



Why teens attend the TU Teen Summit

Kai Pham, age 15 – California



There were three things I brought back from the Summits I have participated in: how to further involve myself and my community in conservation work, leadership skills such as confidence and proper public speaking, and finally, the sense of accomplishment that coincides with helping save our environment. These skills are necessary to give to our members because if they are not shared, no one will be able to lead us into a better and healthier world.

Support your aspiring teens. They will go to the Summit, learn and grow, and they will return to support not only you, but also the awe-inspiring world we live in.

Alex Rundella, age 17 – New Jersey



From my journey through TU I have gained both knowledge and purpose in my life. Prior to the Teen Summit I lacked ideas for what my future career path would hold, but after questioning Chris Wood, the president of TU, at the Summit I found a direction. I am now looking into pursuing a degree in Fish and Wildlife Management. I look forward to an enjoyable career due to the discoveries I have made about myself through Trout Unlimited and my initial

experience through Trout in the Classroom.

Adam Beede, age 19 – Colorado



The TU Teen Summit poses important questions to teens such as: “What is TU? How is TU organized in your eyes? What is the importance of the Youth Leadership Council and how should it be organized?”

TU staff often asks such questions and lets the teens work out answers and solutions on their own. For example, it took the teens only two hours to arrange the YLC into representational districts based off of the largest similar conservation efforts

applicable in each area and beginning the groundwork for initiatives. My point in bringing this story up is to prove that our youth are clearly capable of bearing the responsibility of TU’s groundwork on their backs.

The TU National Teen Summit is special; it is special because you are gathering a group of the nation’s most powerful youth leaders in river conservation and putting them in the same room. At the Summit, you are provided with a roomful of the ‘cream of the crop.’ Why should you support the Summit? There isn’t a better place for your money or time. One roomful of the nation’s top youth river conservationists; you’ve heard what they can do with two hours....

Corey Stoner, age 18 – Pennsylvania



As a TU Teen leader who was at the first two Summits, I can tell you it has changed me. I am more involved with conservation and fly fishing than I was before. By getting involved with TU—and more importantly TU teens—it has helped show my true passion. By supporting TU teens you are not only supporting the future of Trout Unlimited but the future leaders in TU.

Hugh Cipparone, age 17 – Connecticut



The third annual TU Teen Summit was a fantastic experience. Set in the Driftless Region of Wisconsin, the cabins and streams were straight out of an edition of *Trout* magazine. In the glow of the camp, not only did the brown trout sip dry flies but I found 23 other teenagers just like me. They shared my love of fly fishing and renewed my passion for conservation. The major goal of the program was encouraging conservation. We sat on weathered picnic tables on the porch, listening intently to the tragedies and successes of Wisconsin conservation issues. We took a tour with Duke Welter, a TU staff member, observing restoration projects and building access stiles of our own. We electrofished with a Wisconsin fisheries biologist, watching with mouths agape as stunned and sizeable trout flowed from nooks and crannies that we had fished heavily that morning. Finally, we created a plan for moving ahead, a plan to grow TU Teens to an organization that can eventually lead Trout Unlimited through an uncertain future.

Austin Chu, age 18 – Washington



The Summit was an amazing experience. I was able to meet many teens from around the country with similar interests in conservation and fly fishing. By talking to them, I learned about the conservation issues they cared about and their involvement with TU. We also discussed the issue of encouraging youth involvement in TU, which I continued to think about after the Summit.

After the summit, I started attending local chapter meetings and getting to know members. I also began helping out with the chapter's main conservation project, which involved restoring the kokanee population in a local lake. In addition to learning about the kokanee population and local stream ecosystems, I had a great time participating.

Haley Powell, age 18 – Wyoming



I had just been made a board member of my local TU chapter when I got an email from TU national about applications being available for the first TU Teen Summit. The email described a four day experience in State College, Pennsylvania in which one could meet other like-minded teens and discuss and gather information and ideas as to how to encourage more teens to participate in TU. I thought, "Hey I'm a teen and I like conservation. Why not?" About a month later I got a letter in the mail, telling me that I had been accepted. What was to follow was the best four days of my life.

Not only did the Teen Summit inspire me, but it gave me a feeling of connection. The teens that I met at the original Summit gave me an essential support network whom I could talk to and sympathize with. Had it not been for the Summit, I honestly believe that I wouldn't still be involved with TU or if I were, it wouldn't be near the capacity at which I am involved with it now. I helped plan the second Summit, held in my great state of Wyoming. I've taken part in three TU films, taking a lead role in one that encouraged conservation of the Little Mountain area of Wyoming. I have testified in front of committees to promote funding for Game and Fish. I have been published in multiple state newspapers, state TU publications, on the TU website, and in TROUT. Most notably, I was able to travel to D.C. to speak with the Secretary of the Interior about ways to get more youth involved in conservation.

If you know a young person who is connected with your chapter or council who doesn't seem to be that involved, give them an application. That teen will come back with more ambition and will be inspired to participate more heavily in your chapter, I can guarantee it.