

## **Cohutta Chapter, Trout Unlimited, FY 2021 Activity Report**

The Cohutta Chapter of Trout Unlimited completed its latest fiscal year on March 31, 2021. The new year began amid the COVID-19 first-wave lockdown, significantly curtailing the planned activities of the chapter. However, following health authority guidance, the organization was able to function on a curtailed basis, utilizing zoom, outdoor events, and social distancing. We present here and outline other activities during this unusual time.

### **Conservation Activities**

**Raccoon Creek Workday:** Coordinated by Kevin Doyle, in conjunction with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), 26 volunteers help clean up and improve access to a section of Raccoon Creek in the Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area.

**Sweep the Hootch:** Coordinated by Steve Westmoreland, six Cohutta volunteers assisted in this annual event sponsored by the Chattahoochee River Keeper.

### **Youth Education**

**Five Rivers Program:** Led by Rodney Tumlin and assisted regularly by Steve Westmoreland and Josh Rakestraw, members assisted the North Paulding High School Coldwater Conservation and Fly Fishing Club in learning fly tying, fly casting, and resource conservation. In addition, 31 volunteers helped mentor 45 youth participants over three full-day fishing outings in North Georgia waters.

**Trout in the Classroom:** Although the main classroom trout hatching events were canceled during the 2020 – 2021 school year due to COVID-19, Chairman Bruce Whipple maintained contact with the teachers of 10 TIC classrooms and provided them with resources to online materials to share.

**Scouts:** Four Cohutta volunteers participated in the Hornaday Scout Weekend at Camp Woodruff. They assisted in teaching Fly Fishing Merit Badge in three sessions to 36 scouts. Several scouts were able to complete all requirements and receive a sign-off by Coordinator Nelson Withers.

### **Community Engagement**

**Stream of the Month:** The chapter sponsored six SOTM outings, with an average of 14 participants at each during the fiscal year. Participants were able to enjoy social distancing in the great outdoors on the beautiful trout streams of Georgia, Western North Carolina, and East Tennessee.

**Chapter Meetings:** Five chapter meetings were held, with a variety of guest speakers. One meeting was held outdoors, the rest via Zoom, with an average of 23 participants per meeting.

**Fly Fishing for Veterans:** Coordinator Rob Hilkin was able to arrange three events for 9 veterans to fly fish with six volunteer guides on the private waters of Frog Hollow. All the veterans were participants in the fly fishing course taught by Rob and volunteers in March of 2020.

**Communications:** Tim O'Kelley and John Rakestraw have kept the membership engaged and up to date with Chapter activities through the Korn Dunker newsletter, emails, and website, [tucohutta.org](http://tucohutta.org).

## Fundraising

**Rod and Reel Sweepstakes:** In place of the Chapters usual fundraising activities, the Chapter held its first online sweepstakes raising over \$1600 for its youth education activities.

**Dream Trip:** The Chapter raised over \$2100 in “Dream Trip” ticket sales of benefiting the Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited and Georgia Trout Camp.

## Board of Directors

The Cohutta Chapter Board held three business meetings during the year via Zoom. The activities of the Board Members assured maintaining Chapter activities in compliance with COVID-19 restrictions.

Several of the Cohutta Chapter Board members also hold positions on the Georgia Council of Trout Unlimited, helping direct and coordinate the activities of the Council.