USDA United States Department of Agriculture | Forest Service | Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests Supervisor's Office | 1755 Cleveland Highway Gainesville, GA 30501 (770) 297-3000

File Code: 1900
Date: August 25, 2009

Dear Interested Party:

In coordination with the Sumter, Chattahoochee and Nantahala National Forests, I wish to announce that the three forest supervisors have selected Alternative 4. Our decisions are documented in three separate Decision Notices (DN) and Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) that include amendments to the different forest plans. After careful review of the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Management of Recreation Uses on the Upper Chattooga River, Alternative 4 best meets the intent of the Wild and Scenic River Act, the Wilderness Act and the purpose and need described in the EA. See the Rationale for the Decision in the attached DN.

This alternative emphasizes year-round, high-quality trout fishing and at the same time provides boating opportunities on the main stem upper Chattooga. Boating will be allowed from the confluence of Norton Mill Creek in North Carolina to Burrells Ford Bridge between December 1 and March 1 at flow levels of approximately 450 cfs or higher (Burrells Ford gauge). The selected alternative also calls for limiting overnight camping in the upper Chattooga to designated sites and closing and/or rehabilitating a number of user-created campsites and trails.

For this decision, the two other Responsible Officials and I have decided to use the "Optional Appeal Procedures Available during the Planning Rule Transition Period". Appeals must be postmarked or received within 45 days after the date the legal notice of this decision is published in the newspaper of record (The Times, Gainesville, Georgia). Appeals must be filed with the Regional Forester for the Southern Region at: USDA Forest Service, Attn: Appeal Reviewing Officer, 1720 Peachtree Road, NW, Suite 811N, Atlanta, GA 30309-9102. Appeals may also be faxed to (404) 347-5401 or mailed electronically in a common digital format to appeals-southern-regional-office@fs.fed.us. Hand-delivered appeals must be received within normal business hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday, closed on federal holidays.

Electronic copies of the EA and DN are available on the Francis Marion Sumter National Forests' website at www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/sumter/resources/Chattooga.php. For more information on this decision, please visit www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/sumter/resources/Chattooga.php or call (803) 561-4000

Sincerely,

GEORGE M. BAIN
Forest Supervisor