

Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited Steering Plan

**Effective Plan Date**: January 24, 2017

**Planning Workgroup Members**: President – Russ Collins, Immediate Past President – Ed O’Gorman, Vice President – Steve Vegoe, Secretary – Bob Pennell, Treasurer, Trip McGarvey. Board Members: RoseAnn Viozzi, Steve Long, Cyndi Camp, Rick LaTournous, Francis O’Gorman, Rich DiStanislao, Joseph Connor, Chuck Swanderski, Rob Konowitch.

**Doc Fritchey & TU’s Vision:** By the next generation, Trout Unlimited and Doc Fritchey will ensure that robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish once again thrive within our footprint, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

**Doc Fritchey Chapter of Trout Unlimited’s Mission:** To conserve, protect, and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

* **Conservation -** Our approach includes efforts to Protect, Reconnect, and Restore coldwater fisheries throughout Dauphin and Lebanon Counties. By categorizing our conservation efforts along these guidelines, it will help strengthen the cohesion of TU’s projects across our footprint and help ensure our efforts are coordinated with neighboring chapters, State Council, and TU national staff. Our chapter will call upon the expertise of TU’s National staff.
* **Protect** - Our Chapter will do its part by being an advocate for our cause, working with local land trusts to assist in conservationeasements and visiting local legislators and local officials.
* **Reconnect** - We will assess culvert or dam removal projects in our area or other efforts that connect existing fish habitats topreviously unreachable areas.
* **Restore** - We will assess: riparian buffers; invasive plants for removal; in-stream habitat project potential; stream cleanup needs.

**Communications - Consider seeking a “communication committee chair”.**

The board and officers will explore and learn how best to communicate with our existing membership and the broader community in our area. The ecological benefits our work has for fish is just part of the overall equation of Protect, Restore, Reconnect, and Sustain. Communicating our work to the membership and the local community will help ensure the long-term impacts of the projects remain long after the work is done. A robust communications platform will help the chapter recruit and retain members for current and future efforts.

* **Website -** A strong, up-to-date chapter website is an essential tool to provide members withmeeting location, time, updates on chapter projects, and a source for general information on the chapter for our community.
* **Newsletters -**We re-introduced our chapter printed newsletter. As a supplement to the printed newsletter, we should consider doing an email distribution of the printed version.
* **Newspapers and Local Press -** We have been missing the free press we can get fromthe local community newspapers, radio stations, television networks and more. When we host an event or activity, we will strive to

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send an announcement or calendar listing to the local media at least three weeks in advance of the event so they can help promote the event in the community and increase the attendance of both members and non-chapter members. At an event or project we will take photographs and send a follow-up press release to local media to raise awareness of the important work we’re doing.

* **Local Community Advertising** - Use TU’s Event Printshop, an online tool that allows our chapter to print appealing, high-quality and affordable posters, flyers, postcards and tickets. These can be valuable tools when promoting our events.
* **Social Media -**Social media can be a great way for the chapter to amplify our message and engage newand often younger audiences. There are a range of social media tools and sites available. Some of the most common are the following:
* **Facebook** - A particularly effective tool for engaging younger generations. Facebook is the go-to social media platform for building an online community for our chapter. Administrators for our page, as well as members, can post photos, links to news stories, or comments about anything related to the chapter, TU’s mission and fishing. Much like our website, Facebook is also a good resource for communicating meeting times and locations, project updates, and chapter news.
* **Twitter -**A great resource for keeping our members up-to-date on chapter news.
* **Instagram** - An easy-to-use site for posting photos of chapter projects, meetings, or events.
* **Pinterest** - Useful for gaining project ideas and for sharing your chapter’s project or merchandise ideas with the broader community.

**Member Engagement Task**: work on getting up-to-date email addresses for our members & correcting them on our rosters. This will go a long way to boosting communications with our membership and increasing engagement. Also, ensure that new attendees to a chapter meeting are greeted and made to feel welcome, and that we get their communication information.

To attract a broad and diverse audience to the chapter, (including developing a Women’s Initiative), our engagement strategies need to be broad and diverse. Some events, such as a monthly chapter meeting, are well tailored to building community within the existing membership. Other outward-facing events are great for attracting new members to our chapter. When hosting events, keep in mind that public spaces like restaurants, fly shops, or other businesses may be less intimidating for first-time attendees. Holding a variety of events will help build engagement with our members. Consider dividing our events by season into Winter, Summer, Spring and Fall, since some events such as fishing trips and river cleanups may be best for the spring or fall. Youth and family events are ideal for summer when school is out. Fly tying and skill building classes can be great winter activities.

Some example member engagement events are the following:

**Community Building Events:**

* Chapter barbecues and picnics
* Happy hour social events
* Fundraising banquets
* Youth and family activities

**Conservation Oriented Events:**

* River cleanup or stream buffer planting events
* Stream monitoring volunteer programs

**Fishing Events and Activities:**

* Chapter fishing trips to local rivers
* Casting clinics and family fishing days
* Fly tying lessons and classes

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**Fundraising -** Every chapter needs resources to host events, fund restoration projects, purchase supplies, mail newsletters, and advertise activities. Chapter fundraisers can be the highlight of our year and should be both fun and profitable. While annual banquets are a proven means for generating chapter income, other events have also helped many chapters raise much-needed revenue, including:

* Hosting the Fly Fishing Film Tour
* Holding a fishing/casting tournament
* Selling chapter merchandise

When planning fundraising events, we need to keep in mind our target audience and consider diversifying the events to appeal to different members of our chapter and the community at large.

**Chapter Leader Development-Sustainability**

Often the success of a chapter times is driven by the personalities and skills of a handful of determined, passionate leaders. To minimize difficulties and loss of momentum during transition periods, it’s critical that our chapter have strong leadership development initiatives and a well-defined succession plan for when a key chapter volunteer moves on. Planning for leadership transitions is one of the most important things our chapter can do to ensure the long-term stability of the organization. If a key leader leaves, any knowledge can be lost if we don’t address succession planning early and often.

* **Evaluate our recruitment criteria.** Let’smake sure our nominating committee is bringing in new boardmembers with leadership experience. And be sure to let the candidates know they are encouraged to take on officer responsibilities.
* **Designate someone on our board to watch for the up-and-coming natural leaders in the chapter.** There will certainly be some people who articulate and pursue the chapter’s goals withnoticeably more energy and success. Other chapter members listen to them, and they are obviously highly motivated. Let’s encourage these budding leaders to assume leadership roles and work with us on chapter management.
* **Delegate.** The whole objective of delegation in a chapter or council is to cultivate relationships and train peoplefor positions of increasing responsibility, depending on their talents and interests.
* **Build Strong Committees.** Committees are one of the best ways to cultivate new board leaders for our chapter.Service on a committee can transition members into taking responsibility for tasks for your chapter and can increase in importance and workload over time, until they are ready and willing to step up for a board position. Conservation, events, education, and membership committees are some examples.
* **Evaluate our training, orientation, and leadership development opportunities.** Assist willingcandidates in learning the tools they need to take on added duties. As new chapter leaders come on board, pass on valuable knowledge.