From:	Steve Moore
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Cc:	akimbell@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chatttooga Comments
Date:	08/11/2008 10:27 PM
Attachments:	Chattooga Comments August 10th.doc

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212
comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

August 10, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest:
My name is Steve Moore and I've been active in the outdoors my entire life. For the last three years I have been blessed to be able to participate in the sport of whitewater kayaking. I still enjoy hiking, backpacking, mountain biking, and running when the opportunity presents itself. I currently reside in the Asheville area, where I work as a Manufacturing Engineer.
I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I strongly disagree with your analysis and your proposal. The Alternative presented continues the practice of discriminating against certain user groups and I cannot accept any alternative or proposal that does that. Nothing short of a policy that allows equal access for anyone who wishes to enjoy the Chattooga or any other USFS-managed area is acceptable.

As an outdoor enthusiast, I want to see our nation's forests and other wild lands protected. However, the protections need to be tailored to the particular region or feature in question, and right now we're talking about the Chattooga River. Having participated in several of the Forest Service's meetings over the past year, I've come to realize that everyone is very passionate about the issue, but the common theme is that everyone wants the river corridor protected. Many good management actions to address the current situation were brought forth and the Forest Service has taken those into consideration. But again, you continue to discriminate against boaters – even in Alternative 4, which you've selected as your "preferred" alternative. This just continues the pattern that has been supported by the Forest Service for the last 30 years. Tell me, if this was racial, religious, or other social forms of discrimination, do you really think that a ban on those groups would have lasted? If you think those forms of discrimination are wrong, why do you think that it's acceptable to discriminate against a group of Americans who simply want to enjoy the Chattooga, just like everyone else?

Remember, every other user group, not boaters, is responsible for the current damage. Would it not make sense to limit their access? In addition, having zero proof or evidence that boating would harm the river corridor, does it not make sense to allow boating until proven otherwise? Innocent until proven guilty. Due process of the law. Heard of those concepts? They're only some of the principles that the fabric of this nation is made up of.

I hate to make this sound like it's boaters vs. other user groups, because it's not. This issue is

larger than that. This is about doing the right thing, both for the Chattooga watershed as well as those who use it. Choosing to uphold a boating restriction on the Chattooga will set a negative precedent that could affect millions more Americans across the country. Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are unalienable rights given to us by the Declaration of Independence. Who is the Forest Service to trample on that document?

Thank you for considering these comments. Reiterating, I want the Forest Service to take the necessary steps to protect the Chattooga, but those protections MUST be applied equally to everyone who wishes to use the area. That means equal access for all – no bans – no limitations.

Sincerely,

Steve Moore
Marion, NC