>				
<b># of Fish</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>300</b>
Out of Hatch Box	0.09	0.17	0.34	0.51
Fish = approx 1”	0.34	.0.68	1.36	2.04
Fish = approx. 1 ½”	0.85	1.70	3.40	5.10
Fish = approx 2 ¼”	2.73	5.45	10.90	16.35
<b><u>Food Weight in Ozs</u></b>				
<b># of Fish</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>300</b>
Out of Hatch Box	0.003	0.005	0.01	0.015
Fish = approx 1”	0.015	0.025	0.05	0.075
Fish = approx. 1 ½”	0.03	0.06	0.12	0.18
Fish = approx 2 ¼”	0.10	0.19	0.38	0.57

As your fish grow, you will see them starting to jump for the food. When this happens, it is suggested to put some type of cover over the tank so they don’t jump out.

## Section IX.

## Vacation Notes

### If Not Using the Weekend Automatic Feeder

#### **Prepping for short vacations** (3- or 4-day weekends)

- Feed less on Friday.
- Do your water change as normal.

#### **Prepping for mid-length vacations** (7-10 days)

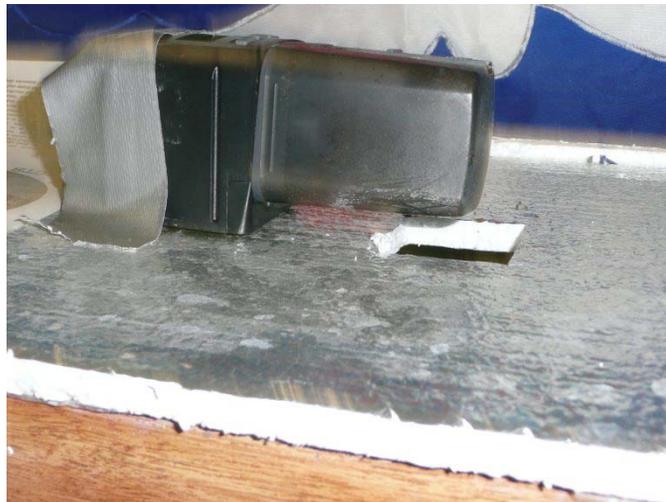
- Trout are wild animals that can survive leaner times. They really do not need to be fed or visited during a 10-day vacation.
- Starting about 1 week prior to vacation, feed a little less, so as to minimize ammonia discharge during holidays.
- Do a nice BIG water change on the day you are leaving. Be careful to watch the temperature as you do this. Don't let the tank temperature fluctuate more than 5 degrees or so.

#### **Prepping for LONG vacation** (11+ days)

- Same prep as above.
- Plan to come in once to feed, if possible, about halfway through.
- If you can't come in, don't worry. Trout are wild animals that can survive the lean times.

### If Using Weekend Feeder

- Follow the directions for loading the food into the system and setting the food dispensing time.
- Test the system before installing it on your tank to make sure it is dispensing approximately  $1/2$  the amount of daily food you would normally feed reducing the possibility of uneaten food polluting the tank. You may have to adjust the dispenser depending on the model you have.
- Teachers have found it easy to mount the feeder above the tank on the screen or extra piece of foam with a hole cut into it to allow the food to drop into the tank.



## **Section X.**

## **Crisis Mode**

### **What if I come in and many of the trout have died? What do I do?**

- Remove healthy fish first by putting them into in a reserve water bucket with the emergency ice blocks, no matter its temperature.
- Put a battery-operated aerator or tank's air stone in the bucket.
- Remove as much water from the tank as possible (80%).
- Leave pump and filter intake covered.
- Clean tank with clean scrub sponge and gravel cleaner. Remove as much crud as possible.
- Refill tank with any water available (if using chlorinated tap, use a declorinating product first).
- Cool water with ice or freeze packs to the proper temperature.
- Drain and clean the filter and pre-filter and turn it back on. **DO NOT TURN ON THE UVS IF USING.**
- Add BioZyme as soon as possible.
- Replace fish in tank.
- The next day, add more BioZyme.

### **What do I do if my chiller stops working?**

Contact your TIC coordinator ASAP. Float 1 or 2 of the frozen jugs of water on hand in the tank to maintain the temperature. Replace as necessary until your replacement chiller arrives. All labels and glue should be removed from jugs before use.

### **Making an Emergency Chiller (for Flow Through Chiller system)**

You can “make” an in-line chiller using a submersible pump, the chiller thermostat, a whole bunch of tubing (thanks to Home Depot), some connectors, and a cooler.

Basically disconnected the hose from the U/V pump and attached about 20 feet of additional hose to it using brass hose connectors. Coil up the tubing and put it in a cooler and then fill the cooler with ice. Connect the U/V pump power through the chiller's thermostat so that it would know when to shut off.

### **Obtaining an Emergency Replacement Chiller Procedure**

Dr. David Jones of Martinsville has graciously offered to maintain a supply of chillers in the event an unexpected chiller failure. He is willing to overnight a chiller in order to keep the tank operating properly.

If you experience a chiller failure, call Dr. Jones at both of the following numbers:

Cell: 276-634-8488    Office: 276-638-8888

When you talk to him, you will need to provide him with:

1. Your name, address, phone number, and TU chapter name; and

2. The shipping address where you want the chiller sent.

You will also have to get the address where to send the check for the cost of the shipping and the replacement chiller.

The school, if not supported by a TU chapter, will be responsible paying for the cost of shipping this replacement chiller to the school as well as the cost of a new chiller. Dr. Jones has indicated that the chapter or school may take up to a year to repay him, by check, for the cost of the chiller and shipping.

## **Section XI.**

## **Trout Release and Transporting Techniques**

The materials you will need are:

1. Sturdy cooler or bucket (clean cat litter buckets work well) with a loose-fitting lid.
2. Ice made with dechlorinated water -- or -- ice in a Ziploc bag or 2-liter bottle with labels removed.
3. Mandatory Item - Lava rock from the tank – if travel time is over 45 minutes.
4. Optional Item - Battery-powered air stone – if travel time is over 45 minutes.

Instructions:

1. Fill cooler or bucket half full with water from tank (be sure you can lift the cooler). The reason for filling only half way is that the introduction of air into the water is more important than the depth of the water. The slight jostling of the water in the bucket/cooler will keep adding oxygen to the water.
2. Put the lava rock from the tank into the bottom of the cooler.
3. Transfer trout fingerlings to cooler or bucket using a small net.
4. Add ice to water -- but monitor the temperature, do not allow to drop too low.
5. Insert and start air stone – if used.

Hints:

1. Make sure the trout aren't in the bucket or cooler longer than they have to be.
2. Make sure to have enough water, but not so much that the cooler can't be carried.
3. Make sure the lid is on tight enough so that your fingerlings don't splash out, but don't seal them in and cut off their air supply.

NOTE: Whenever releasing fish into ANY body of water, you must have state approval to do so. If released into the wrong body of water, our small fingerlings can permanently alter an ecosystem. Please coordinate your trout release with your TIC coordinator for more information.

Once you've arrived at the stream or second tank, it is important to slowly acclimate your fingerlings to their new environment. Monitoring the temperature of your cooler or bucket, slowly add water from their new stream/tank, one or two cupfuls at a time every 10 minutes. The goal is to gently change the temperature and water chemistry of your cooler or bucket water to near the temperature and parameters of the new water, allowing the temperature to change no more than a few degrees every ten minutes. Once the bucket/cooler temperature is within one or two degrees of the stream/tank temperature, remove the fingerlings to their release container. To release the trout, lower their container into the stream/tank and gently tip it to let them out. You can either release them that way or you can transfer them into individual cups so each student has one to release.



Wallace Middle School students prepare to release their trout

## Section XII.

### End of Year Cleanup

At the end of the TIC season, it is important to clean your aquarium set-up in order to ensure a successful next year. If you take a few minutes to make sure everything is clean, your equipment will have a much longer life. Here are a few pointers for cleaning the various components of your system:

#### **Aquarium Tank**

1. Turn off the electrical pumps, chillers, filters, etc. Empty the tank almost all the way, by your usual method--many people like to use the gravel cleaner to do this work. Then remove the gravel, wood, and plants.
2. Finish emptying the tank and disconnect the tubing.
3. Using a solution of 1 part Chlorine bleach (Clorox – unscented ) and 10 parts water, wipe down the interior and exterior of the tank. You can also use a 1 part white vinegar to 5 part water solution. A soft sponge (dedicated to this use only) can be used to scrub hard to remove scale and algae growth. For stubborn scale/algae, you can scrape them off carefully with a straight edged safety razor.
4. You can use the same solution from above for cleaning out the tubing (clean tubes using long brushes you can buy at any pet shop).
5. Rinse the tank to remove any chlorine/vinegar and wipe dry with clean cloth, or let air-dry.
6. Wash and dry the gravel and wood by laying out on a cloth or towel in the sun or a ventilated area. The gravel can also be sterilized with the Clorox/vinegar solution, but they also MUST be rinsed and completely dried. Do not use either solution on the wood
7. Put the gravel and wood inside the tank and store it in a safe place covering the top with any dust-proof covering.

#### **Aquarium Chiller**

##### Drop-in style chiller (Tradewind)

1. Using a bleach or vinegar solution and a dedicated sponge, you can wipe off the exterior of the drop-in unit.
2. For hard-to-remove plaque, a small PLASTIC scrub brush can be used. NEVER USE A WIRE BRUSH.
3. Remove dust and lint from the fins of the coolant tubing (those black thin slats on the side of the chiller). This can be accomplished using a small vacuum cleaner, dusting cloth or soft bristle plastic dust brush. Your chiller will run more efficiently if you clean the lint and dust from this side of it.

##### Flow-through style chiller (Arctica Titanium, Prime Tower, Polar Bear)

1. Discard pre-filter sponge on pump.
2. Tip chiller and drain. Using pump or faucet hose, flush chiller with clean tap water in each outlet, to ensure any dirt is washed out of the cooling tank. Then tip further to ensure it is fully drained.

3. Remove dust and lint from all vents on the chiller, using a small vacuum cleaner, dusting cloth, or soft bristle plastic dust brush

### **Filter**

1. Take apart your filter and scrub out the plastic parts with your 1:10 bleach solution or 1:5 vinegar solution.
2. Thoroughly rinse out all filter media (filter sponges, charcoal, ceramic cylinders, etc.) with regular water, and dry them in the sun or a well ventilated area. Scrub the ceramic cylinders until free of all debris. For the hang on type filters, it is recommended that you buy new filter cartridges for the following year. You can also use this year's filters that you rinsed out. Fluval filters do not need replacement parts – except for the pre-filter.
3. Thoroughly air-dry entire filter apparatus.
4. When all components are dry, re-assemble the filter and store inside the tank.

## **Section XIII.**

## **Q and A's**

**My chiller temperature reading and digital thermometer are showing different temperatures. Which should I use?** Always rely on your digital thermometer to determine the temperature of your tank. Chiller temperature readings can be off by as much as 10 degrees.

**I set my chiller temperature for 55 degrees, but the digital thermometer shows 60 degrees. What should I do?** Determine the difference in readings (in this case 5 degrees). Lower the chiller temperature setting by this differential and check the next day.

### **Are leaks a problem? How can I prevent leaks?**

Once a chiller system is assembled, it is unlikely that a leak will develop. However, physical contact with the system could damage connections, particularly tugging on tubes. For this reason, students should not touch chiller or filter hardware without supervision. A serious leak will pump the entire contents of the tank onto the ground within a very short time.

### **What should I do if my chiller system starts to leak?**

If there is a leak in any external part such as the tubes for the chiller, turn off and unplug all electric tank systems. A large volume of water may be contained in the chiller and chiller tubes, so it might help stop a leak if the tubes are removed from the tank and placed in a 5 gallon bucket. It is important that the leak be fixed as soon as possible so that the chiller can continue to keep the water cool. Float some frozen tank water or ice in a zip lock bag in the tank to maintain the temperature while you are fixing the leak.

### **Can I fix leaks on my own?**

The assembly of the chiller system is straightforward, so fixing it is quite possible without assistance. Simply unscrew the connection, and make sure that it is not cracked or damaged in anyway. Next, reassemble the leaking connection carefully. You can use a tool to tighten any connection, but do not force any plastic parts as they will crack under excessive strain.

### **What happens if there is a power failure? How much time do I have?**

It is important that the fish have a stable a water temperature as possible. Short downtimes, of an hour or two at a time, probably will not harm the fish or change tank temperatures by any great amount. However, lost power during the night or over a weekend (or worse still, a long vacation) will likely be fatal to the fish.

### **What should I do if the power must be turned off?**

All individuals such as custodians, who may turn the power on and off, should be informed that the trout system needs constant power. If there is no way to prevent it, for construction for example, it would be best to cycle the power. This means running the chiller for two hours on, then two off. This is better than simply letting the tank sit all day without power.

### **Can I keep eggs or fish in a household refrigerator?**

Refrigerators are not an acceptable substitute for the tank environment. Because most refrigerators operate between 35 and 40 degrees, they are far colder than the tank.

### **What do I do with my eggs or fish in an emergency?**

In an emergency, eggs can be preserved by placing the hatching basket in a container of water and putting that in a cooler in a cool dark place, with an ice pack and thermometer. Careful regulation in the amount of ice should make it possible to keep the eggs around 50 degrees. Do not add ice to the eggs directly; apply to the outside of the egg container. Ice water may be dirty, and the rapid melting from immersion would cause sudden temperature changes that might do more harm than good.

With fish, particularly large fish, the only option in an emergency is to add ice to the tank. The best way to do this is to freeze large plastic containers of water, such as soda bottles with the labels removed, and add them to the tank. When creating these, do not fill them to the top as the ice that forms takes up more space than the liquid. Clean ice packs can also work, or sealed plastic bags of regular ice. It is possible to regulate temperature by adding or taking away ice in this way. Do not add regular tap water ice cubes directly to the tank unless they are in a Zip Lock type of bag--this ice likely has chlorine in it, which can harm the fish. Some teachers create tank-water ice cubes, in anticipation of an emergency.

A 5 gallon bucket for every 20 fish would be a good choice for holding fish in an emergency, if there is a problem with the tank.

It is best to prevent any such problems and carefully maintain the tank environment. The priority in an emergency is getting the tank environment back to normal; no emergency procedure can replace the stability of a working tank.

### **What should I do if there is a serious leak while I am away, and the tank is almost empty when I return?**

If there is a serious leak, during the night or weekend, almost all of the tank water may be pumped out. It is unlikely for the tank system to fail on its own, but it is important to be ready in the event of such an accident. If the fish are in very shallow water, and the chiller is no longer working because the pump is running dry, it is important to carefully repair the tank system environment. First, you should find and fix the leak. Unplug the filter system. Next, add a declorinating solution to a container holding about 5 gallons of cold tap/well water (stir the tap water as you add a declorinating solution; for well water this step is not necessary). This should be enough to get the chiller working again; if it isn't, add another 5 gallons of cold declorinated/well water to the tank. Add this water slowly, and try to make this water around the same temperature as the tank water (which might be warmer by now). Make sure the air stone is working and putting bubbles into the water and that the UVS system is on.

Once there is enough water for the chiller to run, you should let the tank reach 50 degrees again. Open the filter and pour all the water out of it and rinse the filter media. Because there was no water circulation, the filter will be full of dead bacteria that will kill the fish.

At this point, use a declorinating solution to get as much tap water as possible (you don't need this solution if you are using well water) in every clean container you might have. Put your emergency ice packs into the containers to start lowering the temperature. Once the declorinated/well water has reached a temperature close to the tank's temperature, slowly add the water to the tank. If you can, it would be best to add only a few cups at a time, many times during the day. Continue to do this until the tank is about half full. Open the filter, refill it and add a dose of BioZyme, reconnect the filter system, and plug it in. Once the tank is half full, you can add the aged water a few gallons a day. Continue to make new aged water as you use it until the tank is back up to normal levels. Then resume normal maintenance procedures including water changes.

The idea throughout this process is to make the changes for the trout as subtle as possible. Large swings in temperature and/or water quality can stress them out and increase mortality.

**How can I inform custodians, or other teachers, about what to do if there is an emergency while I am away?**

It is a good idea to give custodians some basic information about the requirements of your tank. For example, it is important that custodians know that your tank always needs electricity. It would be most helpful to place a sheet of paper (in a visible location) describing emergency procedures. This might include contact numbers, and basic advice on what to do to stabilize the tank if there is a chiller failure, leak, or power outage. You should prepare several frozen soda bottles of water to use in a chiller emergency, and then include the location of this ice and how to use it in your emergency procedure sheet. An example is below:

**Tank Emergency Procedure:**

**In the event of a power outage, leak, or refrigeration system failure, or any other tank problem, please contact me: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**If you cannot reach me, please try calling:**

**Contact: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_**

**Then,**

**In the event of a power outage:** The trout in this tank need cold water to survive, and the chiller next to/under the tank maintains their temperature. If possible, the electricity to this tank should be turned on again. If the electricity must be off because of maintenance or construction for more than a few hours, please contact me as soon as possible. If I cannot be contacted in time, please place the frozen soda bottle of ice, located \_\_\_\_\_, in the tank to help keep it cool. Even with the ice, the tank needs electricity as soon as possible.

**In the event of a serious leak:** A serious leak can be stopped by turning off all electrical parts of the tank system, or unplugging them. Any leaking tubes should be placed back in the tank or in a bucket. After all the water is cleaned up, the source of the leak can be fixed. This will probably be loose tubes or tubes which fell out of the tank. If there are more than 4 inches of water left in the tank, the fish can survive. Please do not add any water to the tank if this is the case. Lots of tap water, or water that is too warm, can kill the fish. If there is very little water in the tank, please add only enough cold tap water to let the pump work again. If the leak is fixed, please turn on all devices before you leave.

**Do I need goldfish to start my nitrogen cycle? If I start late, should I use more goldfish?**

At this time, it is no longer recommended that goldfish be used to help “break in” the tank system. All systems should be installed with additives such as BioZyme which help create a suitable water environment.

**Can I mix species of trout?**

No, the different trout species may not be compatible. The risk of cannibalism among young fish (under ½ year of age) is greatly increased with species mixing.

**Why are so many of my eggs or fish dying?**

Death is a natural part of fish development. Everyone should expect to lose eggs and fish. The exact survival rate is highly variable and based on many factors. A sudden spike in mortality can indicate a tank problem. It is also worth noting that there are two naturally high-mortality periods, first during the egg stage and then again when the trout first learn to feed. Some fish never learn to feed and simply starve.

**What is a normal death rate?**

Death rates are different from one stage to the next. With green eggs, a large percentage is expected to die. With eyed eggs, a higher survival rate is expected. The loss of most of your eyed eggs does suggest a problem. As the fish hatch, and age further, survival rates should improve. By the time fish are free swimming and have learned to eat, death should be an uncommon event. Losing many free swimming fish, above all else, is a sign that the tank environment is not healthy. As they grow, fish produce more waste, so cleaning and water changes may be needed more often.

**Most of my fish died in the first month, is this common?**

One of the most common times for massive fish death is in the first month. Because eggs and young fish are more easily stressed, there is a high risk for death as a result of fungus, changes in water quality, or large swings in temperature. While the UVS will help with any fungus issues, it is important that water changes and cleaning be practiced before the fish arrive, and that this process is maintained on schedule. Most catastrophic die offs seem to start with a missed cleaning day or weekend. By the time cleaning resumes, the damage may have already been done.

**What do I do with dead fish or dead eggs?**

It is very important that dead eggs, dead fish, and decaying waste matter (discarded food for example) are removed as soon as possible. This should be done at least once a day, and even more often during critical periods or as needed. This process alone is very

important in keeping the remaining fish alive. Poor cleaning is very often the root cause of excessive fish death.

### **Why are my fish or eggs dying at an abnormally high rate?**

Poor water quality, as a result of insufficient cleaning or water changes is among the most serious threats to fish health. It is essential that water changes of 10-20% per week (more as the trout get older and bigger) be maintained, with aged tap or well water. Other causes of fish death might be temperature fluctuations, lack of aeration, and chemical exposure. High ammonia concentrations can result in sudden fish death. Your daily water testing will show if you are having continually high ammonia concentrations. Dealing with ammonia spikes is covered a little further on.

### **How sensitive are the fish to temperature changes?**

For best results, the trout should be exposed to the most stable temperature possible, as close as possible to the ideal. Fish can handle small fluctuations of one or two degrees, but sudden changes of almost any scale will be stressful. Changes of 5 degrees or more are a serious threat to trout survival particularly if they are sudden.

### **How can I help keep a stable tank temperature?**

It is important that the chiller always be on and set to the appropriate temperature. Also, because water changes introduce warmer water into the tank, please limit these changes to approximately 10 – 20% of your tank volume at any one time. If you want, you can pre-cool your water by floating frozen bottles in the bucket before you add it to the tank. The use of insulation will help the chiller maintain a stable temperature, but may not be needed. Larger tanks will also help protect fish because they have more water to buffer any changes.

### **Why is the air stone needed?**

Aeration of the tank is an important part of simulating a stream environment. The stream environment is not only cold, but also constantly moving and constantly mixed with air. Because of this, it is important that filters, air-stones, and the chiller pump all operate well. The pre filters on the chiller pump and the intake on the tank filter, as well as the surface of the air-stones should all be clean and free of debris.

### **Should students wash hands *before* touching tank water?**

Students may wish to clean their hands before working in or around the tank **without using soap**. Simply use warm tap water for this, and for cleaning of other objects like nets and the bucket. This will help keep chemicals and dirt from getting into the tank. Moisturizers and other skincare products might also harm fish. It is very important that no soap enter the tank environment, because soap may harm or kill fish even in small concentrations.

### **Should students wash up *after* contact with tank water?**

Yes. While tank water is not particularly hazardous to students, they should clean their hands with soap and warm water. Please do not use soap until all tank work is done.

### **Some of my hatched fish are not eating - Some of my fish are deformed. Is this normal?**

Yes. During the growth process, some fish will die. Some fish may survive initially only

to die later because they never begin to eat. Other fish will be deformed, and very often will also die as a result of this. This is a natural part of fish reproduction. It is not normal, however, for very many or most of the fish to die. If this is the case, there may be a problem with the tank environment.

**My fish have hatched, what should I do with the eggs?**

The discarded egg shells will decompose naturally in time. If they appear to be hosting fungal growth, they should be removed and disposed of. Just as with living eggs, they might turn opaque white, or may take on a fuzzy appearance. If this is the case, please remove them.

**When should the trout be allowed out of the hatching basket?**

It is generally agreed that trout should remain in the basket as long as possible, even after some start to jump out on their own. Once the trout are all able to swim freely, and are strong enough to navigate the currents of the tank, you can release them into the tank. After the trout have been actively feeding for a week or two, they should be nearly strong enough.

**How do I let the trout out of the basket when it is time?**

You can gently remove the basket from the sides of the tank and slowly lower it to the bottom of the tank. You can let the trout swim out from here. This allows some trout to remain in the protection of the basket for a few days. You may also gently tip the basket as well to remove them, but it is best to be as gentle as possible. Please make sure that the basket is empty before removing it from the tank. Using the pre-filters on the intake lines of the filter and chiller will ensure that small fish are not sucked into these units as a result of the powerful suction these tank components generate.

**My alevin are very active, and are pushing other fish into the corners of the basket. What does this behavior suggest? Should I be feeding these fish more?**

This type of activity is normal in trout. In this stage, young trout prefer dark corners. It may be helpful to put some screen material over the basket to reduce the amount of light these fish are exposed to. UV light can be harmful to eggs and alevin. Fish at this age do not need food at all. When beginning to feed, at the end of the alevin stage, please start with small amounts.

**Trout are being sucked into the filter, how can I prevent this?**

Using the pre-filters on the intake lines of the filter and chiller will ensure that small fish are not sucked into these units as a result of the powerful suction these tank components generate.

**What is an ammonia spike? What can I do about it?**

An ammonia spike is one example of a chemical imbalance in the tank environment. These are serious threats to fish health. The tank filter and its bacterial population help reduce problems like this, but they cannot work alone. The best way to prevent any chemical imbalances in the tank is to regularly clean the tank, and change the water. All debris such as food, waste, and dead fish should be removed as soon as possible. Water changes of 10-20% per week are required and should not be skipped. There is no replacement for regular cleaning and water changes.

**Can I use ammonia removal grains to prevent ammonia spikes?**

They may be used only in a dire emergency if a large water change did not reduce the ammonia. These chemicals tie up the ammonia in the water rendering it harmless to the fish. HOWEVER, by tying up the ammonia, it deprives your biological filter (the “good” bacteria) of the food it needs to live and grow. So in the long run, while you have reduced your ammonia, you are killing off your long-term ammonia reducer (your biological filter).

**My tank is coated with a green slime. What is this? What should I do?**

Green films or slime may indicate algal growth. This will not necessarily hurt your trout, and some teachers leave it growing. Many, however, choose to remove algal growth. It can be mechanically cleaned by using an aquarium (or soap free) sponge or similar tool. Also, to prevent further algal growth, it is best to limit the amount of light entering the tank. The use of foam or paper to cover the sides of the tank will help. The tank should never be in direct sunlight at any time. This may also indicate that the UV sterilizer is not functioning properly. Please be sure to change the bulb every year. Even if an older bulb produces blue light, it may not be creating UV light anymore.

**I am using the same tank system I had last year, what do I need to do to make it ready this year?**

At the beginning of each year, to prepare for the next set of trout, you should clean all parts of the tank system with warm water. Please do not use soap on any part of the tank. If you are using a hang on the tank type filter, you should replace any disposable filter parts; Fluval filters do not require replacement filters. If you are using a UVS, you should install a new UV bulb. See our End-of-Year Cleanup Section XI for more information.

**The water in my tank is cloudy. What should I do?**

Cloudy water probably indicates an excess in decaying matter. This may be from dead fish, leftover food, or a problem with the filtration. Doing regular water changes, as well as cleaning the tank of all solid material, is the best way to fight this. Make sure the filter is functioning properly, and that water is flowing out of it. Clean filter components if needed with aged or well water, but do not use soap or any chemical cleaners. Carbon filter packs should be replaced every year. If fish are not eating all provided food, you may reduce the amount given until they are able to eat it all. Excess food after 10 minutes should be removed and discarded.

**How should I conduct water changes? What is the right amount of water to change?**

Water changes are an important part of tank maintenance. Improper water changes can cause fish stress or even death. It is best to change about 10-20% of tank volume every week with tap water aged for more than 48 hours (so that the chlorine in the water has had time to dissipate), water treated with a dechlorinating solution, or well water.

Using the gravel vacuum is an efficient way to clean both the tank and remove water at the same time. Twice a week cleaning will keep the tank clean as well as generate a 10%-20% water change.

**What happens to the fish next?**

The fish will be released into a watershed stream or river. Students can participate in the

transportation of fish to their new habitat as well as the release process. It is hard to determine the survival rates for released trout, but full grown fish have been recovered and genetically linked to trout raised in the classroom. However, in general, TIC is not a stocking program, but rather an educational program. The true value of raising and releasing trout lies in the process.

## **Hardware assembly FAQ -- also see our Basic Set Up page**

### **How tight should plastic parts be?**

Plastic parts need to be tightened by hand. They should be as tight as possible without risking damage.

### **Is it safe to use metal tools on plastic parts?**

The use of metal tools is OK when great care is taken. It is more important that parts be screwed in place in the proper position; no amount of force can replace good alignment.

### **What tool should I use to tighten the worm gear clamps?**

Some ring clamps come with thumb screws that allow tightening without tools. Others only require a screw driver. These should be tight, but should not be forced. It is possible that plastic parts could be broken with too much force.

### **Does it matter where I put the chiller?**

Yes, the location of the chiller (above or below the tank) may alter the water pressure and flow rate in the system. While the pump can handle just about any arrangement, placing the chiller on the floor below an elevated tank will slightly reduce water flow and pressure. It is more important that tubes be free of kinks or excessive bends, so adding length to relax tubing is fine. The best place to put the chiller is directly below or to one side of the tank. It is best to put the chiller as close to level with the tank, but it is not required.

### **My tap water is discolored, is this ok?**

All water will have some color, most often a faint green or white color. Tap water that is not acceptable might appear very cloudy or may have a strong chemical smell. If this is the case, an alternate source of water should be considered.

### **How do I know if my water is safe for trout?**

Most tap water will be acceptable for use in this tank system. After a break in period of at least one week, there will be plenty of time for chlorine to dissipate, and for particulate matter to be filtered out. Unless your water appears to be totally unacceptable, it is probably safe for trout. The break-in period is an important part of this, so being safe after a week does not mean that water directly from the tap would be safe for fish.

### **What tools are needed for tank installation?**

The only tools needed for tank installation are a screwdriver, knife or pair of scissors, and pliers to tighten any connections if needed. You may also need a clean 5 gallon bucket to assist in filling the tank and water changes. This can be purchased at any hardware store. Please rinse the bucket first and then do not use this bucket for anything other than tank water.

**Do I need to age tank water before first filling the system?**

No, the break in period will age the water before fish are introduced.

**The tubing is very hard to fit over the plastic tank parts, what should I do?**

If tubing doesn't fit over parts, it might help to dip the end of the tub in very hot water. This will momentarily soften the plastic allowing you to slide the tubing over the part.

Also, tubing can be carefully stretched by heating the ends, and then inserting a rigid object like a pair of scissors into the end. This applies pressure to the end and stretches it a small amount. Excessive force can break the tube end.

Tight tubing generally will fit, but it might require some time and patience.

**Should I get a lid for my tank?**

Yes, it is better to cover the tank with some material which can prevent objects from falling in, and provide the reduced light levels that fish prefer. Foam, screen, and plastic have all been used as lid materials with success. Purchased lids for the tank can also work, but because many of these include lights, it is important that the light feature not be used. Also, as the parr grow, they will start jumping for their food and could jump out of the tank!

**Does my tank need insulation?**

Many tank systems have worked without insulation. However, insulation will provide a darker, more stable environment for the fish. Insulation will reduce the amount of work needed to maintain the water temperature, saving electricity and limiting the amount of time the chiller will be operational. In addition, insulation will reduce condensation which could pose a problem in the summer.

**What kind of insulation can I use?**

There are many materials which can help insulate the tank. The most popular is foam sheet material, available at any home repair - industrial hardware store. Two layers of bubble wrap, the shipping material, also would make a good insulator. For best results, cover the bottom of the tank as well. Many other materials can work including plastic, wood, or cardboard.

**Where do I position the air stone?**

The air stone aeration system produces a large volume of bubbles. These bubbles can interfere with the filter operation by filling the motor with air and causing it to "air lock" and fail. For this reason, there should be at least 4 inches between the air stone and the filter.

**I Ran out of Food. What do I do?** Contact your local TIC coordinator or Richard Landreth (see Contact section) and food will be sent to you.

## Section XIV.      Teaching Aids

Here are some teaching aids that will help you energize your students about TIC. While they are fun, they also help teach about trout.

### Trout Coloring Features:

- The lateral line is often marked by color.
- Most trout have small spots.
- Many trout never lose their parr marks—the dark, oval-shaped splotches along their bodies that can be a form of camouflage.
- Coloring of a trout often matches their environment to some degree.
- Males and females within a species can have different colors.
- Colors can change over the lifetime of a trout, usually becoming more distinct and vivid as they age.
- Trout colors become even more vivid at spawning time.

### Trout Picture Resources:

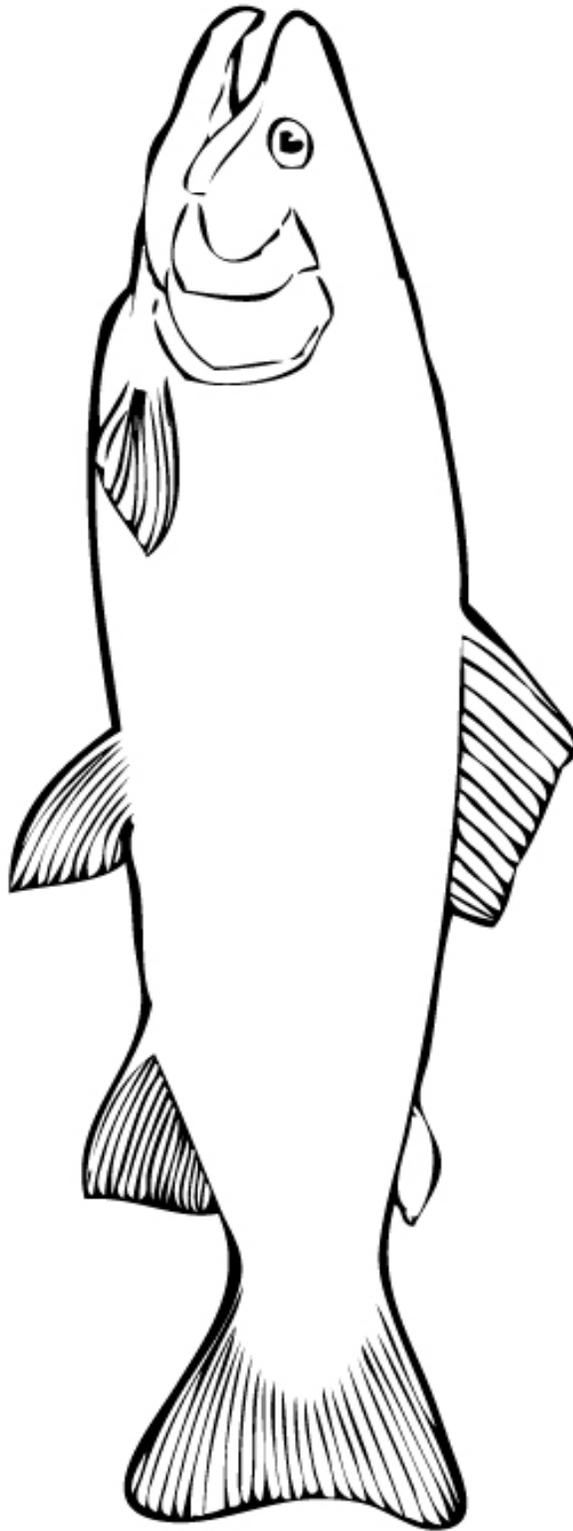
Behnke, Robert J. *Trout and Salmon of North America*. Illustrated by Joseph R. Tomelleri. New York: The Free Press, 2002.

Prosek, James. *Go Fish: A Fishing Journal*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. *Trout: An Illustrated History*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1997.

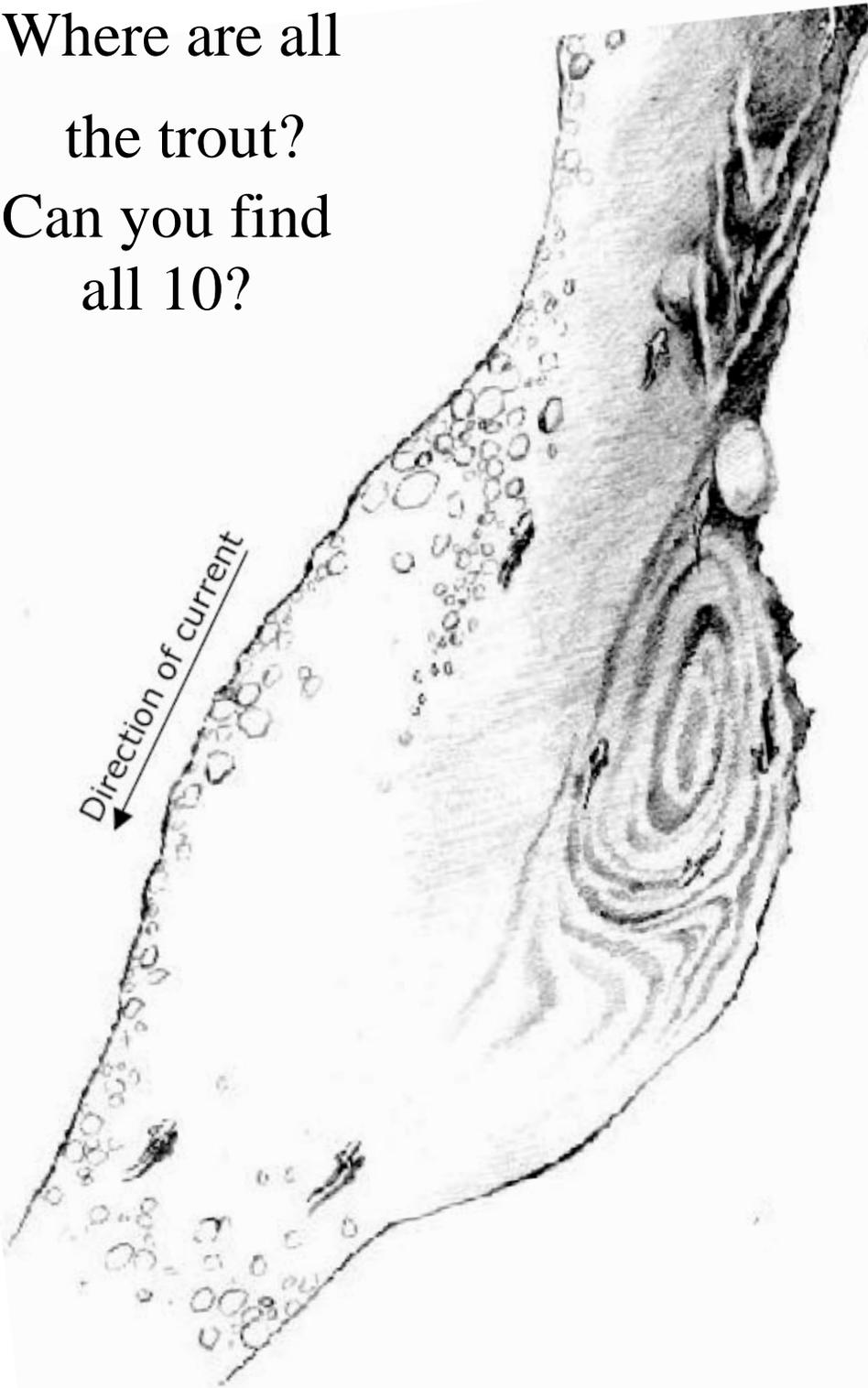
\_\_\_\_\_. *Trout of the World*. New York: Stewart, Tabori & Chang, 2003.

James Prosek's website is [www.troutsite.com](http://www.troutsite.com).

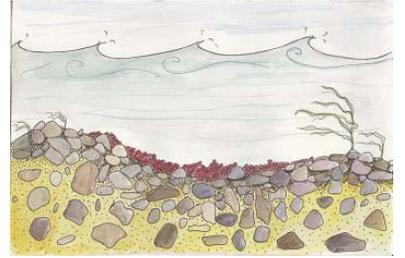


**Color A Trout**

Where are all  
the trout?  
Can you find  
all 10?



## ONCE I WAS A BABY TROUT



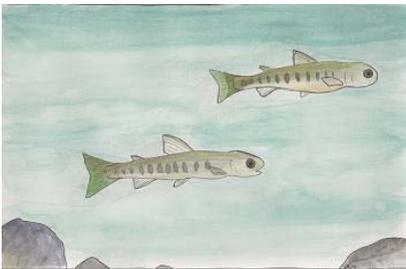
1. First I was a GREEN EGG sitting in my redd.
2. Then I was an EYED EGG, my eyes were on my head.



3. Then I started HATCHING; the egg shell left my back.
4. Then I was an ALEVIN with a big yolk sac.



5. Then I had to USE YOLK; I watched my belly shrink.
6. Then I was a LITTLE FRY—I wanted food, I think.



7. So I looked for BUGS TO EAT and I swam around.
8. Soon I had my PARR MARKS, so I couldn't be found.

The following images can be printed to show your students what their trout will look like when fully grown

**Brown Trout**



**Brook Trout**



## **Section XV.**

## **Potential National Funding Sources**

### **TOSHIBA AMERICA FOUNDATION GRANTS**

Applications for grants under \$5,000 are accepted year-round. Check the Web site for grades K-6 and 7-12 application rules. Deadline for grants over \$5,000: February 1st or August 1st The Toshiba America Foundation encourages teacher-led, K-12 classroom-based programs, projects, and activities that have the potential to improve classroom experiences in science, mathematics, and technology.

### **CAPTAIN PLANET FOUNDATION**

The mission of the Captain Planet Foundation (CPF) is to support hands-on environmental projects for youth in grades K-12. Our objective is to encourage innovative activities that empower children around the world to work individually and collectively as environmental stewards. Through ongoing education, we believe that children can play a vital role in preserving our precious natural resources for future generations.

### **BEST BUY SUPPORT FOR INTERACTIVE TECHNOLOGY**

The Best Buy (<http://www.BestBuy.com/>) te@ch program recognizes creative uses of interactive technology in K-12 classrooms. The purpose of te@ch is to reward schools for successful interactive programs they have launched using available technology. This program has deadlines; check the website to find them. To apply, educators must first register as an applicant and identify a Best Buy store within a fifty-mile radius of the school.

### **TOYOTA TAPESTRY GRANTS FOR TEACHERS**

Open to K-12 teachers of science residing in the United States or U.S. territories or possessions. All middle and high school science teachers and elementary teachers who teach some science in the classroom are eligible. This program has deadlines; check the website to find them. Proposals must describe a project including its potential impact on students, and a budget up to \$10,000 (up to \$2,500 for mini-grants). Environmental Education is one of their three target categories.

### **DONORS CHOOSE**

If you are a public school teacher, DonorsChoose invites you to submit a project proposal for materials or experiences that would help your students learn. Please note that teachers do not receive any monies. If a donor funds your proposal, DonorsChoose will purchase and deliver what you requested. We currently serve all public schools in Alabama, Chicago, Indiana, Los Angeles, Louisiana, Mississippi, New York City, North Carolina, the San Francisco Bay Area (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano and Sonoma counties), South Carolina, and Texas.

### **KIDS IN NEED TEACHER GRANTS**

Kids In Need Teacher Grants provide K-12 educators with funding to provide innovative learning opportunities for their students. The SHOPA Kids In Need Foundation helps to engage students in the learning process by supporting our most creative and important educational resource - our nation's teachers. Businesses work through KINF to sponsor classrooms.

### **OUTDOOR CLASSROOM GRANT PROGRAM**

Lowe's Charitable and Educational Foundation, International Paper and *National Geographic Explorer!* Magazine have teamed up to create an outdoor classroom grant program (TIC can be framed with stream study and release trips). The program focus is to engage students in hands-on natural science experiences and allow enrichment across the core curriculum. All K-12 public schools in the US are welcome to apply.

### **TARGET FIELD TRIP GRANTS**

Education professionals who are employed by an accredited K-12 public, private or charter school in the United States that maintain a 501(c)(3) or a 509(a)(1) tax exempt status can apply for up to \$1,000 for a class field trip. Educators, teachers, principals, paraprofessionals or classified staff of these institutions must be willing and able to plan and execute a field trip that will provide a demonstrable learning experience for students.

**Section XVI.****TIC Resources**

Here is a listing of TIC Coordinators currently in the 2009/2010 TIC program:

**Trout Unlimited Chapter Coordinators**

Angelo Biviano	abiviano@vt.edu	Floyd, VA	540-808-8436
Brian Williams	bwilliams@danriver.org	Collinsville, VA	276-634-2592
Chris Mullens	ccmullens@suddenlink.net	Princeton, WV	304-425-7275
Dick Vipperman	dickvipp@aol.com	Roanoke VA	540-772-9470
Doug Stegura	stegura@comcast.net	Stuarts Draft, VA	540-337-2823
Gary Bobbitt	bobbittg@floyd.k12.va.us		
Howard Williams	hcwil1@hotmail.com	Blacksburg, VA	540-552-2254
Jamey Hutton	jamhut21@hotmail.com	Roanoke, VA	540-525-3853
Jason Hallacher	Jason.Hallacher@dgif.virginia.gov	Verona, VA	540-248-9385
Jeff Peake	jpeake@rockingham.k12.va.us	Harrisonburg, VA	540-574-4093
Jon Wilson	jon@roanoketu.org	Salem, VA	540-580-3731
Karen Sizelove	ecodesign@leaflover.com		703-975-7359
Karl Miller	knj_miller@MSN.com	Roanoke, VA	540-989-6549
Mark Zimmerman	mbzimmerman@comcast.net	Winchester, VA	540-722-4914
Richard Landreth	landrethcats@aol.com	Swoope, VA	540-885-4209
Tom Benzing	BENZINTR@CISAT.JMU.EDU	Waynesboro, VA	540-941-2414
Tommy Lawhorne	tslawhor@cfw.com	Waynesboro, VA	540-943-7250
William Heresniak	william@easterntropies.com	Alexandria City, VA	
Jason McGarvey	tic@vacapitaltu.org	Richmond, VA	804-379-4932

**Section XVII.**      **Letter of Understanding**

**Letter of Understanding**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

This letter of Understanding is between the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the Virginia Council of Trout Council and \_\_\_\_\_(Teacher) of the \_\_\_\_\_ school district.

In exchange for participating in the Trout In The Classroom program (Program), the above chapter will provide, at no cost, all the necessary items needed (see Tank Set Up section) to establish and maintain the Program in the above named teacher's classroom. In exchange, the Teacher acknowledges that the provided equipment is to be used exclusively for Program. If the above named teacher elects not to continue participating in the Program, all the equipment, less the supplies needed to test the water chemistry, will be returned to the \_\_\_\_\_ chapter.

The \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter has the discretion to allow the equipment to be used to raise other fish until 30 days before the Program will commence.

Agreed to by:

\_\_\_\_\_

Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Chapter

Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited

## Section XVIII.

## Sample Grant

Dear Staunton Augusta County Chapter of the Isaac Walton League

My name is XXXXXXXX and I am a XXXXXXXXXXXX at XXXXXXXXXXXX School in XXXXXXXX County. One of my goals as a 7<sup>th</sup> grade Life Science teacher is to capture student interest in the outdoors; which I believe many students have lost. In order to achieve this goal I am trying to implement the Trout in the Classroom Program from Trout Unlimited. This program will entail having a 55 gallon freshwater tank set up in the classroom. It will be equipped with the proper gear to incubate brook, rainbow, or brown trout eggs and raise the fry to maturity. In the spring, with the cooperation of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, students will release the trout in a nearby stream, as well as, perform on site water quality and macroinvertebrate tests.

I envision using Trout in the Classroom to touch on subjects cross the curriculum. In science, students will learn about habitats, ecosystems, and watersheds. This also provides students a Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) as intended by the Chesapeake Bay Educational Program and the Virginia Standards of Learning. Students will use math concepts such as graphing, measurement, and computation. Students will incorporate Language Arts, by learning new vocabulary, writing about their observations in their science journals, and create essays centered on conservation issues. In order to connect to Social Studies, students will learn about the different topography of Virginia and the popular land uses throughout the Commonwealth. Through this study, students can address the shrinking native trout waters throughout the state and the land uses that contribute to this habitat degradation.

Unfortunately, Trout Unlimited does not provide funding for this program, and teachers are left to seek out funding on their own. The total cost of the project is around \$1,000 dollars. The most vital part of the Trout in the Classroom system is the chiller, which costs around \$500 dollars. Without the chiller, the trout cannot survive. I am asking if your chapter would be willing to donate the funds necessary to purchase this chiller. However, any funding that you can provide will be helpful. Thank you for considering this request in order for students to make a connection with their community, recreational facilities, rivers/streams, and to learn how their actions in the Shenandoah Valley can impact their future.

*This sample grant proposal was graciously provided by Courtney Rodgers, a Middle School Teacher at Wilson Middle School in Augusta County, who has participated in the TIC program for two years. She was successful in obtaining her grant.*

**Section XIX.**

**Sample Water Chemistry Log**

Use this form, or one similar of your own design, to record the daily water chemistry readings. Additionally, record the amount of water removed (nearest gallon is fine) during each cleaning.

For accurate records at year-end, record the number of eggs and dead fish you remove. Doing it as it occurs will enable you to more accurate report your year end results.

**School Name and Grade**

Test Date	All Water Chemistry Reading are in ppm					# Dead Fry	Water In/Out	Tank Cleaning	Live Alevin / Fry	Special Notes
	pH	Ammonia (NH3)	Nitrite (NO2)	Nitrate (NO4)	Temp (°F)					
10/06/08	7.4	0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0 ppm	50.8	2			259	
10/07/08	7.4									
10/08/08	7.4	0 ppm	took 3 different readings	0 ppm	51.3	1	2 exchanges	2/3 tank cleaned Bacteria added @ 9	258	
10/09/08	7.4	0 ppm	2.0 ppm	0 ppm	51.5	1	7 gal. exchanged	am	257	
10/10/08	7.4	0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0 ppm	52.3	2	10 gal. exchanged		255	
10/13/08	7.8	0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0 ppm	50.2	-	2 exchanges			
10/14/08	7.8	0 ppm	4.0 ppm	0 ppm	52.1	2			253	
10/15/08	7.4	0 ppm	8.0 ppm	0 ppm	52.3	2	26 gal. exchanged	tank cleaned	251	

## **Section XX.**

## **Release Day Activities as submitted by teachers**

The following are some activities that our TIC teachers conducted on release day. The list is meant to share with you some ideas of what has done, not necessarily what you should do. Work with your local TU chapter and VGIF representative to find ways to put together a release day program.

- Water quality testing
- Macroinvertebrate collection and study
- Wetland habitat and stream studies
- School officials dressed up as trout (I have the pictures!)
- Fly fishing demonstration
- Fly tying demonstration
- Stream shocking by VGIF
- Tree identification
- Family day activities with scavenger hunt for nature items
- Student reunion at release day for previous students who participated in the TIC program
- Partnered with local high school Ecology clubs to talk about watershed and stream health and to assist with release day
- Local restaurant provided “trout shaped cookies”. Trout Cookie Cutter can be found thru a simple Google search.

## **Section XXI.**

## **Thoughts on Classroom Activities**

The following is a list of activities that our TIC teachers used during the school year to help students understand water quality and conservation. As with the release day activities, these are just food for thought. I am sure most of you are doing some or all of them now.

- Watershed studies using the CSI database
  - Comparing your release stream to others in the area
- Macroinvertebrate studies and identification
  - Discussing what the trout will eat when released
- Mapping of nutrient cycles
- Daily trout journals on tank activity
- Plotting nitrate and nitrite levels using different graph types
  - Cross education with Math Studies
- Trout dissection and anatomy
- Painting a background mural for the tank
- Trout life cycle
  - One class did a 9' Brook trout with the life cycle along the lateral line
- Participation in the Trout Tapestry
- Study of yolk sac development
- Oxygen absorption
- Acid Rain impacts
- Trout art
  - Conventional
    - Crayon, watercolor, markers, etc.
  - Non conventional
    - M & Ms
    - Spaghetti
    - Painted Plaster of Paris forms

The following are some things you might want to consider trying in your classroom:

- Hydroponic gardening – how plants can take the nutrients from your tank water to grow. This can be done either with plants having their roots suspended in the water or by raising a garden using regular water and waste water to compare the differences.
- Using tank waste water to develop a waste treatment facility

Don't forget to checkout [www.troutintheclassroom.org](http://www.troutintheclassroom.org) and [www.vctu.org](http://www.vctu.org) for more classroom and program ideas.

And for those of you (and your students) who want to push the envelope, there is always YOU TUBE!!!!

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtu\\_wpD3BDY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qtu_wpD3BDY)

brief video on trout egg and alevin care, which is available at the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/user/bmwcaves#p/a/u/0/B2EjNPFcNnw>

Check it out!