From: kevintmiller@hotmail.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters EA Comments
Date: 08/12/2008 09:20 PM

Kevin T. Miller
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July 24, 2008

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Foothills Paddling Club to express concerns with the document "Environmental Assessment: Managing Recreation Uses on the Upper Chattooga River." We are highly concerned that: (1) This document provides no scientific data regarding the potential impact of recreational paddlers on the Chattooga Headwaters, (2) Provides no data demonstrating that any benefit has been received from the illegal paddling ban it has superficially imposed, and (3) Fails to address the direction it has been given from the Forest Service Washington Office to seek means of responsibly managing all user groups designated based on the ORVs it presented in 1971.

We are disappointed that the proposed plan virtually maintains the boating ban, a ban that the Forest Service Washington Office agreed was unjustified. We are disappointed that the boating community is the only community of those included in the original proposal that has been since excluded. While the inappropriate decisions of other user groups have resulted in the creation of temporary dams, bear problems, and other issues, the Forest Service refuses to address these issues by requiring other user groups to use something as simple as a self-registration permit system with some common sense rules by which all users must abide.

We do hereby request that the Forest Service implement policies consistent with those it promised the American public and its Congressional representatives in 1971. It should open boating on the Chattooga above the Highway 28 bridge, limited only by natural flows and a self-registration permit system as is conducted elsewhere on the river. If

additional limitations are required for the protection of the river, it should conduct a user analysis capacity study inclusive of all ORV appropriate user groups, as its Washington Office has directed.

Sincerely,

Kevin T. Miller
Conservation Officer, Foothills Paddling Club