

TU's History and Structure

Founded over 50 years ago on the banks of the Au Sable River near Grayling, Michigan, the 16 fishermen who gathered at the home of George Griffith were united by their love of trout fishing, and by their growing disgust with the state's practice of stocking its waters with "cookie cutter trout"—catchable-sized hatchery fish. Convinced that Michigan's trout streams could turn out a far superior fish if left to their own devices, the anglers formed a new organization: Trout, Unlimited (the comma was dropped a few years later).

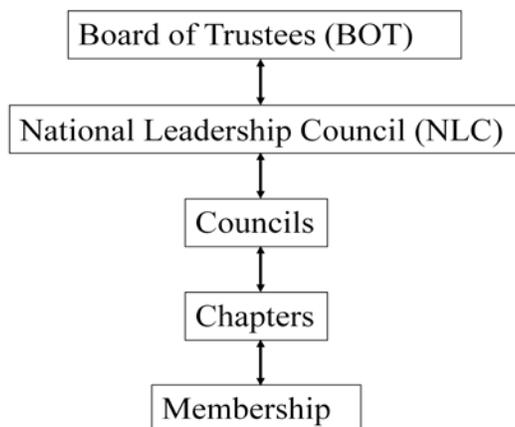
From the beginning, TU was guided by the principle that if we "take care of the fish, then the fishing will take care of itself." And that principle was grounded in science. "One of our most important objectives is to develop programs and recommendations based on the very best information and thinking available," said TU's first president, Dr. Casey E. Westell Jr., "In all matters of trout management, we want to know that we are substantially correct, both morally and biologically."

In 1962-63, TU prepared its first policy statement on wild trout, and persuaded the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to discard "put-and-take" trout stocking and start managing for wild trout and healthy habitat. On the heels of that success, anglers quickly founded TU chapters in Illinois, Wisconsin, New York and Pennsylvania.

TU won its first national campaign in 1965: stopping the construction of the Reichle dam on Montana's Big Hole River. Five years later, TU helped secure a ban on high-seas fishing for Atlantic salmon. And in 1971, TU took legal action to protect the last free-flowing stretch of the Little Tennessee River. Perhaps one of the most significant early applications of the Endangered Species Act, the action stopped the Tellico dam, but only temporarily: an eleventh-hour congressional appropriations rider later doomed TU's victory.

In 1979 TU's headquarters moved to Washington, D.C., where it remains today. Driven by a powerful and dedicated grassroots network, TU is meeting the challenges of coldwater conservation and protecting our rivers and fisheries for generations to come.

TU's Organizational Structure



Board of Trustees

TU's board of trustees (BOT) guides the organization. The BOT, consisting of 32 individuals, meets in person three times a year to review and approve financial and organizational decisions. The nominating committee of the BOT nominates individuals to be the twenty-two "at-large" members of the BOT. The chair and secretary of the NLC fill two of the BOT positions. The remaining eight positions on the BOT are filled by "grassroots trustees" nominated by the NLC. All BOT members serve two-year terms and can serve up to three consecutive terms. TU's governance structure and the relationships between the different levels of the organization are spelled out in [the national TU bylaws](#).

The National Leadership Council (NLC)

The role of the National Leadership Council (NLC) and its rules for functioning are listed as appendices two and five of [the national TU bylaws](#).

The National Leadership Council (NLC) is the volunteer body that sets the direction of TU and is made up of one representative elected from each state council. The NLC has three purposes:

- Establish [the National Conservation Agenda \(NCA\)](#)
- Facilitate implementation of [the National Conservation Agenda \(NCA\)](#)
- Build the organizational capacity of TU

The NLC accomplishes these three tasks by being a conduit between councils and TU national. NLC Representatives bring issues and concerns from their states to the national level and then bring decisions and initiatives from the National level back to their councils. They also serve on workgroups that focus on specific conservation or organizational issues that span more than two states. The NLC meets annually in person at the Annual Meeting and via teleconferences throughout the year.

NLC workgroups are established to address regional or organization-wide issues. These workgroups are composed mainly, but not exclusively, of NLC members and are supported by one or more staff members. There are two main categories of workgroups: conservation and organizational.

Conservation Workgroups

Great Lakes
Native Trout (Western)
Brook Trout (EBTJV)
Delaware River
TU Dare
Energy
Pacific Salmon
Conservancy
Access

Organizational Workgroups

Women in TU
New Initiatives
Grassroots
Bylaws
Fundraising
Education

The composition and tasks of workgroups will change with time. To find out more about current NLC workgroups ask your council's NLC Representative.

The purpose of [the National Conservation Agenda \(NCA\)](#) is to chart the course for all components of TU – national office staff, state councils, chapters and members – to work together on a shared enterprise to implement TU's mission. The most recent NCA was adopted on September 17, 2011 and can be viewed in full online. New this year was the inclusion of seven critical focus areas:

- Pebble Mine
- Yellowstone National Park native fish conservation
- Protecting roadless areas (i.e., killing HR 1581 - McCarthy bill)
- Hydrofracking for gas & oil development
- Upper Colorado water withdrawal
- Clean Water Act
- State & Federal natural resource funding

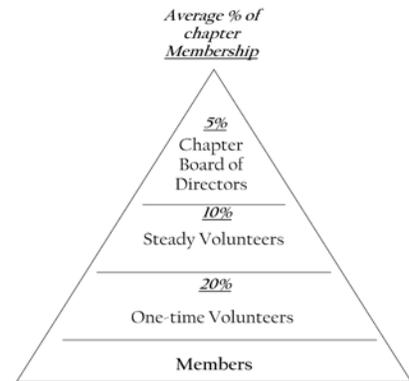
Councils

Chapters in a region are organized into a council. Most are organized by state boundaries; however some councils are made up of more than one state (for example the MA/RI or Mid-Atlantic councils.) Some chapters operate outside of the council structure due to the lack of nearby chapters (for example the Sagebrush chapter in Nevada.) In most cases, the council serves as an umbrella organization for its chapters, state-wide. The council officers are made up of volunteers from around the state who may have previously or are currently serving as officers or directors of a local chapter. Council officers are elected by chapter representatives. Councils are the key link between the TU staff and local chapters and play a critical role in advocating for trout and salmon at the state level. The successful operation of a TU council is very much dependent on the degree and depth of commitment of the chapters and the council leadership. The council is not simply another chapter and should be regarded as a coalition, the vital

thread that binds all the chapters together for mutual support and assistance. The council, therefore, deserves the active participation of every chapter in its state.

Chapters

The basic unit of TU is the chapter. The chapter is a group of members in a local area given a charter by TU's board of trustees in order to carry on the TU mission in their local area. Chapters range in geographic size from a single watershed to an entire state and in membership size from less than 20 to over 4,000. Every new TU member is assigned by zip code to a chapter and gains the benefits of chapter membership which normally includes receiving the chapter newsletter or e-newsletter, invitations to chapter meetings, events or projects. Each TU chapter is unique based on their specific context, geography, membership and history. To be chartered, a TU chapter must contain at least 12 TU members in good standing and a six-member board of directors. Establishing a new chapter takes place through an application process that involves working closely with the TU council to determine chapter boundaries, bylaw provisions, and other administrative details. More details on how to form a chapter of TU can be found in [the Tacklebox](#).



National Staff

TU currently has over 150 staff members. Approximately 25 are in the home office in Arlington, Va, outside of Washington, D.C. The remaining staff is spread out in field offices around the country. A full directory of TU staff, including contact information, is included on the [TU national website](#).