From: Tammi Hill
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us; akimbell@fs.fed.us
Subject: Upper Chattooga Comments
Date: 08/18/2008 03:33 PM

8/18/08

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I would like to comment on the recently released Upper Chattooga Environmental Assessment and proposed management plan, alternative #4.

It is clear that the Upper Chattooga is under increasing pressure from visitors, and concessions must be made to protect all of iits "outstanding and remarkable" qualities. I feel, with alternative #4, the Forest Service has not gone far enough to protect the Upper Chattooga and has restricted boating without justification.

The Forest Service not only needs to conduct a proper impact study of boating in the Upper Chattooga, it must also conduct similar studies on all other user groups. Boating is viewed as the only variable in all management plan alternatives. When in fact, there are larger, more impactful user groups that are not considered for limits and/or restrictions. It's only with quality impact studies that the Forest Service may equitably reduce the impact of all user groups and therefore, protect and restore its natural wonders.

First and foremost, the Forest Service should:

1) Eliminate all road side parking within 1/4 mile of all bridges. Not just create an additional parking area a distance from the bridge.
2) Permanently close user created trails. A few well "designed" and well used trails could be converted to sanctioned Forest Service trails.
3) Establish a fair and equitable permitting system for all Upper Chattooga users. The data collected will help establish future use and limits guidelines.
4) Close the fish hatchery that is responsible for polluting the East Fork of the Chattooga River.
5) Stock only native fish in the river.
6) Restrict or rotate river access to anglers, allowing the stream beds and banks to recuperate from trampling.
7) Restrict or rotate campsite use, allowing areas to recuperate from over use.
8) Ban camping within 1/2 mile of all bridges or roads.
9) Close a couple of bridges and/or roads to create a more remote wilderness corridor.
10) Complete a true user capacity analysis and impact study for all user groups.
11) Allow equitable access to all environmentally friendly user groups based on impact studies.
12) Put the protection and restoration of the environment above all uses and user groups. The "Outstanding and Remarkable" quality of the Upper Chattooga is not artificially created fishing, it is the breathtaking wilderness.

Although it is not a perfect plan, I would support implementation of Alternative 8. It fairly and equitably places all environmentally friendly user groups on the same

footing, while establishing a few
extra protections to the environment. I would urge the Forest Service to make use of the "adaptive management" approach, in Alternative 8, to further protect the environment in the ways I have outlined above.

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.

Sincerely,

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