

site of an early road and natural ford across the river at river mile 22.3. Evidence of this road should be obliterated to the boundary on both sides of the river, and a trail built to the river. Access by trail is definitely needed here for canoeists. This is a termination point for less experienced canoeists and a popular beginning point for expert canoeists.

→ Sandy Ford is also the site of an early road and natural ford across the river. This old road should also be obliterated back to the proposed boundary and a trail constructed to the river on both sides. The stretch of the river above this point to Earls Ford is moderately difficult for canoeists, and an exit trail is needed here for those canoeists who may be "canoeless" by the time they reach this point.

Many of the sandbars and lands directly along the river through this section show evidence of primitive camping, including past campfires, littering and some general deterioration. A system of reinforced campspots located on the more inaccessible portions of the river is needed to provide for over-night camping, prevent sanitation problems and "wearing out" of the lands directly on the river.

#### Section V Chattooga River Mile 10.5 to 9.5

Several detracting influences need to be removed from around U. S. 76 Bridge to improve the quality of this section. These include the remains of an old steel bridge, evidence of sandmining, and a short dirt road which drops from the highway down to the river's edge and parallels the river for one-fourth mile. Heavy equipment will be required to remove this bridge. All traces of sandmining, the only mineral activity occurring within the proposed river boundary, will disappear with the first high water. Limited sand removal was done when Georgia Power Company owned this land. Since there is sand of comparable quality in the general area there will be no measurable effect on the local economy by discontinuing this activity on the Chattooga.

U. S. 76 is a paved two-lane highway crossing the river. This highway does not parallel the river but crosses in a wooded section. Its effects are limited to the immediate area. Traffic on U. S. 76 is mainly local between Clayton, Georgia, and Westminster, South Carolina, averaging 700 vehicles a day.



*A summer home in Section I. Rustic design is compatible with scenic classification.*

*Eroding river banks along the West Fork.*



*Section III, near Highway 28, showing access roads, old fields and buildings along the river.*



Section VI - Chattooga River Mile 9.5 to 4.3

An old jeep road comes down to the river's edge at Woodall Shoals. This access point is needed for canoeists. The river below Woodall Shoals is exceedingly difficult and dangerous for floaters, and most will take their craft out at this point. The old jeep road here should be removed back to the proposed boundary of the river, and a trail brought down to the river.

Section VII - West Fork river mile 7.3 to 4.0

Section VII is on the upper headwaters of the West Fork. This section includes 3.3 miles of the West Fork flowing entirely through National Forest lands. This section qualifies for Wild River classification and there are no private uses which will be affected by inclusion of this section in Wild River class.

Section VIII - West Fork river mile 4.0 to 0.0

Section VIII is located on the lower end of the West Fork and is largely developed in fields, farms, and paralleling road and highway along a major portion of its length. This section meets Recreation River criteria.

Overflow Bridge marks the upper limit of the section. It is a Forest Service concrete bridge on a dirt road crossing the West Fork at river mile 3.9. This access point is needed for canoeists who want to float this easy section and for hikers who will use it as a jump-off point into the inaccessible section above it. The road also provides important access into adjacent National Forest lands.

Below Overflow Bridge the dirt road parallels the river for 1.3 miles to paved Warwoman Highway. In most places the dirt road is within 1000 feet of the river and often visible above the river. Growth of natural vegetation along the road will eventually screen it from view. In one instance a culvert under the road protrudes almost into the river. This culvert should be screened so that it is not visible from the river.

At Warwoman Road the West Fork enters an area of paralleling fields, pastures and occasional stretches of forest. These add variety to the river and provide greater visual interest. At the start of the fields at Warwoman Road, the river banks are badly eroded and continue to show heavy erosion down to the West Forks junction with the main river. This erosion is probably due to overgrazing and lack of sufficient cover along these roads. These lands should be acquired and measures taken to stop the erosion. The owners will probably be willing to sell for fair market value. The fields and pastures along this section of the river should be maintained as open land by fertilizing and planting to hay. Permits could be issued to keep the fields cut and fertilized. This will stabilize these lands with a good cover and stop erosion.

One old farmhouse is within the boundary along this section and detracts from the overall well-maintained pastoral qualities of this part of the river.

Warwoman Highway crosses the West Fork and joins Highway 28 which parallels within one-fourth mile of the main river. This is a two-lane paved highway providing good access between Clayton, Georgia, and Walhalla, South Carolina. It now receives an average daily traffic of 300 vehicles per day.

This section is potentially one of the worst problem areas on the whole river. Paralleling Overflow Road, Warwoman Road and Highway 28 along its entire length could attract undesirable and incompatible development. All lands along this section of the river should be acquired by the Forest Service to protect its quality and to protect the view along the river and along this major access corridor to the river. This section is in forest, fields, or pasture which can be acquired for a reasonable market value with no appreciable adverse effects on present uses or landowners. Now is the time to acquire these lands while they are still largely undeveloped.

Some old junk mining equipment and old steel tanks have been abandoned on the lower portion of this section. These should be removed to improve the quality of this section.

The remains of an old splash dam are located on this section. This structure has some historical significance, is compatible with Recreation River classification, and should be left.

#### Georgia Power Lands

Approximately 5,700 acres of land were acquired from the Georgia Power Company during the past three years. Except for a small stretch of old fields planted in pines near Highway 28 on the main river, and items already discussed, these lands are in a completely forested condition.

The main interest of Georgia Power Company in owning lands along the Chattooga River was for potential reservoir sites. Although reservoirs were not planned for the Chattooga in the foreseeable future, there are several potential reservoir sites which would inundate practically the entire river in Georgia and South Carolina if constructed. Construction of a reservoir on any section of the Chattooga would immediately destroy that section's free-flowing, undisturbed characteristics.

The Georgia Power Company cooperated fully in this study and in exchanging land along the proposed river corridor. If this river is included within the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, much of the credit for its outstanding primitive qualities can go to the Georgia Power Company for its sound management and protection of these extensive lands along the river in the past.

Georgia Power made some secondary uses of the lands within the river boundary. Timber stands along the river were harvested regularly on a selective basis. Inclusion of these lands and management of these timber stands for aesthetic and recreation purposes will cause no appreciable loss of timber to the local economy. Georgia Power lands acquired by the Forest Service outside the river boundary will continue to be managed for commercial timber production as well as other multiple uses.

Much of the land acquired from Georgia Power Company had detracting uses, such as worn out primitive camps, jeep trails, etc. which should be removed to improve the quality of the river. Several of these areas will be used for recreation purposes: for trails, location of information facilities, and for parking and access control along the river.

### Fire Control

Most recreation use on the river occurs during the period of May through September when the forest fire hazard is low. The frequent summer rainfall and lush green vegetation combine to minimize fire danger during this period. The highest risk of forest fires occurs in early spring and fall when vegetation has dried. Fire occurrence in the corridor is small.

Some changes in fire control organization and tactics may be needed. For example, more use of airplane patrols along the narrow corridor would aid early detection of forest fires. Use of heavy equipment may need modifying to protect aesthetic values.

### C. The Benchmark System

A benchmark system must be established within the proposed corridor to measure and note change in the river's outstanding qualities.

Some change is inevitable. The Chattooga River and its surrounding lands are a dynamic moving, living, changing environment. The Chattooga is not a static resource that can be fenced, "encased in glass" and preserved exactly as it is now for all future generations. Inclusion of this river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System can prevent over development of the river, but it cannot halt the ageless geologic and ecological processes that have resulted in the formation of this beautiful river and surrounding forest environment.

Least noticeable are the geologic processes occurring over thousands of years that have resulted in the formation and weathering down of this part of the Appalachian Mountains. These geologic processes will continue in future years, slowly changing even the eternal rock of the mountains surrounding the river. More noticeable are the erosive changes wrought by the waters of the Chattooga as it continues to cut its steep way down through the Blue Ridge escarpment.

The forest vegetation that covers the steep hillsides is a living, growing, dying, ever-changing resource. The abundance of tree and shrub species and variety of composition are the result of ageless vegetative changes as well as man's recent treatment of the environment. The towering white pine, hemlock, and many other tree species within the river boundary are successional species introduced naturally after the "cut-out-and-get-out" logging era of the late 1800's and early 1900's. These species will die out and disappear through natural succession as these forests evolve toward a climax oak-hickory and beech-birch-maple forest. Some of these successional changes may be undesirable, and future management programs may be needed to retain desirable vegetative species that now exist within the river boundary.

Vegetation within the river boundary is susceptible to forest fire, disease, insect attack, soil compaction, overuse, and abuse by man. The fish and wildlife within the river boundary move about and change constantly in numbers with changes in their environment. The waters of the Chattooga change with rainfall or drought, immediately responsive to changes in the watershed, both inside and outside the river boundary. The waters flowing

within the river boundary reflect the condition of the entire watershed.

To protect and perpetuate the unique qualities of the Chattooga River a benchmark system is needed to inventory the river's resources and evaluate their condition and trend. A benchmark system notes and measures change, and undesirable change is separated from inevitable change so that management programs can be structured to perpetuate the qualities that make this river outstanding.

The complete mechanics of a benchmark system must be worked out after the Chattooga is included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Such a system must be designed to focus on the outstanding values and more sensitive elements of the river and environment, measure the existing situation, and provide for periodic remeasurement to keep track of resource condition and trend.

Some of the outstanding river qualities that such a system will measure and monitor are--

- the river is free-flowing, and its environment is essentially primitive and undeveloped. National status and a protective boundary can essentially assure that these desirable conditions will continue within the boundary. A benchmark system should note improvement in the primitive qualities of the river as the few undesirable influences are eliminated and also note changes resulting from construction of trails, primitive campspots and other facilities.
- the river is unpolluted. This condition is definitely not assured; already a pollution problem is being cleared up on a tributary of the river. Water quality monitoring must be continued on the river and its tributaries to frequently measure all changes in this very critical factor.
- the lands along the river are in an essentially forested, natural state. This condition is readily apparent and measureable.
- forests along the river include a variety of tree, shrub, and lesser plant species of all sizes, shapes, and age classes, creating an aesthetically pleasing, natural forested scene. They include both rare and common plants. Present vegetation composition and condition must be inventoried and evaluated. Some methods that might be used are infrared aerial photography to measure species composition in the overstory canopy, line transects on a plot or strip basis to measure all species in the understory and size and rates of growth, and camera points to record the nature of the general scenery. The location and abundance of rare plant species should be totally measured and recorded. The factors responsible for the existence of the present size, shape and

composition of vegetation must be studied and clearly understood. Trends toward a climax-forest type of vegetation through ecological succession must be identified and the most desirable ecological condition determined, so management programs can be tailored to continue desirable successional plant species or allow natural evolution of climax-type forest vegetation.

Vegetation composition and condition must also be inventoried periodically to measure the effects of human use on the river environment. Is the vegetation healthy, normal, or showing signs of stress and loss of vigor? Check plots are needed in remote spots throughout the river boundary as well as in spots susceptible to heavy visitor impact, so natural changes can be separated from man-caused changes and management programs implemented to protect, improve and restore man-damaged ecological conditions. A system for measuring effects of human use on the river environment must be closely tied to an accurate system of use measurement, so damaging levels of use can be identified and optimum levels of use determined.

- the river offers exceptional values of solitude, adventure and awareness, serenity and challenge. Administratively controlled saturation levels, based on limiting numbers of people to maintain a primitive level of experience, will probably be the most severe limiting factors affecting use of this river. A benchmark system should measure these experience level values throughout the river boundary. Analysis of these findings can show the need for design changes in trails or other facilities to disperse visitors and eliminate concentrations, and can suggest needed changes in optimum use levels to maintain a primitive experience within the river boundary. Initial optimum levels have been determined for the river; the effects of these arbitrary controls must be tested and measured on the ground throughout the river boundary.
- a benchmark system must also measure and record changes in fish, wildlife, and other living creatures within the river boundary. It should measure changes in the profile of the Chattooga as it continues to cut its steep course to Tugaloo Reservoir. In effect, it should give an accurate record of all ecological and geologic changes occurring within the river boundary, both natural and man-caused.

All technical assistance available will be used in establishing the system. State and Federal Water Agencies can help with water bench-marks. Forest Service Experiment Stations and many others can help with ecological benchmarks.

#### D. Development - Facilities and Access

The main attraction of the Chattooga River is its recreation opportunity--the chance to visit a whitewater river and experience solitude, adventure, and challenge. Protecting and maintaining the aesthetic values of the river must remain of paramount importance. Development within the boundary of the Chattooga River must not detract from, or destroy, the natural beauty that makes this river different from other rivers.

Requirements for protection and maintenance of the unique qualities of the Chattooga are the most critically important influences affecting development within the river boundary and surrounding lands. Recreation facilities should provide for optimum public use consistent with maintaining the rare qualities of the river. Outside the corridor, areas must be carefully planned and located to minimize or prevent crowding and overuse of the Chattooga. Trails will be an important means of enabling people to see and enjoy this river. They must be carefully located and designed to disperse visitors to the river and minimize crowding and overuse effects on the environment. Trail systems should also include portages for canoeists and floaters around dangerous obstacles on the river.

Existing roads across the Chattooga should provide sufficient vehicular access to the river. Five roads now cross the Chattooga and two roads cross the West Fork. Parking areas should be located outside the river boundary to help protect the Wild and Scenic sections, while providing a place to leave vehicles.

Small information stations at each major access point can give detailed canoeability and hiking information for the sections of river above and below each road point. Current information on weather and fire prevention can be given visitors along with information needed to enjoy the river.

Reinforced campspots accessible only by trail or river can be located at strategic points. These would include drinking water and vault toilets for visitor comfort and help prevent sanitation and littering problems that come with uncontrolled camping use.

As a nationally significant attraction, the Chattooga will create a demand for large, developed camping areas to accommodate the large numbers of people who come to see this river. These must be located outside the river boundary and far enough from the river to prevent concentrations of people and overuse. Unit or recreation composite plans for the National Forest lands around the river boundary will be primarily concerned with distributing, regulating or limiting recreation uses to prevent loss or depreciation of resources.

The proposed Recreation River sections are needed to help protect and provide a continuity to the overall Chattooga River system. Recreation developments should be located in these sections only if they can complement or reduce pressure on the more primitive sections of the river.

The need for a main information center on the Chattooga should be fully explored. Such a center could provide needed detailed information about the entire river and interpretive information for those who cannot be accommodated on the river. It could also serve as a main control point if portions of the river become saturated and visitor limitations have to be imposed.

Present recreation development along the river itself is quite limited. The only public recreation development within the proposed boundary is the U. S. Forest Service campground at Burrells Ford. Private recreation residences occur in a few places. Within 18 miles of the river, there are recreation facilities such as picnicking, camping, and cabins to accommodate in excess of 1500 persons at one time. Appendix H gives the breakdown of the location and facilities available at these areas.

No additional general area access is needed for the Chattooga River. The only additional motor access planned is an extension of the Blue Ridge National Parkway which will pass within a few miles of the head of the river in North Carolina, outside the corridor.

In general, specific access already exceeds need. Only two additional roads totaling 1.4 miles are needed to make presently inaccessible areas available to the public. Neither of these roads will be constructed within the proposed boundary of the river. Generally, the plan provides for closure and revegetation of existing little-used jeep roads. A total of thirty miles of jeep roads will need to be closed and revegetated. The general plan of accessibility for the river will be by trail. Six new trails totalling 2 1/2 miles, generally on the location of old jeep trails, will be constructed from planned parking lots outside the river boundary to the river itself.

Recreation development along the Chattooga River will be kept simple. Access will be primarily by trail, except at existing highway and Forest Service road crossings. Fourteen parking lots are proposed--13 of these will be outside the proposed boundary and only the one at Overflow Bridge will be inside. To protect the river banks and the recreation users, 14 portages have been proposed around areas where canoeing is difficult or impossible.

Eleven launching sites planned for floating equipment will be kept simple and in general will have little development. Their location is along sandbars which will maintain themselves with the periodic high waters.

Ten primitive campsites are proposed along the river. These campsites will be at development scale 1, consisting primarily of reinforced areas to protect the river environment from undue wear. The sites will have minimum sanitary facilities and potable water where possible. A summary of the Recreation Development Plan will be found in Appendix I.

A system of hiking trails is necessary for full enjoyment of the river, especially in Wild and Scenic sections. A total of 54 miles of trails is proposed for the Chattooga River. These trails will, for the most part, replace existing jeep roads and poorly located foot trails. The summary of the trails and the first five years planned construction is in Appendix J.

Outside the proposed corridor, but within 12 miles of the river, additional campgrounds are proposed to handle 2400 people at one time. The only camping to be encouraged within the corridor will be overnight camping necessary while hiking or canoeing. Indiscriminate camping along the river will be discouraged. A summary of the supporting campgrounds near the river is in Appendix K.

Appendix G gives the summary of the recreation development schedule for the first five years, including expected cost.

#### E. Information and Education

The Chattooga River area is rich in settler and Indian history and outstanding scenic features. A real opportunity exists to interpret these outstanding features--to orient the visitor to the river's attractions, inform him of the recreation opportunities available within the river boundary, and enhance his overall experience in visiting the river.

Interpretation can do more than answer basic questions of what visitors come to see and do. It can open new vistas of knowledge and instill in the visitor a sense of appreciation for values or concepts of which he is unaware, or in which he had little or no previous interest. However, this can be done only after the basic questions are answered, and only then by relating these new concepts to what the visitor originally came to see.

Many visitors will have to canoe, hike and camp to get this association. Others will be satisfied by just driving across the river at the access points or by viewing exhibits and interpretive displays at various information points. Motion pictures and television programs can be an effective means of reaching this segment of the public.

A well planned interpretive program is needed for those who cannot be accommodated on the river. It should incite an inspiring feeling of stepping back in history two or three hundred years--a part of the same feeling that one would get if he canoed or hiked down the river. The program would provide an experience for those who for any reason are unable to participate first hand.

Purposes of an interpretive program for the Chattooga River could be--

- to stress to all visitors the need for personal safety and the proper care of the river's unique environment.
- to inspire visitors with the unique primitive qualities of the river.
- to give the public a general idea of the purpose of a Wild and Scenic River and how it is managed and protected.
- to inform the public of the recreational opportunities available on the river.
- to point out the unusually scenic features along the river.
- to explain the geology and ecology of the area.
- to tell the story of the human history along with the legends.

Basic information needs include--

- a detailed description of the various sections of the river and the recreation attractions and opportunities to be found in each.
- maps of access roads and trail system within the river boundary, showing primitive campspots, relative difficulty of trails, estimated travel time and features along the way.
- ~~maps showing rapids, cascades, falls and portages with canoe class ratings for each reach of the river.~~ These should also show primitive campspots, estimated travel time and features along the way.

--current river height information related to canoeability of the river.

--regulations and responsibilities of both the administering Agency and the public concerning the Wild and Scenic River.

--safety considerations for all visitors to the river.

--all access roads and major trails beginning points to the river identified on the ground.

