From:	Amy Chase
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	comments on draft EA to Chattooga Planning Team
Date:	07/29/2008 02:22 PM

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via email to <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fd.us>

re: Chattooga River draft Environmental Assessment (EA)

Dear Forest Service personnel,

As a resident of Whiteside Cove Road in Cashiers, NC who lives near the Chattooga River, I have been following with interest the controversy caused by American Whitewater's request to allow boating on the upper Chattooga.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to comment on the draft EA.

My family swim frequently in the river particularly at Sliding Rock right by the bridge over the river near Grimshawes. Also I often walk near the river and appreciate the wildness of the area. Although I would prefer the policy of no boating on the upper Chattooga, I am relieved that the proposed alternative, #4, in the draft EA continues to allow free and safe swimming and playing at Sliding Rock and at swimming holes along the upper Chattooga. I have thought over the past couple of years that the interests of all users including swimmers and hikers must be considered in addition to those of the anglers and boaters. I am pleased to see that the draft EA includes some consideration of all users not just some users.

As you review the draft EA, please continue to keep boats from spoiling the opportunity for local and visiting families to use the upper Chattooga river swimming holes safely and freely. If you were to look at the upper river by Sliding Rock, you would see that the swimming hole is much more appropriate for swimming activity than for boating activity. Most parts of the river at that point are no more than a few feet wide which allows for good family swimming activity and almost no boating activity except for those few boaters who are want to risk their lives in the dangerous sport of creeking. Please remember that boats are allowed on at least 2/3rds of the Chattooga below the headwaters and that leaving the headwaters as untouched as possible is the best way to maintain the riperian environment of the upper Chattooga.

Please do not extend boating on the upper Chattooga and certainly not beyond the preferred alternative #4. Although I prefer alternative #5 allowing no boating on the river, alternative #4 at least allows boating only in winter when swimmers are unlikely to be enjoying the river. The other alternatives considered in drafting the EA increase access to such an extent

that the nature of the upper Chattooga could well be ruined.

Sincerely,

Amy R. Chase

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