From: Benjamin Gaston
Sent By: bgaston@g.clemson.edu
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us; akimbell@fs.fed.us
Cc: Elena Sanz
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Comment Letter
Date: 07/29/2008 07:56 PM

Greetings and well wishes, as difficult as it might be to harbor those feelings in light of the actions perpetrated by the Sumter office in the past few months and, well, blatantly honest, too many years.

It is sickening to see direct orders from superiors go unheeded, and this disobedience unpunished or unreprimanded. I have never had a job where I was able to commit acts in direct opposition to those requested by my supervisor and keep my job.

You have continued to attempt end runs around both logic and legal precedent to the consternation and amusement of many concerned parties. It has now become a running "reality show" of just how poor the logic and judgment will get in the next round of feeding the Good 'Ol Boy system that is so obviously in play with this situation.

Now, I will allow that you are playing your constituency. Fair enough. But the problem is, that there is ABSOLUTELY NO PROVEN, LOGICAL, OR HISTORICAL EVIDENCE THAT USER CONFLICTS WILL BE ANYTHING BUT A MINOR AND EXTREMELY RARE OCCURRENCE. As well, there have been no efforts made to restrict other (proven more impacting on all counts) groups from this wilderness area (notably hikers and fishermen). Arguments abound about the impact of boaters above and beyond that of fishermen. Allow me to point out the lack of streambank wear and tear perpetrated by a kayaker compared to that of a Foothills trail hiker (of which I am as well). One entry, one exit, and a majority of portages completed on exposed stone. I will spare you the downloads, but I have pictures plenty showing the contrast of abused backcountry campsites, and the impacts of fishermen as well. I request photographic proof of the impact of ONE, any ONE experienced kayaker disrespecting his resources to the extent of an empty 6 pack in the fire ring, a can of corn, and 50 yards of monofilament in the nearby hemlock tree. I in fact INVITE you to prove me wrong on this point.

Please end the absurdity now. Leadership and management is a matter of picking your battles. One should probably consider if this something they would like to be remembered for--bad logic to blatantly massage the wanton desires of local misguided fishermen with a maligned idea about the impacts of a small yet important user group to your local economy. Please accept that the ban is illegal, in direct opposition to both the Forest Service Dispersed Use Policy and in direct conflict with prompts given to your office by your director. In this acceptance one is likely to reach understanding and a valid, reasonable decision, that while irritating the extremely vocal clear and present minority screaming absurdities about our evil clan, will represent the level-headed logical decision making the Forest Service is widely known for. Barring this, we will see you in court.

I appreciate your time, and look forward to the outcome.

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