From: Keil Neff
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 08/11/2008 01:41 PM

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212.

mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

August 11, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

Hello. I am Keil Neff and I love to spend time on streams in the Southeast including the great river of the Chattooga. I am currently working on my Ph.D. in Civil Engineering (Water Resources) at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, TN. In addition to studying water quality, hydrology, and hydraulics of streams, I (with my family and friends) also recreationally use streams for canoeing, kayaking, and fishing, and spend many hours enjoying National Forest lands (backpacking, camping, and mountain biking). As both an angler and a kayaker, I have unique perspective of recreational usage of streams. Indeed, if all parties are respectful to each other, all can use a stream such as the headwaters of the Chattooga harmoniously. As a federal taxpayer, I believe I should have a right to use our national waters recreationally in whatever way I please as long as it does impact the health of our waters.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal that I feel is unfair to myself, my family, and other river enthusiasts. 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 USFS preferred alternative includes a total ban on 2/3 of the upper river, a ban on tributary boating, and allows only 0-6 days of limited boating on the remaining reach, while allowing all other wilderness conforming existing uses in unlimited numbers. This is not equitable and not acceptable!
- The Environmental Assessment offers no basis for the boating bans and limits, is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late, and has wasted millions in tax payer money.
- 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, including the entire Upper Chattooga River and its tributaries.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Keil Jason Neff

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