



2025 BLUE RIDGE TROUT & OUTDOOR ADVENTURES FESTIVAL AND FANNIN COUNTY ENVISION PUBLIC UPGRADES AT LOWER TOCCOA RIVER ACCESS

**Trout Fest '25 event sponsorship program helps build
the foundation for an exciting community-improvement project
associated with outdoor recreation in Fannin County**

(02-24-2024) Blue Ridge Trout & Outdoor Adventures Festival (Trout Fest) and its parent organization – Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited (BRMTU) – will work with Fannin County (Georgia) to discover, design and help fund upgrades for the lower Toccoa River public-access site on North River Road.

In principle, the project's vision explores upgrades at the public access site to the lower Toccoa River on North River Road, located ¼-mile downstream from the river bridge at Curtis Switch Road, near Mineral Bluff.

The upgrades conceived for the lower Toccoa River public-access site is a concept of agreement in principle among BRMTU and Fannin County. TVA owns the project land, and, by agreement, Fannin County operates and maintains the existing site. BRMTU has offered to lead the funding and resources discovery/initiatives behind these upgrades on one of Georgia's most recognized and prized trout fisheries and paddling recreation sites. Recreation enthusiasts in kayaks, canoes and float tubes join Toccoa River anglers year 'round to enjoy its leisurely flows, nature viewing, history and scenic passage from Tammen Park in Blue Ridge to Ron Henry Horseshoe Bend Park in McCaysville.



A community-wide funding and resource program, kicked off by Trout Fest '25 and coordinated by Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited, envisions upgrades to public access on the Toccoa River at North River Road in Fannin County.

The project envisions upgrades to river access for the public, as well as for first responders associated with river safety and river-related emergency situations. The leadership team of BRMTU's 350-plus membership anticipates the process will model the project outline after the ["Embrace A Stream"](#) program designed by Trout Unlimited. The national non-profit organization is comprised of 300,000 members and supporters dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Additional project funding and resources will be encouraged through stakeholder and community solicitation and a range of private and public grant programs.



COMMUNITY HEROES FOR IMPROVED OUTDOOR RECREATION IN FANNIN COUNTY -- THE TROUT CAPITAL OF GEORGIA

Trout Fest 2025 invites organizations of all kinds from Fannin County and surrounding communities to join this community partnership as a COMMUNITY HERO engaged in this project that supports the thriving, repeating, tourism-driven economy of Blue Ridge and Fannin County. Distribution of net proceeds of Trout Fest 2025 includes funds committed to this project.

Fannin County holds so many miles of trout streams that a significant, local supporter of Fannin County's prosperity engaged the Georgia General Assembly to respond to the growing tourism surrounding local trout fishing and associated outdoor recreation. The late Speaker (and local state representative) David Ralston of the state legislature sponsored in 2005 a legislative resolution that named Fannin County the "Trout Capital of Georgia" in response to 10 points of interest associated with trout and trout fishing in the county.

Trout Fest then "arrived" in 2016 in Blue Ridge when the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce in 2015 solicited [Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited](#) to create a springtime festival around the theme of the designation as the Trout Capital of Georgia. The local chapter of the national [Trout Unlimited](#) organization stepped up and

opened the annual event the following April. The 2025 Blue Ridge Trout & Outdoor Adventures Festival opens 10 am to 6 pm, April 26, in downtown city park of Blue Ridge.

Trout fishing is huge in Fannin County! Tens of thousands of anglers enjoy hundreds of miles of streams in Fannin County classified as “trout streams” by the Georgia Department of Natural Resource. In fact, there’s no telling how many angler-days are spent on the Toccoa River and more than 500 miles of its tributaries in the county. Trout Fest responds to that interest and the interests of outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds, and, perhaps, that’s why Speaker Ralston in 2016 also sponsored HR 1039 that named [Trout Fest the “Official Trout Festival of Georgia.”](#)



**10 am – 6 pm, April 26
Downtown City Park
Blue Ridge, GA**



On April 26, Trout Fest '25 gathers fishermen, river sports enthusiasts and outdoor recreation fans and their families at Blue Ridge's downtown city park for recreational services, fun, food, activities, entertainment and shopping, while increasing the public's knowledge of trout and cold-water conservation associated with Trout Unlimited.

To date, the annual Trout Fest even (as a non-profit, 501-C-3 organization) has raised more than \$175,000 that benefits the conservation, education, recreation and community outreach programs of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited. In September 2024, BRMTU designated portions of the existing balance of chapter funding (based on project approval) – as well as portions of the net proceeds generated by Trout Fest '25 and future events – for the discovery, design and direction of the much-needed upgrades to the public-access site on the lower Toccoa River.

TU's mission – and that of the local Blue Ridge chapter with nearly 350 members – is engaged through conservation and community programs and projects that meet needs associated with public recreation and access to coldwater fisheries. Participating **COMMUNITY HEROES** envision the lower Toccoa River public-access site meets those needs and requirements 10-fold and promises a more enjoyable and safer recreation site for thousands of outdoor enthusiasts who annually enjoy the resources of the Toccoa River in Fannin County.

More information:

- Blue Ridge Trout & Outdoor Adventures Festival – Bob Borgwat, event coordinator, 770-827-6657, bborgwat@gmail.com
- Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited – Bob Borgwat, project communications, 770 827-6657, bborgwat@gmail.com
- Fannin County Commissioners – Commissioner Jamie Hensley, (706) 632-2203, jhensley@fannincountyga.org
- Tennessee Valley Authority – Deanna Thompson, Recreation Agreements Specialist, 828-837-4007, dbthompson@tva.gov

In-Service: [Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited #696](#)

[Blue Ridge Trout Festival & Outdoor Adventures](#) is the fundraising arm of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter 696 (a 501-C-3 organization). Trout Fest is led by an event coordinator who works with a volunteer staff.

BRMTU is the annual, primary beneficiary of net proceeds from Trout Fest. Its mission is to conserve, protect and restore cold-water fisheries through education and conservation activities. Funding generated by Trout Fest and distributed by BRMTU reaches:

- Casting for Recovery
- Project Healing Waters
- Rivers Alive
- Fannin County High School scholarship program
- Trout in the Classroom (Fannin County Schools)
- Mercier Orchards' Family Fishing Days
- Trout Adventure Trail
- Fannin County High School Fishing Club
- Georgia Trout Camp
- Save Georgia's Hemlocks



And our organization participates with these government agencies:

- USFWS/Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery (at Rock Creek)
- USDA Forest Service
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Department of Agriculture
- Georgia Department of Economic Development
- Tennessee Valley Authority



More information: John Jenkins, chapter president -- jjjenkins3@gmail.com / phone: 850-803-6958