From: Scott Houser
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga Comment
Date: 08/18/2008 12:40 PM

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

August 18, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

Yes, I have copied the form letter because I wanted the pertinent information included. I am a whitewater boater, and a backpacker. I am a Boy Scout Leader and have been a leader for over 15 years. I am also a member of the Bartram Trail Society. The Chattooga River is one of my favorite rivers to paddle and to hike. I have hiked many of the trails in the area, and many of the sections of the Chattooga River.

I live in the Atlanta area and the Chattooga River is a fantastic resource that is close to my home. I am very concerned that if the ban on boating continues, then other sections of the river and other rivers will eventually be closed.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. Both treat me and my community of river enthusiasts unfairly and your proposal would not meet my interests. Please consider the following concerns I have regarding this issue:

- The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling on the Chattooga and has found *none*. It is time to open the river to boating.
- No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries – without any justification.
- The EA and preferred alternative are not equitable or protective of the river because they considers boating to be the only management variable, while other larger more impactful uses are not seriously considered for limits. I have seen damage to the river by fishermen and hikers. I have picked up trash from both those groups. On other sections of the river, horses really make a mess. This is not equitable and not acceptable!
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits

- The EA is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money
- The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input.
- The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
- All aspects of the “Outstanding Remarkable Values” of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please consider conducting a real user capacity analysis and immediately allowing boating in the same numbers, places, and seasons that you allow existing users. Paddling should be allowed in a similar manner to your alternative number 8, except on the *entire* Upper Chattooga River and its tributaries.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Sincerely

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