

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2017**

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**HOUSE BILL 414**

Short Title: Swain County/Official Trout Fishing Location. (Public)

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Sponsors: Representative Clampitt.

*For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.*

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Referred to: State and Local Government I, if favorable, Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House

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March 22, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT DESIGNATING SWAIN COUNTY AS THE OFFICIAL LOCATION FOR TROUT  
2 FISHING IN NORTH CAROLINA.  
3

4 Whereas, Swain County is home to hundreds of miles of trout streams and scores of  
5 different streams ranging from those accessible with a short walk to others that are more  
6 remote; and

7 Whereas, Swain County holds 42% of the entire acreage of the Great Smoky  
8 Mountains National Park and also holds over several hundred miles of trout fishing within the  
9 National Park; and

10 Whereas, Swain County holds within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park the  
11 legendary trout streams of both Hazel Creek and Deep Creek, the complete length of the  
12 Oconaluftee River and its tributaries; and

13 Whereas, it is generally acknowledged that for stream-bred fish (rainbows, browns,  
14 and speckled trout), the streams of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park provide a scenic  
15 and wild destination unmatched in the eastern United States; and

16 Whereas, virtually all of Swain County's trout water is available to the general  
17 public due to being located in the Nantahala National Forest or the Great Smoky Mountains  
18 National Park; and

19 Whereas, the lower end of the Nantahala River, the Nantahala Gorge, is entirely in  
20 Swain County and enjoys the rare attribute of being wadeable during times of power generation  
21 as well as when upstream dam gates are shut and also enjoys year-round levels of water; and

22 Whereas, the tail waters of the Nantahala River, the Nantahala Gorge, are entirely in  
23 Swain County and hold a substantial population of wild fish even though it carries a "hatchery  
24 supported" designation; and

25 Whereas, the tail waters of the Nantahala River, the Nantahala Gorge, are entirely in  
26 Swain County and was named in Trout Unlimited's list of America's 100 greatest trout streams;  
27 and

28 Whereas, the tribal waters of the Cherokee Reservation's famed fishing are in Swain  
29 County and offer both catch-and-release trophy options as well as catch-and-keep fishing; and

30 Whereas, Swain County offers over two miles of delayed harvest waters on the  
31 Tuckasegee River readily accessible via wading, bank fishing, boating, and fishing piers; and

32 Whereas, Swain County has hosted two top fly fishing events, the 2011 U.S.  
33 National Fly Fishing Championship and the 2012 U.S. Youth National Fly Fishing



1 Championship, and is hosting the upcoming 2017 U.S. Youth National Fly Fishing  
2 Championship; and

3       Whereas, Swain County has 42,550 stocked trout over 31.2 miles of stream, or  
4 1,364 trout per mile; and

5       Whereas, Swain County holds two State record fish, the brook trout State record  
6 was caught on Ravens Fork and the brown trout State record was caught on the Nantahala  
7 River; and

8       Whereas, Swain County is comprised of 541 square miles with 13 square miles of  
9 water that equal 2.3% of the county overall with the vast majority of those streams being  
10 accessible to fishing; and

11       Whereas, Swain County holds four rivers, including the Nantahala, Tuckasegee,  
12 Little Tennessee, and Oconaluftee, all easily accessible for fishing and stocked; and

13       Whereas, Swain County is home to Fontana Lake, with over 900 miles of shoreline  
14 and over 13 varieties of fish, including brown and rainbow trout, small- and large-mouth bass,  
15 muskie, walleye, yellow perch, and others; and

16       Whereas, Swain County is home to Cheoah Lake, which has over 6 varieties of fish,  
17 including brook, brown, and rainbow trout; and

18       Whereas, Swain County is the home of the Fly Fishing Museum of the Southern  
19 Appalachians, devoted to the history and teaching of the art of fly fishing and nationally  
20 recognized as being the top museum of its type; and

21       Whereas, the trout and lake fishing industry brings a \$174 million economic impact  
22 to Western North Carolina; and

23       Whereas, Swain County offers a remarkable variety of aquatic waters for outdoor  
24 recreation, including fishing, boating, kayaking, and more, which encourages destination  
25 tourism, second-home buyers, and retirees to the fair State of North Carolina; and

26       Whereas, Swain County deserves to be designated as the official trout fishing  
27 location in North Carolina; Now, therefore,

28 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

29       **SECTION 1.** Chapter 145 of the General Statutes is amended by adding a new  
30 section to read:

31 **"§ 145-49. State trout fishing location.**

32       Swain County is designated as the official location for trout fishing in the State of North  
33 Carolina."

34       **SECTION 2.** This act is effective when it becomes law.