From: Ed Martin
Reply To: edmartin@alum.emory.edu
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Please adopt a no-boating alternative on the Upper Chattooga
Date: 08/12/2008 04:22 PM

Please adopt a no-boating alternative on the Upper Chattooga.

As a native Georgian and long-time resident, I have backpacked in the Upper Chattooga watershed on many occasions over the past 40 years. I have always prized the quiet, untouched quality of the river and its mountain setting.

I saw the river become a commercial destination after the filming of Deliverance. I worried that those uses might degrade the quality of wildland recreation there.

I was pleased when much of the area received wilderness protection. I have always hoped that the Forest Service would act as a responsible steward of this unique area, preserving its special remote character.

I am deeply concerned that your plans for use of the river include a proposal to open even more of it to boating. I do not believe that this would be a suitable use of the river.

I have seen the devastating impacts of commercial and heavy recreational boating on wild rivers around the US. The Chattooga would be no exception. Solitude, quiet, and unspoiled natural settings would be lost and maybe never be regained on a charismatic river like the Chattooga.

I am doubly concerned by the proposal for boating use, since the number of boaters who could safely navigate the upper reaches is so small compared to the much greater number of other potential users. Administrative and management burdens could be great if the river is not to be remade by boaters for their convenience. Fatalities are not unknown on the river, and unprepared boaters in extreme conditions may create even more. It seems an unwise proposal all around.

Please adopt Alternative 2 or 3 and keep the Upper Chattooga wild. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to comment.

Yours,

Ed Martin
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