

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**ERNIE NESTER CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED KICKSOFF  
ANNUAL TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM PROGRAM**

*Program provides students an opportunity to raise trout from eggs to fingerlings*

**Charleston, W.Va.** – Bringing nature into the classroom is a key component of the Trout in the Classroom program, which the Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited (ENCTU) kicked off in nearly twenty schools in the Kanawha Valley this week.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) offers students a chance to raise trout in a classroom setting and then release them into a nearby stream or river. Caring for the fish fosters a conservation ethic in the students, and the act of walking to a stream bank and directly releasing the fingerlings into the water makes a concrete connection between caring for the fish and caring for the water. Lakewood Elementary School in St. Albans was the first school to participate in the Trout in the Classroom program.

"This is the 10th year we have done Trout in the Classroom and it continues to grow in popularity. We have great teachers participating who spend the extra time monitoring and caring for these fish so their students can learn about the trout life cycle up close and personal," said Homer Sweeney, a coordinator for the Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Over a six-month period the trout are raised from eggs to fingerling size in 55 gallon aquariums in 19 classrooms. The teachers and students feed the trout and with the assistance of Trout Unlimited volunteers, monitor the pH level, ammonia, nitrates, nitrites, and water temperature of the aquariums.

In the spring, when the trout reach fingerling size, the students will work with Ernie Nester Trout Unlimited volunteers to release the trout into local streams near their elementary school.

"This is a great program that teaches kids responsibility and about the life cycle of trout and also the importance of cold, clean waters, which is part of the mission of Trout Unlimited," said Ralph Douglas, a coordinator for the Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

You can view a live stream of the Trout in the Classroom aquarium at New Haven Elementary School by clicking [here](#).

The following schools participate in the Trout in the Classroom program: Alban Elementary, Bible Center Schools, Capitol High School, Elk Elementary, Chesapeake Elementary, Geary Elementary and Middle, Hometown Elementary, Kanawha City

*The Ernie Nester Chapter of Trout Unlimited is based in Charleston and is the largest Trout Unlimited Chapter in West Virginia with over 400 members. For more information, visit [www.enctu.org](http://www.enctu.org).*

Elementary, Kenna Elementary, Lakewood Elementary, Malden Middle Elementary, Mary C. Snow Elementary, New Haven Elementary, Overbrook Elementary, Poca Middle School, Pratt Elementary, Shoals Elementary, and Walton Elementary.

"Trout in the Classroom is one of the most wonderful teaching and learning experiences our teachers and students have today. It involves a life experience that these students will take away with them for the rest of their lives," concluded Sweeney.

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