From: trey coleman
Reply To: roscoepwavetrain@yahoo.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:
Date: 07/29/2008 08:22 AM

Hello,

I am both a lifelong trout fisherman (recent past member/supporter of Trout Unlimted) and whitewater kayaker of 10+ years and avid fisherman from a canoe/kayak for some 25+ years.

I am writing to voice my extreme frustration at the process of selectively excluding recreational use of the Chattooga headwaters by kayakers and canoeists. I have expressed these views before and will summarize them again.

1) There is zero basis (or common sense) for the exclusion of kayakers/canoeists from using a waterway that is used by fishermen and both parties offer minimal impact in terms of environmental impact. A plastic boat passing over a rock is about as destructive as someone standing on a riverbank or wading into a stream. Thus, it is ignorant to suggest one party is creating more of a environmental threat than the other. I have fished enough to see the trash that is left behind by fishermen, although fly fishermen are less messy than bait fishermen, the point is there is no such thing as people using banks and streams to fish and not leaving behind evidence of there being there.

2) Kayakers/canoeists are only interested in using the headwaters when there is ample CFS to get down the waterway and this happens to be the same conditions that fishermen seek to avoid. Any fishermen that suggests higher flows (with consequent turbidity and ecosystem disruption) is good fishing conditions is either a novice or someone that doesn't catch many fish. Trout hunker down for the most part when the CFS cranks up after a rain event as they hit visual patterns, which is in turn hampered by turbidity.

3) We are all federal taxpayers and as a result have equal rights in terms of use of federal land if the use isn't destructive or giving preferential benefit over other users (such as loggers, strip miners and ATV trails that add sediment load to waterways). It boggles the mind that anyone that loves this country would support discrimination of other citizens wishing to enjoy the land that is theirs by both legal and moral obligation.

4) I am appalled at the manner in which the Forest Service has conducted this entire

manner. It has been unprofessional at best and has shown overt deference to the fishermen who want to maintain their monopoly on this public asset. There is a compromise in this stand-off that will allow use of these waters in an equitable manner and that is giving kayakers/canoeists use of the waters on high-flow days (or perhaps in the winter months when most fishermen don't even use these waters) and allow both parties to enjoy these public assets.

I am asking that a compromise be reached (none of the alternatives are suitable as framed) that allows the kayakers/canoeists to use these waters during high-flow or winter months and then the rest of the year it is the exclusive domain of fishermen.

Sincerely,

Trey Coleman

Knoxville, TN

Lifetime Member of American Whitewater

Trout Unlimited member (2002 - 2007)