

Official Trout Festival of Georgia Returns to Celebrate Trout Fishing in the Trout Capital of Georgia



April 28-29, 2017

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(Jan. 11, 2017) BLUE RIDGE, GA – The official Trout Festival of Georgia returns to Blue Ridge this spring when thousands of outdoors enthusiasts descend upon Georgia's top trout-fishing destination – Fannin County, the Trout Capital of Georgia – to benefit cold-water education, service, conservation and recreation in North Georgia via the mission of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter 696.

"The Festival is built around the fact that Fannin County has become a trout-fishing destination for fishermen from all over the nation," says House Speaker David Ralston (representative, 7th District) about the **Blue Ridge Trout Festival & Outdoor Adventures event, April 28-29, in Blue Ridge, Georgia.** In 2016 Ralston led the effort behind House Resolution 1039 that gave the Festival its official status when the declaration was passed by the Georgia Legislature.

"More than 3,500 trout fishermen and other outdoors enthusiasts visited the event in 2016 that drew 70 vendors, crisscrossing the spectrum of outdoors fun," says event chairperson Lynn Brincks. "Outfitters, retailers and non-profit organizations will share the park again on April 29 with thousands of visitors browsing displays of fly-fishing gear and fly-tying demonstrations, drift boats and fishing guides, kayaks and whitewater services, outdoor clothing and trout art, food trucks, a beer garden and live music!"



Whether wading a stream, floating the river or casting from the bank of a lake, trout fishing in Fannin County exemplifies the sport for trout fishermen of all levels. Located about 100 miles north of Atlanta, the Toccoa River is the spine of local trout-fishing opportunities. Its watershed harbors wild-trout streams deep in the forests of the Appalachian Mountains, trophy brown trout in the tailwater downstream from Blue Ridge Dam, private-access trout fisheries, and put-and-take fishing at small highland lakes. Rock Creek, one of the Toccoa's largest tributaries in southeast Fannin County, supports the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery, which annually raises hundreds of thousands of rainbow trout for stocking across North Georgia.

"Trout fishing in the Southeast is not exclusive to Fannin County, but what Fannin County – and Blue Ridge – bring to trout fishermen is one of the finest and well-rounded destinations for trout fishing close to the region's largest population center," says Don Kirk, publisher of Southern Trout

Magazine. "Fannin County was named by legislative resolution in 2010 as the official Trout Capital of Georgia. We regard the Blue Ridge Trout Festival & Outdoor Adventures to be the premier event of its type in the Southeast."



Located among the scenic Blue Ridge Mountains just 90 miles north of downtown Atlanta, the festival opens **April 28 with an exclusive fund-raising High Country Boil & Silent Auction** – a seafood-and-fixin's-eat-with-your-hands dinner and auction hosted at Mercier Orchards, Fannin County's family owned and operated premier apple orchard now in its fourth generation and featuring Mercier Hard Cider and wines. Tickets for the dinner, 5:30 to 9 pm, are only available online at BlueRidgeTroutFest.com.

"The High Country Boil brings you the food, drinks and a 360-degree view of the north Georgia mountains, but you'll remember the evening much more for sharing a great evening with your family, friends and neighbors and placing your winning bid at the silent auction, where there's something for everyone," says Jan Hackett, executive director of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce, co-presenter of the dinner and festival event along with the volunteers of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter 696 (BRMTU). "It will be a perfect way to start your weekend in Blue Ridge and the Trout Capital



of Georgia. Afterward, visit the grounds of the festival's Breakout Marketplace on Saturday, where you can stroll among almost 90 vendors of outdoors gear and services targeted at outdoors recreation in Fannin County. Then, choose from among the fantastic selection of fine restaurants for a great dinner before relaxing overnight at a local cabin, lodge or hotel."



Local outfitters and fishing guides, fishing gear and tackle reps, kayak liveries, hiking clubs, mountain bikers/cyclists, whitewater outfitters and an impressive list of local experts in all things outdoors gather at the all-day **Break-Out Marketplace, Saturday, April 29 from 10 am to 7 pm**, in the downtown City Park while live music provides entertainment, and food trucks and a beer garden offer great eats and beverages. Commercial vendors and local shops of outdoor recreation and gear will be on hand to share the latest outdoor products and services. Expert anglers will provide free fly-fishing instruction, and local fishing guides will share inside information on trout-fishing in the North Georgia mountains.

"We're really excited about having the capable instructors of Atlanta Fly Fishing School and several local outfitters and guide services returning to this year's Trout Fest," says education chairman Howard Winkler of BRMTF. "They'll present free hands-on seminars covering trout-fishing topics and skills throughout the day – everything from reading a stream, to casting a fly-rod, to the tips and tactics for successful trout fishing right here in Fannin County, the Trout Capital of Georgia."

Blue Ridge Trout Festival & Outdoor Adventures also features a number of conservation-related exhibitors and recreation providers, reinforcing Trout Unlimited's commitment to protecting and improving cold-water fisheries, while expanding its education program for people of all ages. Proceeds from the Festival go directly to local conservation, education and service work supported by the membership of Blue Ridge Mountain Trout Unlimited Chapter 696 (BRMTU). One of Fannin County's most active non-profit organizations, BRMTU shares these funds to achieve its mission across the cold-water resources of North Georgia on behalf of the community of supporting services.

"Once again, the Blue Ridge community of volunteers and the wide range of vendors from inside and outside Fannin County promise to make our second year Festival a bigger and better event," Brincks says. "Our planning committee of volunteers is key to keeping the event moving forward ... from the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce, to the members of the local Trout Unlimited chapter, and to community leaders such as the Blue Ridge Lodging Association, who share what really is vital logistical and physical experience in planning and executing festival events in Blue Ridge."

For information about sponsorships, vendor applications, event details and more, please visit the Blue Ridge Trout Festival & Outdoor Adventures website at BlueRidgeTroutFest.com.

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ABOUT BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAIN TROUT UNLIMITED CHAPTER 696

BRMTU Chapter 696 is the official local chapter of the acclaimed national organization dedicated to cold-water fisheries. Trout Unlimited is dedicated to protecting critical habitat, reconnecting degraded waterways, and restoring populations to cold-water fisheries. All funds raised or donated to BRMTU are applied right here in the North Georgia mountains for conservation and stream restoration efforts; stream cleanups, such as Rivers Alive; and education and outreach programs. Sponsored programs include Trout in the Classroom in local schools, the Trout Adventure Trail, Boy Scout and Girl Scout conservation education, Project Healing Waters and Goodwill Guides for wounded veterans, Georgia Women Fly Fishers, Casting for Recovery for breast-cancer survivors, Georgia Trout Camp, Save Georgia Hemlocks, the Chattahoochee Forest National Fish Hatchery and Mercier Orchard Family Fishing Days. For more information, please visit BlueRidgeTU.com.

ABOUT FANNIN COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Blue Ridge, Georgia, is located 8 miles south of the North Carolina–Tennessee border line, only 1½ hours north of Atlanta via I-575- GA/Hwy 515, within easy reach of the best attractions the Georgia, North Carolina and Tennessee mountains have to offer. The Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau is the place to visit to find out information about the entire Georgia Mountain region. Make sure your first stop on a vacation in Georgia's Blue Ridge Mountains is at our new **Fannin County Chamber Visitor Center**, 152 Orvin Lance Drive, Blue Ridge 30513. For more information, please visit <http://www.BlueRidgeMountains.com>.

ABOUT BLUE RIDGE LODGING ASSOCIATION

The Blue Ridge Lodging Association was established by a group of peers closely involved in the lodging and tourism industry in Blue Ridge, Georgia, formed to create an environment that promotes improved business relationships, opportunities to increase tourism, and a shared sense of accomplishment. Self-accountability and trust are the cornerstone of this establishment. Members of the Blue Ridge Lodging Association are required to follow certain guidelines to qualify. For more information, please visit StayInBlueRidge.com.

ABOUT SOUTHERN TROUT MAGAZINE

Southern Trout Magazine is an Alabama-based bimonthly publication devoted to fly-fishing for trout and smallmouth bass in the highlands of the South, from the Mason-Dixon Line to North Georgia. Learn more about the publication by visiting www.SouthernTrout.com.

