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Subject:	Comments on Chattooga River use
Date:	08/18/2008 11:26 AM

As an outdoorsman with forestry and law degrees who loves to hike, birdwatch, bike, boat and fish, I appreciate the difficult job the Forest Service has in managing public land.

It strikes me that a key issue in the Chattooga controversy is whether recreation uses that are more disruptive than others must have access to all wild and scenic river areas at all times and in all places. Of course, the answer is no. It certainly is not reasonable for me to ride my mountain bike or a horse on all trails where others want to enjoy hiking and would like solitude and freedom from vehicles. It also is not reasonable for me to boat, or even fish from a boat or tube, in all areas of the river where those on foot seek solitude and freedom from vehicles.

In light of the disruption that boating has had to other recreation uses below Highway 28, the best and most reasonable solution remains for boating to be limited to that the area of the river below 28 and the best alternatives are #2 and #3. As the river narrows to a stream further upriver, boating is even more disruptive - the same pools at the base of rapids and falls that a creek boater would love are the ones sought by swimmers and anglers. Obviously a kayak hurling off a drop and into the pool would ruin trout fishing and could endanger swimmers and anglers. Stream trout are so easily spooked that an angler often only has two or three tosses of a fly into a pool before the trout retreat. If a light dry fly does that, how about a boat? Also, there simply is no room in tight streams to move out of the way of rushing boats. I have fished and hiked the Nicholson Fields DH, the Bend area and the portion of the Chattooga in North Carolina. As there are numerous other places for creek boating and as the upper Chattooga is a unique foot-traffic only area, the Forest Service should maintain the current zoned management policy.

Finally, if the Forest Service decides to open some of the river above Highway 28 for boating, it should be limited at a minimum by the measures of Alternative 4. November and March are prime hiking and angling months in the Chattooga area. Any boatable day flow should be posted day ahead on a Forest Service website. I often check weather and USGS flow measurements on line before heading out and this would be a simple mechanism to avoid controversy and alert potential users. Indeed, a boater who likes to fish could check the website and decide whether to bring a boat or flyrod.

Thank you for your consideration.

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