From: Julia Franks
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: comments on the Chatooga EA
Date: 08/12/2008 08:36 PM

Dear Sirs:

I have reviewed the Chatooga Environmental Assessment and the proposed plan. I have to say that I'm severely disappointed in the inequity and the impracticality of the proposal.

The most egregious problem with the plan is that it doesn't treat all user groups equitably. Boaters are the only user group who are restricted from using the river---despite the fact that A) flow levels already ose a natural restriction for boaters, because they would only be high enough on a sprinkling of winter weekend days. 2) boaters have less of an impact than people who are on foot.They cause less erosion, and they tend to leave less trash than fishermen and hikers, because they, by necessity, bring very little gear with them in the first place.

The other problem with the plan is that it is logistically laughable, not to mention unsafe. Safe winter boating depends upon putting on the river early, particularly if the river in question has limited acess points. No boater wants to be caught out on the river at night, wet, with no dry clothes and no daylight. Yet the whole "flow calculation" aspect of your plan would encourage exactly that--late starts that could very well lead to disastrous consequences. Apparently boater and hiker safety is of little concern to you though, since you've also banned the removal of all woody debris. Haven't there been enough hiker and boater entrapment deaths on the Chatooga already?

I urge you to reconsider this short-sighted plan.

Julia Franks