From: Michelle Burnett
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@FSNOTES
Subject: Fw: Upper Chattooga River Boating access
Date: 07/17/2008 11:40 AM

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----- Forwarded by Michelle Burnett/R8/USDAFS on 07/17/2008 11:40 AM -----

Carol L Forney/R8/USDAFS
07/16/2008 09:45 AM

To: Michelle Burnett/R8/USDAFS@FSNOTES
cc:
Subject: Fw: Upper Chattooga River Boating access

Caroline Forney
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----- Forwarded by Carol L Forney/R8/USDAFS on 07/16/2008 09:44 AM -----

"Bryant Smith" <bryantsmith24@gmail.com>
07/15/2008 07:46 PM

To: cforney@fs.fed.us
cc:
Subject: Upper Chattooga River Boating access

US Forest Service:

I am a native Georgian and a frequent whitewater paddler and hiker. For over 30 years, I have hiked, camped and paddled in and around the Chattooga National Wild and Scenic Wilderness Area.

I have reviewed the current Environmental Assessment regarding recreational management of the Chattooga River. Unfortunately, this "new" plan is just a rehash of the original. It essentially continues the total ban on boating the Upper Chattooga. The small window for some boating is so restricted, almost no one will ever gat a chance to run the headwaters of the Chattooga legally.

There is no reason to ban private recreational boating on ANY section of the Chattooga River. Of course, justifiable restrictions on all user groups to protect the wilderness and wilderness experience are desirable, similar to those in place on lower sections of the river.

Not only are bans illegal according to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, it is unfair and discriminatory against certain groups. Hikers who blaze their own trails, campers who trample an area, and fishermen who deplete the fish and damage the banks do more harm than paddlers. Over forty years of boating on the lower Chattooga and neighboring Overflow Creek has not harmed the environment of those sections.

The Forest Service should take this opportunity to stand up for for the rights of all river users. Effectively banning one group from using the resource due to political pressure from another, wealthier and better politically connected group is simply corruption of the most odious sort. The government bureau entrusted to manage public resources for ALL citizens should avoid even the appearance of such impropriety as this action creates.

Sincerely,

Bryant K. Smith
Attorney at Law
1171 Mohican Trail
Stone Mountain, GA 30083

CC: US Rep. John Lewis, US Senator Saxby Chambliss, US Senator Johnny Isakson