From: acke4534@bellsouth.net
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Upper Chattooga Management Plan Comment
Date: 08/13/2008 09:17 PM

After a review of the results from the user capacity study and the subsequent preference for option Number 4, I have a few concerns. Apparently, the greatest challenge to water quality is sediment, which could be exacerbated by the creation of portage and scouting trails if boaters are allowed to float the upper Chattooga. Yet the study determined that most fishing is done from the bank or from wading in the water, and fishermen have to exit the water to get around the large woody debris. Thus boating is not significantly different from fishing in terms of creating portage trails along the bank and around large woody debris or steep drops. This argument in itself does not warrant a boating ban.

The expectation that boaters will be likely to remove large woody debris to facilitate boating is an opinion. If the Forest Service deems it illegal to remove large woody debris, MY opinion is that boaters will obey the law. Opinions about what might happen are not valid arguments to allow or deny boating on the upper Chattooga

The last concern is that boaters should be banned from the headwaters because fishermen have an expectation of solitude and may resort to violence (if your history of the start of the ban is any indicator) to enforce their right to solitude on “their” river. This is an unfortunate situation, but boaters should not be restrained from recreation opportunities because other users can’t restrain themselves.

I prefer option 8 because it provides a more equitable access. Option 4 is estimated to result in 0-11 days of paddling which is almost a virtual ban of boating. Fishing will be allowed 354-365 days. Option 4 is not equitable.

I appreciate the effort that went into the current impact study and I hope you can resolve this issue. If everyone is unhappy with the outcome, you might have determined a fair balance. If paddlers are unhappy, a federal court will determine if a fair balance was reached.

Douglas Ackerman
Gainesville, GA 30507
770.503.0365
Acke4534@bellsouth.net