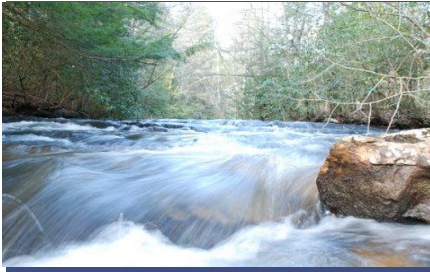


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Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited

Chapter #696

Blue Ridge, GA

President's Message

By Mike Holloway

Fall is a time for celebration and festivities, for football games and family get-togethers. We have our own celebration coming up next month, which is our annual chapter Christmas party. Cathy and I are happy to host this year's party at our house in Mineral Bluff, and our party planners are already hard at work to make sure this is another great Blue Ridge TU event.

It is also a time to look back on a very successful year for our chapter. We have accomplished much and have grown in membership, despite a tough economic year for many. Now that our new chapter year has begun, we can look forward to new challenges and new successes. Here is some of the focus and direction we will be taking:

We will continue our support for important, like-minded programs such as "Back the Brookie," and "Saving Private Brooks." These programs, at the core, meet the basic mission and goals of Trout Unlimited, and we will continue to give them our full support. We will also give new focus to the "Save Georgia's Hemlocks" program.

The survival of Eastern Hemlocks is critical to the health and water quality of our mountain streams. Therefore, we will be available for assistance with education, awareness and funding assistance for this important endeavor.

We will continue our educational efforts, particularly with youth programs and education for the next generation of conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts.

We have already begun a new year for Trout in the Classroom. I was there with Carl and Joe at Fannin Middle School when the new trout eggs were introduced into the classroom trout tank, and I was encouraged by the excitement of the students. I know this program will give many of them a new found respect for the delicate balance of nature necessary for the survival of these fish.

Our educational efforts with our area's Boy Scout troops will also continue and be expanded as much as possible. Ralph has some great ideas for the creation of a scout hiking/fishing trail program in the national forest that will foster a better understanding of the need to conserve both forest and stream in order to protect our wild fisheries. I am particularly excited that Ralph has taken on the position of educational chair to help us develop and promote these vital programs.

We will also hold educational programs to promote the sport of fly-fishing, including “fly-fishing 101” for novices and a new program, “fly- fishing 202” for more experienced fishermen and ladies who wish to sharpen their skills. We will also continue to hold our fly tying classes for both beginner and intermediate tiers. We will continue to promote better unity and participation among our chapter members by holding regular fishing outings. Our new members will also have a chance to get to know us and our local waters better through the creation of a new mentoring program. Hopefully, we will all have more fun and enjoy some great fishing experiences with new and old friends. We have a great year to look forward to, and I am excited about the possibilities. Let’s have a great holiday season and keep the enthusiasm for our Blue Ridge TU Chapter going and growing. Tightlines and Happy Holidays.

Mike Holloway,
President Blue Ridge Mountain TU

SAVE GEORGIA'S HEMLOCKS

A group of concerned citizens joined Trout Unlimited members on Wednesday October 28 to discuss and learn more about how to treat and identify trees that are infested with the Woolly Adelgid. Guest speaker Donna Shearer was very informative and discussed several different processes to protect and improve the chance of an infested tree surviving. Concerns of treating trees near a water source were discussed and testing by the USFS has concluded that low dosages used to treat trees have minimal effect on fish and invertebrates in running water. For more information or to get involved in the effort, contact Donna Shearer at 706-429-8010 and visit the website at www.savegeorgiashemlocks.org.