



Tri-Valley Fly Fishers "Trout In Classroom"



TIC Fish Release Field Trip

TIC

"When It's Time To Say Goodbye"

When: The timing for the release can vary depending on several variables.

1. One is the aquarium setup; the smaller 10 gallon insulated tanks with the small "Ice Probe" chiller and an under gravel filter, typically cannot support the trout for much more than a week or two after they "button-up", start swimming around the aquarium, and start to eat. Water changes (replace 3 to 5 gallons weekly) will help some but water quality will start to degrade to the point where the fish cannot survive. Larger tanks with more powerful chilling systems and additional filtering will allow you to extend the time you can keep the fish in the classroom.
2. Water temperature will affect when the eggs hatch and somewhat on how fast they develop. Fish that live in the smaller chiller units where the water temperature is up near 55 degrees F will hatch and develop faster than those that are raised in the tanks that hold the water temperature to around 50 degrees F. The cooler tanks also seem to maintain a higher water quality.
3. The permit issued by DFG (772) will specify a "must be released by" date, and the approved release location. Release before that date.

Where: The fish must be released at a pre-approved location. The DFG permit (772) will specify where the fish may be released. DO NOT RELEASE AT ANY OTHER LOCATION. If there is a problem with releasing at the approved location contact your sponsor for instructions. If the location will be at a park (EBRPD Park etc.) make sure that any other approvals are obtained well in advance of the release date. EBRPD locations require a letter of approval from their fisheries manager. If you need any assistance contact your sponsor ASAP.

Preparation: It is recommended that, unless you are familiar with the release site, you make a preliminary visit to the location and determine how you are going to conduct the release procedure. Consider how many people will be involved and what safety precautions will be necessary. Try to pick a location that has plenty of room for those participating and an area where you can keep a close eye on the students. Try not to select a location where they can easily disappear behind brush, etc. and where the shoreline is not exceedingly unsafe. Also consider the water conditions for the fish. Pick an area where they can swim to a sheltered area when they are set free. Underwater vegetation or similar cover is ideal. Try to avoid areas that might contain a high population of predators (water fowl etc.) to the fish. Check to make sure the location will not be in the middle of poison oak or similar vegetation.

Arrange for transportation for the trip. Consider how much time it will take for the trip and any schedule conflicts that might occur.

Supplies and materials you will need include:

- A portable tank to transport the fish. This can be a small plastic bucket (about one gallon) or similar container (with lid). It should be rinsed with bleach water, then fresh water (tap water okay), and then dried and aired out for a few hours. For short trips to local release sites, chilling or aeration should not be required. A small ice chest to set the bucket in may help prevent accidental splashing from damaging upholstery etc. in the car.
- A small net to catch the fish.
- A pitcher, beaker, or similar container to transfer water.
- A thermometer to measure water temperature. Approximate 40 to 70 degree F (minimum range)
- Several small plastic cups or glasses (approximately 8 oz. size) to put the fish into for the students to release
- Permits; DFG Form 772, & EBRPD Authorization Letter (or similar) as required. Remember to take these documents with you.

Catching The Fish: Unplug power head and chiller – remove chiller, and remove the larger river rocks.

- Transfer some water into the bucket you will be using to transport the fish (3" to 4" deep).
- Remove most of the water from aquarium (pour into bucket etc. and check for fish before dumping down the drain).
- Carefully catch the fish with the net and transfer to the bucket. This is a good time to count how many fish you will be releasing. Record the number of fish you have on the DFG Form (Form #772). Catching the fish may be a challenge – they are fast. Remove more water if necessary, and tip one end of the tank to force them into a smaller area
- Carefully examine aquarium for hiding fish. If available have some of the students inspect the aquarium for stragglers. They typically have very good eyesight.

At the release site: Clear the area of ducks, geese, or other predators.

- Acclimate the temperature of the water in the bucket to that in the lake as follows:. Measure bucket water temp and lake water temperature. If they differ by more than a couple of degrees slowly transfer some of the lake water to the bucket until they are near the same.
- Transfer the fish to the plastic cups or glasses (one per cup) using the net and allow the students to take the cup to the lake to release it. The best way to do this is to have the student slowly submerge their cup (with the fish in it) and allow the fish to swim away. Try to avoid pouring the fish out from very far above the lake. If the water is deep where they will be releasing be sure you have close adult supervision.

After they are gone: This is a good time to point out a few things about the fish's habitat to the students. Where they might find food, and where they can hide from predators. Look for and discuss signs of water pollution and contamination, and how this might jeopardize the chances of the fish surviving. Possibly point out litter and trash in the area and maybe even conduct a clean up of the area.

Follow-up Report to Sponsor: Complete and return the DFG 772 form to the sponsor. Be sure to report how many fish were released and the number of students that participated in the release. Report any problems you may have had at the release and/or any ideas you have about improving the program.