

Against The Flow

Learning to swim against the flow puts life in perspective.

Motivation - Spring 2018

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Four years ago, I learned a new sport, my most favorite activity, my passion. This was fly fishing. I grew up in a small town in Western Kentucky. I had fished all my life, but only with a spin rod and bait. Fly fishing was foreign to me. Little did I know that it

would empower me to be a leader, a conservationist, talk to others with confidence, want to travel to every state, and to not be afraid to be myself. Fly fishing has taught me to not swim with the flow, but against it.



photo courtesy of - Amy Abbott

I first learned of fly fishing after we purchased three cabins in Pigeon Forge, TN, near the Great Smoky Mountains. My family and I love the outdoors and we are always looking for new adventures in the National Park. Learning to fly fish was on my mom's bucket list, so she signed up for an Orvis endorsed fly fishing class. She fell in love with it as soon as she picked up a rod. After the class, she came home and told me all about it. My first reaction was "that sounds weird and complicated." So, I didn't immediately pick up on it. About a year later, we were in the Smoky Mountain National Park. While we were there, my mom insisted that I try it at least once. I eventually gave in, and the rest is history.

photo courtesy of - Amy Abbott

The next year we were in the park at the Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont and they had an advertisement on their bulletin board about a youth fly fishing camp through Trout Unlimited. I was hesitant at first because it was so far away from my home in Kentucky. However, once again, my mom convinced me that I should do it. I went to the camp that summer. It was one of the best decisions I ever made. I met so many great mentors and other kids my age that fly fish. I also got to learn more about Trout Unlimited and conservation. It opened the door for so many opportunities, including the TU Teen Summit, and to be a part of the Youth Leadership Council for Trout Unlimited. Being on the Youth Leadership Council is the next step in TU for teens. There is a long application process and only 30 teens across the United States get to go to the Summit.





photo courtesy of - Amy Abbott

I am currently in my second year of being on the Youth Leadership Council. The Youth Leadership Council is a group of teens who do projects year-round and promote Trout Unlimited to other teens. Each year there is a Teen Summit where we plan what we are going to do throughout the next year. It has been an amazing experience for me. The YLC has changed me in the best way possible. I now want to share my passion of conservation with other people. I have traveled to some of the most beautiful places in the United States, which has made me want to go to more. I am glad to be a part of something that is making a difference.

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My goal is to fly fish in every state. Hopefully my travels will allow me to meet more people and further spread the word about conservation and the importance of preserving our environment. I have been to 29 states and have fished in Montana, Kentucky, Maine, Michigan, Tennessee, North Carolina, Missouri, Arizona, Arkansas, and Utah. I cannot wait to go to the other twenty-one states and to have more amazing adventures.

My involvement in Trout Unlimited has empowered me to travel, speak in front of crowds, teach people to fly fish, have a sense of adventure, be able to speak to teens and adults about important issues, and be treated as an equal. It has taught me to be myself. It has shaped who I am as a person and who I want to be in the future. While most teenage girls my age are worried about conforming and peer pressure, I have learned to take my wisdom from a trout.

A trout does not swim with the flow, but against it.