

Trout In the Classroom (Virginia) State Resource Job Description

Trout in the Classroom (TIC) offers students of all ages a chance to raise Salmonids 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 streambank and directly releasing the fingerlings into the water makes a concrete connection between caring for the fish and caring for the water.

The tasks that are currently being performed by the acting coordinator are not time consuming and mainly involve computer work. The main tasks are:

1. Maintain a list of Chapter TU contacts
2. Using the Chapter contacts, gather information and maintain a spreadsheet of statewide TIC participation
3. Share the spreadsheet with DWR so they can develop a statewide release permit, and send the permit to all chapter contacts
4. Respond to requests for TIC information that are received through the VCTU web page.

Following are some details about each task.

1. Email the Chapter contacts in August to update. Most remain the same from year to year.
2. Gather information on TIC participation in the fall and after the New Year. Chapters send me their spreadsheets or sometimes just an email with their participation. I collect the name and address of each school, the teacher in charge, and their trout release site and enter it on our Master Spreadsheet. Most Chapters raise Brook Trout. The eggs are usually ready by early October, so those chapters pretty much know their participations by October. A few Chapters in SW Virginia raise Brown or Rainbow Trout and start later and will not have their participation finalized until after the New Year. There is only a little turnover from year to year so maintaining the Master Spreadsheet involves deleting a few schools and adding a few for most chapters. The only issue that arises occasionally is that some chapters are slow to respond.
3. Have the Master Spreadsheet complete by the end of February. Forward it to Jason Hallacher and Steve Reeser. They review it and share it with the fish biologists in the trout regions. Steve prepares a Statewide release permit that is distributed to the Chapter contacts to share with their teachers.

Another purpose of the Master Spreadsheet is to serve as a record of our TIC teachers having wildlife in the classroom. Teachers may or may not know that DWR requires teachers to have a permit for keeping wildlife in the classroom. By maintaining the spreadsheet and sharing it with DWR, our teachers are exempt from filing the forms.

4. I am listed on the VCTU website as a contact for TIC information. I only receive about a dozen requests from teachers each year, mostly during the summer. I send them a generic response that I copy to the appropriate chapter contact. The teachers are advised to contact their local chapter for the status of the program in their area. If there is no chapter in their area, I suggest they contact the Education folks at DWR for the availability of other programs.

If you have questions about what this position involves, please contact Chuck Hoysa—the acting coordinator—who will assist during a one-year transition period (choysa1@comcast.net). If are interested in serving as the TIC resource person—please contact Jim Wilson—the VA Council Chair—via email: jhw210@juno.com.