The Rabun Chapter of Trout Unlimited is pleased to continue our support for the [ldquo]Foothills Landscape Project[rdquo]. The project recommendations that were provided to the public at the September 2017 presentation in Clayton, Ga., should provide a solid framework to address the changes and challenges that lie ahead in the project's 143,000 acres of the Chattahoochee- Oconee National Forest.

Although the [ldquo]Foothills Landscape[rdquo] project area is largely outside the region's cold-water ecosystems and supporting watersheds, we strongly support action on the following specific recommendations and focus areas for:

BIOLOGIC DIVERSITY

-Restoration of diverse natural habitats, such as the addition of large, woody debris in streams.

WATER QUALITY

-Proper maintenance of all roadways and trails to eliminate or minimize soil erosion into   streams.

-Elimination of non-authorized land uses including random access trails, particularly immediately   adjacent to streams and within sensitive watersheds.

-Restoration of sensitive or unique aquatic habits, including wetland bogs.

CONNECTIVITY AND DISTRIBUTION

  -Maintenance and/or installation of stream structures.

 -Improvement of aquatic organism passage at road crossings. Improvement of trail head parking and other   site development that enhances sustainable recreation and other authorized activities.

-Construction of safe access and other facilities suitable for youth and users with special needs.

The Rabun Chapter of TU applauds the good work in this [ldquo]Foothills Project[rdquo] and looks forward to continuing our support when specific projects that sustain healthy cold-water environments are developed. We look forward to the next phases of the [ldquo]Foothills Landscape[rdquo] collaborative planning project.

Sincerely,

Kent Wilson

President,

Rabun Chapter Trout Unlimited, #522