

“The Traveling Native Fish Showcase”



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Summary Statement

“The Traveling Native Fish Showcase” will fashion the existing work of current Ohio NANFA members Jeff Grabarkiewicz and Todd Crail into colorful, informative display boards usable by several entities at public education and outreach events. The project is congruent with the North American Native Fish Association’s mission to increase “knowledge about North America’s native fish and their habitats among . . . educators, students, and others” and to promote “the conservation of native fishes and the protection/restoration of natural habitats”.

Educational Objective

- 1) To provide established nature educators and local NANFA members with unique, durable, native fish display boards, small viewing tanks and handouts for use in the field or classroom;
- 2) To assist teachers in meeting academic content standards using native fish. For example, students in grade ten are expected to understand biological classification, and relate diversity and adaptation to structures and their functions in living organisms. Native fish provide an excellent medium for these objectives.
- 3) To encourage the general public to take ownership in stream resources by raising the overall awareness of native fish species;
- 4) To promote the conservation of riparian vegetation and floodplains by including information (on display boards) regarding the intrinsic value of stream corridors.

Target Audience

Several demographics are the target of “The Traveling Native Fish Showcase”, a result of the variety of arenas where the materials will be used. Annual projections of students, educators and members of the general public who will interact with the display boards, viewing tanks and handouts are presented below-

Agency or Individuals	Responsible Party	Age Group	Total Individuals
Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District	Jeff Grabarkiewicz, Urban Specialist Jamie Kochensparger, Ed Specialist	All	5000+
Cuyahoga, Summit, Lake, Medina, Geauga Soil and Water Conservation District	Becky Siekkinen, Ed Specialist @ Cuyahoga SWCD	All	1000+ (each)
Sandusky County Parks	Tom Kashmer	All	1000+
University of Toledo	Todd Crail	All	1000+
NANFA members Todd Crail and Jeff Grabarkiewicz	SAME	All	1000+

The county Soil and Water offices carry out several water quality and stream monitoring programs with a broad array of students, including inner city youths, Girl Scouts, students of all ages (mostly elementary and secondary) and home schooled groups. In addition, groups of all ages and ethnicities are present at various public outreach events such as Earth Day, County Fairs, etc.

Ohio NANFA members Todd Crail and Jeff Grabarkiewicz also participate in independent educational activities. For example, Mr. Crail has set up native fish tanks for local schools such as Maumee Valley Country Day where students learn about native

fish from the comfort of their own classroom. In addition, Mr. Crail and Mr. Grabarkiewicz are developing a working relationship with the Toledo Area Metroparks. Commitments have already been made to present at an annual “Oak Openings” symposium where 200+ participants learn about local natural resources.

Native fish tanks are also on display at the Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District and the University of Toledo. When not in use, the display boards will be placed or hung near the tanks to add a new dimension to those exhibits. Lucas Soil and Water in particular receives a significant amount of “walk-in” traffic from consultants, engineers, farmers, and the general public.

Project Description

The project will essentially entail three initial phases, with one final ongoing phase:

- 1) Digital pictures of native fishes taken by Mr. Grabarkiewicz and Mr. Crail will be collected and organized for use on the display boards. The primary focus will be on the non-game native species of Ohio, from the families Percidae, Cyprinidae, Centrarchidae, Catostomidae, Esocidae, in addition to the *Noturus*, *Fundulus*, and *Umbra* genera. Refer to the cover page for a sample photo of *Etheostoma variatum*;
- 2) Obtain the proper materials and assemble high quality, durable display boards. Design handouts and purchase viewing tanks and all accessories;
- 3) Distribute the boards to the various parties as follows-
 - 1 Shared between Mr. Grabarkiewicz and Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District
 - 1 Shared between Mr. Crail and The University of Toledo
 - 1 Sandusky County Parks

2 Shared between Cuyahoga, Geauga, Lake, Medina and Summit
Soil and Water Conservation Districts

4) Ongoing- Track how often the boards are used by the various agencies and individuals. Document events annually.

All boards, tanks and handouts will contain information about NANFA, including, but not limited to, funding credits and the website address. Due to the wide geographical scope of the project, and the multitude of events where the materials will be used, increased exposure will be a supplemental benefit to NANFA.

Educational Format

“The Native Fish Traveling Showcase” will be used in a wide array of educational backdrops. The anticipated settings and corresponding educational formats are presented below-

1. Public Outreach Events- At public outreach events the boards and viewing tanks will be displayed by educators who will engage the general public by answering questions and discussing native fish and their habitats.
2. Stream Monitoring Events- The boards will act as an identification reference at monitoring events for students. Viewing tanks will be used to provide “hands on” opportunities for students.
3. Field Days- Viewing tanks will be used at field days to showcase native fish. Display boards will be used to not only illustrate the diversity of native fish populations, but also educate students on the importance of riparian areas and floodplains.
4. Classroom Events- The boards are particularly useful in classroom settings where access to live fish may not be possible. The Soil and Water Offices have a

number of water quality programs where the boards would be an asset to have in describing what lives in local streams.

5. Fish Tank Displays- Alluded to earlier under *Target Audience*, when not in use, the Lucas Soil and Water and University of Toledo boards will enhance existing native fish tank displays. Walk in traffic will be able to observe the tank inhabitants and relate them to the fish species on the display boards.

Planned Sites

As previously mentioned, the boards and viewing tanks will be used at a wide variety of sites. Some examples are listed below-

- A) Public Outreach Events- Earth Day (at various locals), Earthfest, Maple Sugar Fest, Soil and Water annual meetings, County Fairs, Aquarium Clubs;
- B) Stream Monitoring Events- UT Outdoor Club events, Lucas Cuyahoga, Medina, and Lake SWCD monitor streams with students, and Summit SWCD monitors streams with Girl Scouts and the general public;
- C) Field Days – Fallen Timbers Field Day (Lucas SWCD), Owens Community College field day (Lucas SWCD), Oak Openings Symposium (Lucas SWCD Euclid Creek Field Day (Cuyahoga SWCD), Rocky River Watershed Fest (NANFA/Cuyahoga SWCD);
- D) Classroom Events – As planned by SWCD staff or NANFA members;
- E) Native Fish Tank Displays – Present at Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District and the University of Toledo.

Project Lifespan

The initial collection of materials and board assembly will take roughly four months. The boards will become permanent tools of the various educational programs.

Expected Outcomes

- 1) The educators involved will find that the display boards are an integral component of various stream quality events;
- 2) The boards and viewing tanks will stimulate discussion regarding native fish species during public outreach and education events;
- 3) The target audience will develop a deeper understanding of native fish and their habitats.

Evaluation Methods

The amount of usage will be the prime indicator of project success. Annual contact will be made by Mr. Grabarkiewicz or Mr. Crail with the parties involved to determine the number of events where the boards, handouts and/or tanks were used.

Timeline (2005)

Month	Task
July	Collect pictures, information, and materials for boards
August-September	Assemble boards, purchase viewing tanks and accessories
October	Distribute the boards to the various institutions involved

Itemized Budget

Item	\$
(5) Display Boards	625 (125\$ each)
(10) 2.5 gallon tanks	100
Tank Accessories	100

(E.g. gravel, pumps, etc.)	
Laminated Color Handouts	175
Total Request =	1000\$

Cooperating Individuals

Jeff Grabarkiewicz, Urban Stormwater Specialist, Lucas SWCD, NANFA member, will coordinate the project among Soil and Water Districts. He will also be heavily involved in the creation of the display boards, purchase of materials, and usage of the final product.

Todd Crail, UT Graduate Student, NANFA member, will co-manage the project with Mr. Grabarkiewicz, and will be equally involved in the construction of the display boards, purchase of materials, and the usage of final the final product.

Becky Siekkinen, Educational Specialist, Cuyahoga SWCD, will be the contact for the Northeast Ohio Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Tom Kasmer, Naturalist, Sandusky County Parks, will be the contact for the Sandusky County Parks.