



TROUT UNLIMITED

Stream Explorers

Human Impact Issue

TROUT Unlimited (TU) is an organization of volunteers and staff across the country dedicated to saving trout and salmon and the rivers where they live. We do this by working with others to protect the most important trout habitat, fix dams and pipes that block fish, and repair rivers damaged by pollution or development. TU also teaches kids and adults why trout and clean water are important. To find out more or to join TU, go to www.tu.org.



Taking Care of Trout

Which animal is a trout's worst enemy? Which is its greatest friend? The answer to both questions is... us. We humans have more impact on streams and the animals in them than any other animal in the world. That's because we control the land, we create and clean up the pollution, and we understand the importance of our actions.

Quick Tips to Make a Difference

Here are some easy ways to help keep water clean and plentiful in your neighborhood.

Plant a garden instead of grass.

Gardens use less fertilizer than grass, and fertilizer can harm your stream.



Reduce, reuse, and recycle.

Every kind of litter and pollution can harm streams. Every time

you reduce your trash by reusing and recycling, you're making a difference.



Turn off the water.

When you turn off the water while you brush your teeth, you're helping to conserve fresh water.



How can people harm streams and hurt trout?

It's not hard to do. We ...

- Dam up streams which prevents trout from being able to move around to find food, cover, and places to lay eggs.
- Pollute farms and lawns with pesticides and too much fertilizer. When it rains, water carries the pesticides and fertilizers into the water, harming the trout.
- Mow and cut vegetation right down to the edge of the water. Without trees and bushes to provide shade, the water may get too warm for trout.
- Allow cows and other livestock to stand in the water. Cows don't look like a problem, but when they kick up mud and poop into the stream, they pollute the water.
- Overfish. People enjoy going fishing, but if they catch and keep too many fish, there may not be enough trout left in the stream to reproduce.

- Build roads and houses too close to the water. Hot, dirty runoff from the roads and driveways pours into the stream, making it too warm and too dirty for trout.

So what can we do to keep streams healthy?

Kids can make a difference! Some kids ...

- Help replant trees and plants near streams.
- Join in local clean-up projects on Earth Day and throughout the year with TU or other groups.
- Convince their families to use fewer pesticides and less fertilizer.
- Write letters to state and federal representatives to help support clean water action.
- Enjoy fishing and then release most of the fish they catch.
- Attend outdoor camps to learn about nature with TU or other groups.
- Save clean water by using less when washing and brushing teeth.

**Would you know a healthy stream if you saw one?
Turn the page to test yourself.**

WHICH STREAM IS HEALTHY?

One of these streams is healthy. The other is not.

Can you spot the ways in which the streams are different?



Rhyming Riddles:

Try solving the rhyming riddles to test yourself. You can find the answers to the riddles on the web at www.streamexplorers.org.

When trout can't
swim they're in a jam.
For healthy streams,
remove the _____.

These critters like to
drink and browse, but
they kick up mud so
let's move those _____.



Where there's no shade it's hot and so – leafy plants near streams should _____.

During summer storms when it rains a lot, runoff from roads can be dirty and _____.

Trout streams should not be flat and wide, rocks give trout a place to _____.

Kids in Action: Keeping Streams Healthy!

Think kids can't help to keep streams healthy? Think again! Kids at the Bronx New School in New York City and the Windham-Ashland-Jewett Central School in the Catskill Mountains spend the whole school year making a difference. They're part of a program called Green Connections, run by the Catskill Center with help from Trout in the Classroom and other agencies.

Early in the year, kids in both schools start raising trout in their classrooms. As the eggs hatch and the trout grow, they write to each other about what they observe.

Then, in November, kids from the Catskills come to visit their New York City friends. Since the water in New York City comes from the Catskills, they get a chance to see where their water goes, and to meet the kids who drink it.

In the spring, it's time for the kids in New York City to take a trip to the mountains, along with

their full-grown trout. First, they meet their Catskill friends at a stream – and all the kids release their trout. Next, they test the stream to see how healthy it is. They check the temperature, the oxygen level and the chemistry of the water. Then

they lift up rocks and use a kicknet to find the animals that live in the stream. Certain kinds of animals only live in healthy streams – so when they find those animals they know their trout will be healthy too.

After checking the stream, the kids help to keep the stream healthy by planting trees. The shade from the new trees will keep the water

cool. The trees' roots will provide safe homes for stream animals and hold the stream bank in place. And the rotting leaves from the trees will become food for many animals that live in the stream.

What's the coolest part of the Green Connections program? According to Jessica Olenych, who's run the program for three years, "You get to get dirty, dig your hands in the dirt, and be outside!"



How to Get Involved with Trout Conservation in Your Classroom

If you live in the Catskills or in New York City and want to take part in Green Connections, tell your teacher or another adult to contact the Catskill Center at (845) 586-2611.

Would you like to raise trout in your classroom? Ask your teacher or another adult to go to www.troutintheclassroom.org for more information.



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