

Dear Ms. Colpitts:

This letter is being written to ask that Ammonoosuc Trout Unlimited be considered for Partner of the Month in 2021. We are a non-profit 501c3 organization based in Littleton with 130 members. Our membership spans a large geography, extending from Lincoln north to Pittsburg and from Crawford Notch west to Northeast Vermont. Although many might consider us a “fishing club” because of our name, in fact much of our members’ time is spent on volunteer activities- educating kids, communities and disabled veterans, conserving and restoring stream habitat, studying fish and other wildlife, all demonstrating our strong commitment to improving and sustaining the valuable natural resources in northern-NH. In fact, we strongly advocate for special regulations that protect fish and enable others to enjoy the sport. Our “Mission, Vision and Who We Are” are described in an attachment to this letter. In this letter, I will also tell you about a few of our chapter activities.

Our chapter members, as well as other TU members from NH and MA, are working closely with a landowner in Bethlehem and the Society for the Protection of NH Forests to conserve 259 acres of land. This includes 1.8 miles of the Ammonoosuc River that comprise one of the most beautiful and remote sections of any river in the State of NH. This is not only a wonderful place for wild trout, but it also includes beautiful habitat for hunting, and will be of tremendous benefit to everyone living in our North Country community. Ammonoosuc TU contributed a total of \$22,495 through individual member contributions, a \$5,000 contribution from the chapter treasury, and matching challenge grants from the TU National organization and an anonymous donor. We provided significant fund-raising assistance so the Forest Society could cover partial land costs and other expenses estimated at \$565,000.

Our chapter contributes a minimum of \$1,000 annually to offset tuition expenses at two kids, outdoor camps in NH so kids can learn about nature and fishing. These two camps include Barry Camp, run by NH Fish & Game and UNH Cooperative Extension, and NH TU Trout Camp, run by the NH TU Council, which comprises all eight chapters in the state. NH TU Trout Camp now has expanded to include three levels to help maximize learning among children at all different expertise levels- Tier I (beginners), Tier II (more advanced) and CIT’s (Counselors In Training- paraprofessionals). Ammonoosuc TU members serve as volunteer counselors/teachers for ten days, two camp sessions, each summer. During normal years without COVID-19, our members work closely with Schilling Beer Company (a local brewery with a strong interest in conservation) and the NH TU Council to run a fun Schilling Celebration/Tournament on the Ammonoosuc River in the center of Littleton to raise funds for the TU camp.

We traditionally work with the Town of Twin Mountain on many activities that benefit townspeople and visitors during Memorial Day Weekend. For several years, Ammonoosuc TU has run a kids fishing derby at the town pond with trout provided by our chapter and NH Fish & Game.

We teach adults as well! We set aside one day per month for the past two years to work with disabled veterans to teach fly tying and fishing through a national program called Project Healing Waters (PHW). Veterans and TU volunteers traveled from all over NH to Littleton where Ammonoosuc TU pioneered the program. This effort has now expanded throughout NH with other chapters following our lead. Ammonoosuc TU also worked with the NH Parks Department, NH Fish & Game Department and the Old Man Legacy Fund to construct a handicapped platform on Profile Lake, the only facility of its type in the

State of NH. This platform enables disabled veterans and others the opportunity to angle this beautiful Brook Trout fishery in circumstances where they would otherwise not be able to do so.

During the summer of 2017 Ammonoosuc TU organized an extensive study of >750 stream and river crossings in the entire Ammonoosuc River watershed. To perform this work, we first raised \$150,000, of which over \$80,000 was received from the Upper Connecticut River Mitigation and Enhancement Fund. We worked with three State of NH Departments (DOT, DES and Fish & Game) to develop the protocol and procedures for evaluating stream crossings statewide. Four college interns, a professor, a TU National Project Manager and many Ammonoosuc TU Chapter volunteers, used these methods. The current conditions of all the Ammonoosuc River Watershed crossings were uploaded to a large, statewide database managed by the University of NH. Since 2017, these data have been used to predict the vulnerability of road stream crossings under 25-, 50- and 100-year flood events and to identify those where fish and other wildlife are unable to travel. The analyses and crossing maps were then shared with communities in the watershed to assist them in planning for improvement projects that will restore the entire watershed.

Stemming from the work identified above, Ammonoosuc TU Chapter volunteers in 2019 worked with the Bath Conservation Commission to write several proposals to help fund the restoration of Childs Brook, an exceptional coldwater tributary to the Ammonoosuc River. By replacing three badly degraded and impassable road stream crossings, the restored stream channel will once again allow wild Brook Trout to access valuable habitat in headwater stream reaches. To date, the project has received funding support from the Bath Conservation Commission, NH Fish & Game Department, TU's Coldwater Conservation Fund, and the Trout & Salmon Foundation. Presently, this restoration project has grants pending from the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the NH Aquatic Resource Mitigation Fund. Overall, the project is 70 percent funded but additional funds are needed to complete all the necessary restoration work.

One of our most exciting collaborative fish research projects took place in 2018 on what is arguably the finest wild Brook Trout fishery in NH located in the Second College Grant. This effort involved nine NH and Maine TU chapters, NH Fish and Game, university academia, various research students and volunteers. These fish migrate many miles between the Dead Diamond and Swift Diamond Rivers in the Grant to the Magalloway River, Lake Umbagog and the Rapid River in Maine. Through several grants, a corporate challenge grant from Orvis, individual contributions, and research funds from Dartmouth College, we supported two interns and a PhD student who analyzed the influence of upwelling groundwater on the selection of spawning sites. Using PIT (microchip) tags, we studied the migration of juvenile and adult trout to learn how they utilize tributaries and mainstem river habitat for their different life stages and needs. Ammonoosuc TU contributed \$7,000 to this research activity and supplied a significant number of volunteers toward the field portion of the project.

An ongoing, exceptionally large, project for our chapter is taking place in the unincorporated town of Success, NH. So far, several partner organizations have raised over \$350,000 to replace two failing culverts with bridges and repair a less than adequate portion of the roadway to Success Pond. Eventually, this undertaking will require substantially more funds to finish restoring fish and wildlife

habitat in the many small streams that cross under the roadway and flow to the Androscoggin River. The work along the roadway will also enable safe public access to more than 35 sq. miles of beautiful, conserved forestland in this watershed.

As you can see from a portion of our activities, the Ammonoosuc TU Chapter is dedicated to engaging the local community in their mission to restore, conserve and protect our wildlife and natural resources, as well as to share knowledge and appreciation of those resources with others. Any funds garnered from the Littleton Food Coop Partner of the Month Program would be appreciated and enable us to foster these activities. Receiving grants from both state and federal partners always requires significant match through both cash and in-kind contributions. The project team would be tremendously grateful for any financial support to help raise the additional funding required to make these projects successful.

Sincerely,

Schuyler Sweet

President, Ammonoosuc Chapter of Trout Unlimited