

A silhouette of a person fly fishing in a river at sunset. The person is wearing a cap and a backpack, holding a fishing rod. The background shows a river, trees, and a clear sky. The text 'TU Costa 5 Rivers Advisor Handbook' is overlaid on the image.

TU Costa 5 Rivers Advisor Handbook

Contents

Getting to Know Trout Unlimited.....3

What You Need to Know About Being an Advisor.....5

Things to Focus on For A Strong and Healthy Club.....7

Leveraging Local Support for your Club.....9

Resources Available.....10

Getting to Know Trout Unlimited



What is Trout Unlimited?

--Our Mission

To conserve, protect and restore North America's Coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

--Our Vision

By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild Coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

--Who We Are

Founded in Michigan in 1959, Trout Unlimited today is a national non-profit organization with 300,000 members and supporters dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's Coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Our staff and volunteers work from coast to coast to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain trout and salmon habitat on behalf of today's anglers and coming generations of sportsmen and women who value the connection between healthy, intact habitat and angling opportunity.



What is TU Costa 5 Rivers?

TU Costa 5 Rivers is a network of 120 conservation focused college angling clubs around the country. These clubs work with their local TU chapter and state council to complete projects in the community.

We encourage clubs to complete the “5 Rivers” pillars each school year which include:

- A Conservation Initiative

As a conservation organization, we believe it is imperative to involve the next generation of environmental stewards in our work. We encourage clubs to conduct a meaningful conservation event in their community. Everything from tree plantings to water samplings to habitat improvement projects have been conducted by clubs across the country. However, we encourage club leaders to have some creativity and fun with their projects and are not limited by just these options.

- Community Outreach Initiative

We ask that clubs reach out to their broader community (outside of the club) in some capacity each school year. Kids fishing days, trout in the classroom, learn to fly fish and project healing waters are some of the most popular community outreach events.

- Fundraising

Clubs are encouraged to fundraise for their club in some capacity during the school year. Whether through dues, t-shirt sales, or school funding. They are not asked to directly fundraise for Trout Unlimited.

- Costa Ambassadorship

The club president (if they so choose) gets to be a Costa Sunglasses Campus Ambassador. They are given a free pair of Costa's with the promise they do a good job. We reward the best presidents around the country each semester with prizes for all their hard work in their community.

- TU Connection

Clubs are encouraged to work with their local TU Chapter or council each school year. Oftentimes, clubs partner with their local TU Chapter on conservation, fundraiser, or community outreach project.

What You Need to Know About Being an Advisor

Starting a Club

To get my club (JMU) started, I worked with a group of students to complete the university's process for official recognition. The approval process involved writing a constitution, receiving training on university policies, and identifying our club's mission and purpose. Official recognition allows the club to access university resources (e.g. rooms, vehicles, funds, recruiting) that would not otherwise be available.

Annual Forms

"Annually, our club must complete their registration form to identify new officers and, in order to remain in good standing, submit it to the university office for student clubs and organizations. As advisor, I make sure that this form (as well as some other policy forms, e.g. anti-hazing) is submitted to avoid losing official status with the university "

Fundraising and Club Financial Accounting

As in any organization, it is important for the club to fundraise to conduct events and outings.

Colleges and Universities have a variety of rules that influence how your club can fundraise. Some schools offer (and sometimes mandate) school funding for clubs and other times clubs have to fundraise on their own.

--School Funding

School funding for university organizations is often administered through the Student Government Association. The funds are collected by the university through tuition fees and are made available at the beginning of school year or at the beginning of each semester. Club offers have to apply for the funding through a small-time window and may require an advisor to approve their request.

As the advisor for the club, it is important for you to remind the students of this funding opportunity (if available) and the due dates for applications each semester. You may be required to sign off on it in some capacity prior to filing the request with the Student Government Association.

--Dues

Are often the easiest way to acquire funding for the club. It is important to make sure the students set dues at their first meeting of the school year. Depending on your academic institution, you may have to have the students add the dues amount into the club constitution.

--Accounting

As a club, it is important to set up a club bank account each school year. As the Advisor, we recommended that you are included on the bank account along with the president, and treasurer. As Advisor, make sure the both students complete the signature card with the local bank. Be sure to include each of you as signatories. As the Advisor, it is important that you have access to the monthly bank statements so you can keep an eye on the funds. It is important to also have the students track income and expenses to report out as needed. Student leaders should only have access to the bank account for the school year, and it is important to have them relinquish access to the club account at the end of their tenure.

It is also important to note that some schools provide (or mandate) school backed bank accounts to student organizations. Check in with your student organization office to see how club bank accounts are regulated by your college/university.

--Taxes

It is important for the club to be tax compliant. Check with your university officials on what the best practices are for clubs to remain tax compliant. Oftentimes, this will require that a 990 form is filed each tax year. This form is available on the IRS website.

Club Leadership Training

As the school year starts, most colleges require the board of the club to participate in a leadership course. This course focuses on skills they will need, what paperwork is needed, and due dates for funding just to name a few. It typically has an anti-hazing training component as well. These are often held within the first few weeks of each semester and are required to be completed before the club is officially re-registered with the Registered Student organization office.

As an Advisor, it is important to check in with the office at the beginning of the fall semester for the dates of this course and relay that information to the club leadership board.

Events

--Room Rentals

As a Registered Student Organization, your club often has access to reserve a meeting space or classroom through the university. This makes renting a room for a meeting, tying night, or an event super easy. Just reach out to your Registered Student Organization office about the process of reserving space and they will assist you.

--School Vehicle Rental

Some colleges also offer vehicle rentals through the school for club events. Which can be a huge help getting underclassmen out on the water if they do not have transportation. Please inquire with your colleges Registered Student Organization office about what vehicle rental services they offer and what requirements they have.

--Understanding Liability

If the event is school funded, check with university officials about liability pitfalls and ways to limit them.

--5 Rivers Regional Meet Ups

Each school year, Trout Unlimited Costa 5 Rivers puts on regional get togethers supported by Simms Fishing Products and Costa Sunglasses. These events are free to attend for all 5 Rivers Club members and are insured under Trout Unlimited's policy.

Club Apparel and Logos

Club Apparel is a great way to fundraise for the club and get the word out of the organization. When creating a club logo or graphic to go on the shirts or other apparel it is important to consult the logo department at the university.

The logo department is responsible for approving all apparel that uses school colors, logo, or name. It is important to speak with prior to purchasing apparel. Often you will have to use a school approved vender to get apparel as well. They will often have a guide for school organizations looking to create apparel.

As the advisor for your club, it is important to make sure you help the club leadership board through the apparel approval process, so they don't end up in hot water with the university.

Things to Focus on For A Strong and Healthy Club

Recruiting New Members

--Diversity

It is important to focus on diversity when targeting new members for the club. Having a diverse membership is critical for success as a student organization. By having a large representation from all walks of life, makes the organization more relatable to the student body. Allowing for a healthy, inclusive and sustainable organization that will be relevant on campus for years to come.

--Student Organization Night/Freshman Involvement Fairs

An important opportunity for a club at the beginning of the school year is to attend a university-wide Student Organizations Nights. Often freshmen and transfer students are required to attend so that they can learn about student clubs and organizations on your respective campus. As advisor, it is important to make sure that the club is registered to have a table at this event each semester. Once that happens, I leave it to the students to staff the table. New prospective members want to talk to students, not advisors.

--On Campus Events

"Nothing raises awareness of my club on campus more than having a casting clinic on the quad or holding a "Carp Shootout" at the lake on our campus. The Carp Shootout is simply setting up a table

at the lakeshore with rigged rods and giving away prizes to any student (member or not) who catches a carp (hey, it's the only thing that swims in that lake). “

As one of our best Advisors in Virginia suggests, having on campus events can be huge for garnering interest in the club. Offering prizes for a low barrier event with a high chance of success can get students excited about learning more about the club. If your club hosts an on-campus event, make sure they have the proper school approval and that they have a follow up event lined up in the coming days for those new participants to come out to.

Marketing and Communication

To grow awareness of the club, it is important to create and stay current with club social media pages. Currently, Instagram has been the best platform to use when targeting potential new members on campus. However, other platforms can be useful as well. Facebook is great at targeting college alumni and Tic Tok is a newly emerging platform that is popular with Gen Zer's.

As Advisor, it is important to communicate by university email with the officer team for the club and let them manage how to spread the word to everyone else through their choice of platform(s).

Here are a few social media platforms that are popular today, and what we have seen as the best use for each:

--Instagram

Is the most popular amongst college students currently. The platform offers great ways to market your club to the campus community and recent alumni. Making announcements posts about upcoming events and meetings is a great use for the club's social media.

--GroupMe

Is a group messaging mobile app. This is a great way to share member specific messages and organize fishing trips within the organization.

--Facebook

Is a great social media platform to engage college alumni with the club. Making posts about ways that alumni and members of the community can help the club is a great use for a public Facebook page.

Leadership Transfer

As the school year progresses, it is an important role of the Advisor to have the longevity of the club in mind. As the spring semester begins, it is important to start considering who will be taking over for the current president (if they are graduating). As one of our Advisors in Virginia mentions, it is important for the students to make the decision of who takes over the club and for the Advisor to Shepherd them through the process.

“For my club (JMU), I try to play a behind-the-scenes role in identifying leaders for the coming year. We have an annual club trip in late February or early March and I use this trip as an opportunity to say something to potential leaders like “have you thought about becoming an officer next year?” or “I can see that you’re one of the active members of the club and think you’d be a good leader”. We elect our new officers in April (for the following school year) - it’s a university club requirement but also good practice so that the club leaders are in place when everyone returns to campus in the fall.”

It is important to also follow up prior to school being let out for the summer.

“I meet with the newly-elected president before classes end in the spring to discuss roles, expectations, etc.”

--What to Look For

“Some of my best leaders did not come to the club knowing how to fly fish – they learned the sport (although they often had spin fishing experience) during college and that made them willing to teach and encourage others.”

Oftentimes the best angler is not the best club leader. We have found the best recipe for a great leader falls under three categories

- 1.) Passion for fishing, conservation, and the club
- 2.) Desire to teach and involve others
- 3.) Time (the student’s major plays a large role in this)

Oftentimes, if one of these elements are missing from the club leader, the club will suffer. People can be taught the nuances of club funding and trip logistics, but they cannot be taught to care or stretch their free time.

--Best Practices

“Our university requires us to post the club constitution/policies manual on student orgs website. I’ve found it useful to reference when contentious issues have been raised among leaders.”

In most cases, as one of our advisors points out, you do not need to reinvent the wheel with leadership transfer (or anything else). Most problems that your club is facing are like those of other clubs at your college. If you need help, a great place is to start with the most successful clubs on campus, and mirror their practices.

Leveraging Local Support for the Club

Partnering with Local Outdoor Stores and Fly Shops

Partnering with your local outdoor stores, fly shops, and other businesses will lead to increased awareness of the club and create greater local “buy in” from the community for the club to be more successful. Finding local stores to support raffles, events, online engagements, and fundraisers are a great way to get your community involved!

Resources Available

TU Costa 5 Rivers Coordinator

The TU Costa 5 Rivers Coordinator, Andrew Loffredo (Andrew.loffredo@tu.org), is always available to help both club members and Advisor questions. If you have any questions about anything in this document or a more club specific question, please reach out!

TU National, Councils, and Chapters

Trout Unlimited is a robust organization that offers many layers of support for 5 Rivers Clubs. As an Advisor, it is important to understand what opportunities each level of the organization can assist the club.

--Chapters

Chapters are the most local and offer a helping hand right in your backyard. Because they are the most local, they present the best opportunity to network with you and the club. They can help in a variety of ways ranging from planning workdays, to fundraising, and local publicity.

--Councils

State Councils are comprised of representatives from local chapters across the state. They often have their own discretionary fund outside of chapters and in most cases, are willing to support initiatives that also involve a local TU chapter in addition to the club. They can also provide support for you club by providing statewide TU resources towards an initiative (places to fish, environmental professional contacts, etc.).

--National

TU National and Costa Sunglasses provides a full-time staffer for the program. In addition of the TU Costa 5 Rivers Coordinator, TU National also provides free memberships for all the students in the program, internships opportunities, and media resources to clubs.

5 Rivers Student Discount Program

Once students complete their "5 Rivers" pillars, they earn access to the 5 Rivers Student Discount Program for the remainder of the current school year and the following school year. If they do not complete the 5 Rivers the following school year, they will lose access to the discount program.

Example: If the students complete their pillars in March 2020, they will have access to their discounts until June 2021. If they did not complete their pillars during the fall 2020- spring 2021 school year, they will lose access after June 2021.

5 Rivers Conservation Fund

Starting the fall of 2020, Trout Unlimited Costa 5 Rivers will offer a mini-grants program for 5 Rivers-Affiliated clubs. Clubs will have an opportunity to apply for up to \$500 grant to conduct a conservation project in their community. Please contact Andrew.Loffredo@tu.org for details.

Your College

Each College has some form of a Registered Student Organization (RSO) Office. This office is your key partner on campus. They will have deep understanding of policies pertaining to your campus and state policy. As well as having knowledge of due dates and contacts around campus you may need (i.e. Logo approval office for T-Shirts). For all campus policy specific questions, please reach out to your Registered student organization Office.