From: Robbie Gilson
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments Alt. 8
Date: 08/18/2008 03:36 PM

Dear Sumter National Forest,

My name is Robbie Gilson. I am a 17 year old senior at Norcross High School in Gwinnett County. Throughout the past months I have kept up with the status of the Upper Chattooga. I am an avid fisherman and paddler; I have observed from experience that paddling is a low impact sport to the environment. In comparison, hiking down to the river with a kayak takes the same impact as a fishing pole. Paddlers don't affect the river bottom as much either. 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits
4. The EA lacks a full range of alternatives
5. 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
6. Paddlers prefer an alternative similar to Alternative 8 that one fully allows boating on the entire Chattooga River below Grimshawes Bridge, two allows paddling on tributaries, 3) includes encounter standards based on a real user capacity analysis, 4) will *equitably* limit *total* use only when encounter standards are consistently exceeded, and 5) will do so using all available indirect measures first.
7. The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
8. All aspects of the "Outstanding Remarkable Values" of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

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.I hope the Forest Service makes the correct choice in finally making the Upper Chattooga a full access part of the Wild and Scenic Program. Thank you for your time.
Best regards,
Robbie Gilson