From: pwsisk0@engr.uky.edu
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 08/18/2008 11:01 AM

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

August 18, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

Thank you for receiving my comments. I am an avid outdoorsmen and have been for all of my life. I have been fortunate to enjoy many of the US's national forests whether it hiking, camping or kayaking. I live in Lexington, KY, but hope you realize that the decisions going on with respect to the Chattooga headwaters affect us all. 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. I find it rediculous that the public has no rights to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits, it lacks a full range of alternatives, and sadly is no better or different than the last one. To make matters even worse, the EA is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money. Why is it the USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input?

No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries ? without any justification. Paddlers prefer an alternative similar to Alternative 8 that 1) fully allows boating on the entire Chattooga River below Grimshawes Bridge, 2) 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.

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,

Phillip Sisk

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