



## BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN TROUT UNLIMITED #696 SEPTEMBER 2021 NEWSLETTER



### August Chapter Meeting Recap

One new member and one visitor joined a healthy showing of chapter members who gathered together on August 14 at Faith Presbyterian Church in Morganton for the monthly membership meeting of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited chapter 696.



### Meeting came to order about 9:15 am.

New member **xxxxxxx** and visitor Roger Daniel were introduced. Roger offered to display his hand-built drift boat at Trout Fest.

### Announcements:

- VP Mel announced the Friends of NRA dinner will be November 2, 2021 at Tooney's in McCaysville. Tickets are currently available at a discount through September 30.

**A general discussion** was held concerning the membership of the Board of Directors. The non-officer Board members will be Sam, Carl, Roger and Bob B. At-large members will be Gary, Richard Wagner and James Weeks.

**Treasurer report included (Bob W):**

- The Board will evaluate the on-going need for our Zoom subscription.
- Paid \$1,320 rent for the next year of the storage area
- Received \$36 from Amazon Smile for last quarter
- Balance in the TU account is \$28,315
- Balance in the Trout Fest account is \$12,266

**Proposed McCaysville event report (Bob B):**

- Sam M., Richard W. and Bob B met with the McCaysville City Council in July to present ideas for a fall event in McCaysville.
- The McCaysville City Council rejected the proposal due to our recommendation to have beer at the event.
- An alternate idea is to have an event inside Tooneys.
- Open to additional discussion

**Trout Fest report (Bob B):**

- Date of Trout Fest will be April 30, 2022
- Plan to conduct a meeting of the Trout Fest committee in September to prepare initial plans for Trout Fest
- Targeting 10 members for the TF committee
- TU National is aware and supportive of TF

- Bob B has again invited Chris Wood to participate (details TBD)

#### **Conservation report (Carl):**

- John's Creek workday is 08/15
- Rivers Alive will be September 25, 2021. Need to promote event to get volunteers.
- 2022 Trout Camp is in planning stage. Will have 12 kids again next year.

#### **Education report (Roger):**

- Fannin Middle School has requested TIC for 2022
- Carl, Roger and Sam will schedule meeting with Fannin Elementary teacher/principal to discuss TIC for 2021/2022

#### **Membership report (Harmon):**

- We have over 300 members in BRMTU chapter

#### **5 Rivers report:**

- No representative attended the meeting

#### **Calendar:**

- Next meeting is 09/11. Likely need to change meeting location – TBD. Fisheries biologist Sara Baker of the GDNR is scheduled to speak.

#### **Fishin Dayz (Harmon)**

- Thursday (08/19) on Rock Creek. Meet at 8 am at the hatchery.

### **Fishing reports:**

- Bob B ... fished tributaries of Coopers Creek. Lots of small rainbows on dry flies.
- Bob B ... floated lower Toccoa tailwater and caught several rainbows and browns.
- Bob B ... Fished Hiwassee River at Reliance, TN, for trout and strippers. Caught one 10 pound and one 30-pound striper.
- Sam M ... Friend has invited TU to fish his local lake. Details TBD
- Jim R ... Fished in Helen and showed video of strippers chasing a trout on his line.

**Featured Program:** Dream Trip report by Ralph Artigliere ... Ralph presented a day-by-day overview of the Dream Trip in Idaho. Good fishing and great hosts.

**Meeting adjourned about 11:30.**



### **GDNR Fisheries Biologist Sarah Baker Talks "Trout" at September Meeting**

It's time to "hook up" with your BRMTU buddies! Wake up Saturday morning and reset your directions to our monthly membership

meeting, temporarily set to take place 9-11 am at Fannin Family Connection -- 501 Fannin Industrial Park, Blue Ridge, GA 30513. Come early for donuts and coffee while sharing in the camaraderie that makes TU what it is.

### **September 11 Agenda:**

President's Message: THE NEW TROUT UNLIMITED VISION

Meeting Program: TROUT UPDATE FROM GEORGIA DNR ... Fisheries biologist Sarah Baker of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources talks all things "trout" in Georgia and reveals her insights on the troubles and the tributes of the trout fishery of the Toccoa River tailwater.

Local Fishing Reports and Photos

Membership Updates

Activities Reports and Updates

Treasurer's Report

Raffle Awards

[Learn more about Fannin Family Connection.](#)

## **Mud Spill Stains Toccoa Tailwater**

Following heavy rain on August

17 during the passage of

Tropical Storm Fred, a

significant mud spill was

observed on the Toccoa River

tailwater at the discharge

channel for the bypass structure

of Blue Ridge Dam. Photos

were captured by an unnamed

source and shared with Blue

Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited.



**BRMTU member Bob Borgwat** reported the mud spill to the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. Bob reports he observed and photographed a similar spill on April 1 at the same site below Blue Ridge Dam.

Bob said EPD's Feltman told him that following the August 17 spill, the contractors on site will be required to replace the silt containment system in an improved/upgraded design over the previously failed system.



**Whether that improved system** was completed or not, a significant mud spill again took place on the same site on the Toccoa tailwater on August 31 when the remnant storms of Hurricane Ida passed through area. Bob reported this spill to Feltman that day and shared photos of the event with him via text.

**Meanwhile, water releases** at Blue Ridge Dam include spilling up to 1,000 cubic feet of water off the surface of the lake via the flood gates. Observation of the tailwater's temperature by BRMTU members recorded 69 degrees on September 2 just 1 ¾ miles downstream from the dam. The spilling is TVA's control of the lake's high-water level that has resulted from the heavy rain of August and early September. Blue Ridge Lake's elevation on September 10 is reported at 1,685 msl, almost 5 feet above the operating guide published by TVA ([see TVA.com](https://www.tva.com)) and just two feet below full summer pool level.

#### **EPD inspector Tracy**

**Feltman** explained the mud spill was the result of a failure of silt fencing on the 37-acre construction site of the Fannin Schools Transportation and Training Facility, located on Old Highway 76 about a quarter-mile west of the Blue Ridge Dam. The





school system purchased land in  
2019 from the U.S. Forest Service  
that the service had deemed not  
necessary for its use any longer.

Construction on the site began in late winter/early spring 2021.

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### **Lend a Hand or a Skill**

### **Volunteer Opportunities for Our Members**

[Click here to learn how you can volunteer](#) your hands and your skills with these organizations supported by Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited:

[Powder Horn \(Boy Scouts of America\)](#) -- September 26, Camp Woodruff, Blairsville

[Blue Ridge Blues & BBQ](#), September 18, downtown City Park, Blue Ridge

[Rivers Alive](#), September 25, Tammen Park, Blue Ridge

[Fall Arts in the Park](#) -- October 9-10, downtown City Park, Blue Ridge

[Blue Ridge Trout & Outdoors Festival](#) -- April 30, 2022, downtown City Park, Blue Ridge

[Conservation Weekend 2021 \(Boy Scouts of America\)](#) -- November 20-21, Camp Woodruff, Blairsville

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### **Organizing Kicks Off for Trout Fest '22 – Staff Committee Forming**

Planning for the 2022 Blue Ridge Trout &

Outdoor Festival – our fifth Trout Fest! -- gets  
under way next week for the April 30, 2022,  
fund-raising event in downtown City Park in  
Blue Ridge.

**Event coordinator Bob Borgwat** has

scheduled the event committee's first

meeting for 1:30 pm, September 17, at the

Fannin County Chamber of Commerce Visitor

Center at

152 Orvin Lance Drive, Suite A, Blue Ridge,

Georgia.



**Trout Fest is the primary fund-raising event** for BRMTU and historically attracts more than 3,000 visitors. The event's net proceeds range upward of \$25,000 and helps fund the chapter's conservation, education and community outreach programs.

Trout Fest requires 10-12 volunteers for its organizational staff, which works on the event's operational requirements. Volunteers are tasked with event communications/social media, sponsors recruitment, vendors recruitment, infrastructure, sales, security, promotions and entertainment.

**Can you lend your expertise to Trout Fest?** Please do! Contact Bob Borgwat, email: [bborgwat@gmail.com](mailto:bborgwat@gmail.com), phone: 706-838-5259 or text: 770-827-6657.

## **Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited Meets September 18**

At least one member of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited is asked to attend the meeting of the Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited at 9 am, September 18, at [Smithgall Woods Fish Camp facility on Joe Franklin Road in Sautee, Georgia.](#)

**The Council will host the meeting.** Kathy will prepare and distribute an agenda prior to the meeting. Picnic tables are onsite, but it is recommended that you BYOCC – bring your own camp chair – because seating is limited.

**Watch for directional signs** as you near the turn for Joe Franklin Road. *THIS IS NOT AT THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO SMITHGALL WOODS WHERE THE WELCOME CENTER IS LOCATED. DO NOT ENTER THE BACK GATE OF SMITHGALL WOODS.* Joe Franklin Road is about ¼ mile north from the back gate – if you are coming on Hwy 75 from Helen, the gate will be after Joe Franklin Road on the right. If you are coming from the other direction on Hwy 75 you will see the back gate ... and then Joe Franklin Road on the left just past.

Choose AMAZON SMILE when shopping on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com), pick Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter #696 as your charity, and Amazon will donate .5% of the price of your purchases to BRMTU!





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**Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter 696**

**September's Trout Habitat Team Meeting Focuses on Sedimentation**

Jeff Wright of Trout Unlimited reports: The upcoming Trout Habitat Team training will take place after the GATU Council meeting on September 18. This training will focus on the sedimentation survey. We are recruiting volunteers who are interested in surveying select Forest Service roads to document where and how sediment is leaving the road surface and, potentially, entering local streams. **These data are collected** using the Survey123 app and are uploaded to an online mapping system that is accessible to multiple agencies and partners. This effort will help identify and justify the highest priority rehabilitation projects. We have already had great conversations with



GADNR, Georgia Forest Watch and US Forest Service and everyone is excited about the possibilities.

**The training will take place** within 15-20 minutes of Fish Camp at Smithgall Woods.

Participants should be up for hiking and expect the training to last about four hours. Anyone interested can sign up at <https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Trout-Habitat-Team-Georgia-Sedimentation-Survey-54394>. Sign ups will close on September 15. Attendees will receive an email with more details on the training by September 16.

Jeff Wright, Southeast Project Coordinator | Trout Unlimited | [jeff.wright@tu.org](mailto:jeff.wright@tu.org) | 636.734.2055



## **Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests seeks support for FY 2023 land-acquisitions nominations program**

The Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests (CONF) are nominating tracts of land to acquire through the Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Many of you and your organizations provided letters of support last year for our FY22 nominations and the CONF would like to ask for your support again as we nominate tracts for FY23 funding.

**You may [download a set of maps](#)** depicting four tracts with a short description and photo(s) highlighting some key features of each tract. You may notice that two of the tracts are the same as last year's proposal, since we don't anticipate receiving any FY22 funding we requested.

**You may also download a [template letter](#)**, with the total acreage and value, you may use if you would like (feel free to add to it). We are coming in on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of our due date to our Regional Office, so if you could please return any support letters by September 16<sup>th</sup>, that would be greatly appreciated.

**For more information**, please feel free to reach out to me by email or phone, 470-208-1243. If you need more time to provide a support letter, please let us know by the September 16, and we'll coordinate with you to get your response.

**Thank you in advance of any support you can give!**

Jeff Emmert, realty specialist/Forest Service

p: 770-297-3062 c: 470-208-1243 email: [jeffrey.emmert@usda.gov](mailto:jeffrey.emmert@usda.gov)

Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests

1755 Cleveland Highway, Gainesville, GA 30501

[www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

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## **Rivers Alive Toccoa River Clean-up ... followed by hot lunch and prizes!**

RIVERS ALIVE is Georgia's annual volunteer waterway cleanup event that targets all waterways in the state, including streams, rivers, lakes, beaches, and wetlands. Volunteers meet up on 8:30 to 12 noon on September 25 at Tammen Park in Blue Ridge.



**The mission of Rivers Alive** is to create awareness of, and involvement in, the preservation of Georgia's water resources through the annual volunteer waterway cleanup event that targets all waterways in the state, including streams, rivers, lakes, beaches, and wetlands. The mission of Rivers Alive is to create awareness of and involvement in the preservation of Georgia's water resources. Rivers Alive is held annually each fall and is a program of the [Georgia Environmental Protection Division Outreach Program](#).

**Meet at:** Tammen Park ([CLICK FOR DIRECTIONS](#))

**Organizer:** Carl Riggs/Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited

**Phone:** 706-838-4110/678-371-7191

**Ages:** All Ages

**Partners:** Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited, Fannin County Government, U. S. Forest Service, Fannin County Chamber of Commerce, Faith Presbyterian Church.



## Trout Week and TU's Virtual Annual Meeting Goes Online September 25 to October 2

For a second year in a row, Covid has caused Trout Unlimited to cancel its in-person annual meeting, but that doesn't mean we can't all get together online (virtually and at local in-person events where possible) to celebrate all we have accomplished and continuing to build and grow our conservation community.



**This year, TU has partnered with** Fly Lords to turn the annual meeting into a full week-plus of fun digital and in-person content all wrapped up in the marketing of "Trout Week". We'll still be bringing you the exciting and inspiring "state of TU" presentation by Chris Wood, we'll still have our annual members meeting to elect our Board of Trustees members (get the proxy form at [www.tu.org/annualmeeting](http://www.tu.org/annualmeeting), and our National Leadership Council will still convene.

**We're also throwing the door wide open** and inviting all of you – our chapters, councils and TU staff and partners – to make "Trout Week" your week and share and plan fun and innovative local events and activities. Even better, with our new TU Event Calendar we have the ability to share and promote your local event like never before, so start planning now and reach out to your Volunteer Operations staff to find out how you can have your local event added to the national calendar and reaching a broader audience than ever before.

[Learn more and find events and activities at www.tu.org/annualmeeting.](http://www.tu.org/annualmeeting)

### Save Georgia Hemlocks Summer Newsletter

HEMLOCK HAPPENINGS, the quarterly

newsletter of [Save Georgia Hemlocks](http://www.savegeorgiahemlocks.org) is finally

finished and posted on the Resources page of [the](http://www.savegeorgiahemlocks.org)

[organization's website](http://www.savegeorgiahemlocks.org). Sorry it's so late,



but this has been an unusual year. Here's the link, and I hope you enjoy.

[https://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Downloads/Resources\\_page/SGH\\_Newsletters/2021\\_Summer\\_Newsletter\\_8-24-21.pdf](https://www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org/Downloads/Resources_page/SGH_Newsletters/2021_Summer_Newsletter_8-24-21.pdf)

Best regards!

Donna Shearer, executive director

Save Georgia's Hemlocks

phone: 706-429-8010

## IN THE FIELD & ON THE WATER

- **Discount Gear/Accessories** – [Cohutta Fishing Company](#), 490 E Main Street in Blue Ridge, offers a 10% discount on tackle/flyes/fly-tying materials to active members of Blue Ridge Mountain TU. Phone: (706) 946-3044
- **Discount Gear/Accessories** – [Toccoa River Outfitters](#), 120 Grand Avenue in Copperhill, TN, offers a 10% discount on all products to active members of Blue Ridge Mountain TU. Phone: (706) 374-5912
- **Guided Fishing Discount** – [Reel Angling Adventures](#) offers a \$50 discount on all guided fishing trips (GA-NC-TN) booked by active members of Blue Ridge Mountain TU. Phone: 706-838-5259
- **Discount Gear/Accessories** -- [Unicoi Outfitters](#), 7280 S Main St, Helen, offers a \$10% discount on tackle, flies, fly-tying materials to active members of BRMTU. Phone: (706) 878-3083
- **BRMTU members “gang up”** weekly for adult beverages at 4:30 on Thursdays at Whiskey & Water in Blue Ridge.

## CHAPTER CONTACTS



### BRMTU Chapter 696 Contacts

The BMRTU Board of Directors and chapter officers encourage your participation in club leadership, activities and events, and solicit your comments and suggestions for improving the chapter's direction and commitment to its Mission Statement and support of Trout Unlimited. Please contact any of the standing officers to share your ideas and to volunteer for chapter leadership positions and committees.

President	John Jenkins	jjenkins3@gmail.com	850-803-6958
Vice President	Mel Richardson	melrich60@hotmail.com	404-406-5442
Recording Secretary	Jeff Kling	jeffkling@msn.com	404-457-3519
Treasurer	Larry Myers	myers134@tds.net	
Education Chair	Roger Johnson	rogerj@tds.net	706-838-4851
Conservation Chair	Carl Riggs	7turns@tds.net	678-371-7191
Membership Chair	Harmon Smith	htsmithlaw@gmail.com	770-540-4608
Director-At-Large	James Weeks	james-weeks@att.net	
Director-At-Large	Richard Wagner	richardmccay@icloud.com	
Director-At-Large	Gary Peterson	garypeterson@tds.net	
Web/News/Fundraising	Bob Borgwat	bborgwat@gmail.com	706-838-5259

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