**Operating Procedures for Trout Unlimited Chapter Development Concept**

One important task for Trout Unlimited's (TU's) Councils and Chapters is the cultivation of new chapters, particularly in underserved geographic areas where current chapter members reside. While TU members are generally assigned to the chapter nearest to them, in some cases the event locations of a member’s assigned chapter can require extensive travel time under sometimes-uncertain weather and road conditions. Ideally, chapters should be in locations that best serve nearby members.

While the cultivation and formation of chapters is an important undertaking for the health of the TU organization, it is not always the easiest task to undertake and requires a strong supporting foundation of both an adequate number of active members and sufficient start-up funding to succeed. These are probably the most significant hurdles facing a new chapter, and weakness in these areas often leads to a short lifespan for what began as a good idea. It is also of great value to have a strong mentor in the form of another chapter or, where a chapter is not located reasonably nearby, a council, to help a new chapter along during the formative stages.

One potential solution to these issues would be the establishment of a new chapter exploratory committee (hereinafter “new chapter group”) comprised of members with an interest in and connection to a local area, combined with the support and guidance of an existing “parent chapter” or “parent council”. The structure of the new chapter group would include official representation within the parent chapter or council in the form of the chair of the new chapter exploratory committee and, if consistent with the bylaws of the parent chapter or council, a board position. The new chapter group could then take the time to identify members for leadership positions, increase active membership, raise funds, manage revenue and expenses under the parent chapter's umbrella, and establish a healthy operation on sound footing prior to submitting a request for recognition as a chartered chapter of TU.

Once a new chapter group meets a set of minimal requirements mutually determined by the new chapter group and the parent chapter or council and once there is mutual confidence in the new chapter group's ability to succeed, the new chapter group should submit an application to the state council and the Board of Trustees for chartering. The new chapter group must apply for chartered-chapter status within two-years of the establishment of the new chapter group. If additional time is necessary, the parent chapter may ask TU's Vice President for Volunteer Operations for an extension of time, and the Vice President may allow the new chapter group an additional two years in which to apply for chartered-chapter status.

Until they become chartered chapters, the new chapter groups must work within the structure of the parent chapter or council to assure compliance with TU's bylaws and its 501(c)(3) non-profit status and to assure that the activities of the new chapter group and its members are covered under TU's insurance policies.