



January 13, 2017

Commander, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Savannah District, Regulation Division
Attn: Joseph Rivera
1590 Adamson Parkway, Suite 200
Morrow, GA 30260-1777

RE: Owl Creek Mitigation Bank, File No. SAS-2015-00220

Dear Mr. Rivera:

The Trout Unlimited (TU), Chattahoochee Nantahala Chapter #692 respectfully submits the following comments in support of the proposed Owl Creek Mitigation Bank in the Tennessee River basin and more specifically, the upper Hiawasse River/Lake Chatuge watershed in Towns County, Georgia.

TU 692 is a 501(c)(3) incorporated nonprofit organization dedicated to conservation, preservation, restoration and protection of trout fisheries and their watersheds in north Georgia and western North Carolina. We work closely with the Hiawasse River Watershed Coalition, Inc. with stream and watershed restoration projects as volunteers and as a funding source. The chapter membership also actively engages the local community in educational programs, like Trout-in-the-Classroom, to promote conservation and preservation of trout and their habitat as well as increase the trout population.

TU 692 believes that the Owl Creek Mitigation Bank advances the purpose of our Trout Unlimited chapter and compliments the overall objectives of Trout Unlimited. The benefits of this project include the following:

- (1) Since Owl Creek is currently on the Georgia 303(d) impaired waters list for fishing, it would add over a mile of protection along Owl Creek and its tributaries, and thereby contribute toward removing the impairment
- (2) Reducing sedimentation and nutrient input into Lake Chatuge which improves stream quality and habitat for trout and other aquatic life in the Owl Creek and its tributaries
- (3) Establishment of a mitigation bank in the Tennessee River basin/Upper Hiawasse watersheds provides for credits to remain locally for conservation efforts on streams and wetlands that may be adversely impacted in the future

TU 692 appreciates the opportunity to comment on this important and critical initiative for our local community and hope this letter of support is considered integral to the approval of this permit.

On behalf of Trout Unlimited Chapter #692
Chapter President Kolt Owenby

Kolt B. Owenby