X. ACTION PLANS

A. Land Acquisition and Easements

The area of the proposed National Wild and Scenic River includes a total of 15,432 acres of land. Of this total, National Forest ownership comprises 87.3%, or 13,471 acres. The remaining area involves 38 ownerships, totaling 1961 acres.

The private lands within the proposed corridor can be divided into four priority classes for acquisition, or scenic easements. These classes are based on public use and access needs, protective needs, river classes, and analysis of compatible and incompatible uses within the river corridor.

These land acquisition classes are:

FEE ACQUISITION NEEDED

1. Lands Needed to Correct Incompatible Uses

   These are lands within the proposed river boundary which directly conflict with wild, scenic, or recreation river classification and definitely should be acquired by fee acquisition. The incompatible uses on these lands could not reasonably be expected to clear up without fee acquisition. This category includes 163 private acres in Georgia and South Carolina. These are lands with unsightly developments along Highway 28, and with incompatible hunter camps, access roads, jeep trails, etc. at Earls Ford. Any lands under this category should receive priority for acquisition. These lands make up only 8% of the total private lands within the river boundary.

2. Lands Needed for Development

   These are not as critical as are those under the first category, but are lands needed for development, or to prevent and minimize future foreseeable problems. These are divided into two primary classes:

   a. Lands needed for recreation development and access, or lands adjacent to main highway access points which might conceivably receive incompatible developments because of adjacent roads or other close developments. Included in this category are 360 acres in Georgia along Highway 28 and the West Fork and 10 acres around Grimshawes Bridge, in North Carolina.

b. Lands in Wild River class. All lands in the Wild River class should be acquired by the Forest Service because these are the most valuable within the river system and must be maintained in a primitive condition. The cost of scenic easements would be almost as much as fee acquisition for these lands. Included in this category are 214 acres in the two proposed Wild River sections.

SCENIC EASEMENTS ACCEPTABLE

3. Fee Acquisition Desirable, but Scenic and Use Easements Acceptable

These are lands where fee acquisition would be desirable, but if not available for purchase, scenic and use easements could be used to meet management objectives. This would include most of the lands in Scenic and Recreation River classes except problem areas, main highway access points, needed development lands and significant outstanding features. Included in this category are 1,179 acres. This category includes 60% of the private lands within the river boundary. The majority of private landowners may retain title to their lands and continue present compatible uses if they so desire. Protection and public use of the river can be accomplished through scenic and use easements.

4. Scenic and Use Easements Desirable

These are lands definitely needed under scenic and use easement. They are lands on which private landowners can help achieve desired management objectives for the river by maintaining needed pastoral scenes, meadows, vistas or farms which compliment the scene along the river. This category includes 35 acres of private lands above Grimshawes Bridge in North Carolina and a two acre church site in Georgia.

The proposed river corridor width is based on establishing a protective boundary at the top of the main ridges on either side of the river. It does not coincide with property ownership lines. Thus, in most cases the boundary splits most private ownerships along the river. Many individual private landowners will be reluctant to sell only a part of their property along the river and may well prefer to sell all of their tracts or none. When landowners so desire, and it is in the interest of

the Forest Service, the remaining portions of these tracts should be purchased under other National Forest acquisition authorities.

Zoning would not be desirable in providing complete protection for the lands within the proposed corridor. At present, there is no zoning anywhere along the Chattooga River. South Carolina has given its counties zoning authority subject to legislative approval, but in Georgia and North Carolina the counties have no zoning authority. Zoning as a protective vehicle has been weak historically, and zoning action is continually subject to rehearing and possible changes. Fee acquisition or scenic easements are much preferred as the means to protect the river.

B. Administration - Management

Most lands within the proposed corridor are administered by the U. S. Forest Service. This agency, because of its existing organizational facilities, including manpower and equipment located near the river, and its knowledge acquired through conducting the study, is well suited to continue management of the Chattooga as a wild and scenic river. It is recommended that the U. S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service administer the Chattooga River if designated a unit of the National Wild and Scenic River System.

A detailed river management plan will be developed. This plan will recognize all of the resource and aesthetic values of the Chattooga River environment. Emphasis will be on protecting and preserving these values while allowing controlled use by present and future generations of Americans.

The Forest Service should continue to work closely with other federal and state agencies in wild river management. Of special need will be state assistance from the Game and Fish Commissions and water quality organizations.

Recreation

Restrictions in the Act limit types of recreation use, especially in the Wild and Scenic sections. Compatible uses on the Chattooga River are floating (including rafting, canoeing, and kayaking) hiking (including sightseeing, nature study, and photography), hunting, fishing, and primitive camping. These uses are provided for in the development plan.

Major management objectives on the Chattooga River will be to maintain the river in the condition that made it worthy of inclusion in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System and to provide a safe and satisfying recreation experience consistent with this status, without damage to the resource. Major problems identified in reaching these objectives are the safety of recreation users, waste disposal, concentration of use and general overuse.

Safety problems associated with river travel and the related activities of hunting, fishing, photography and nature study, and camping in a remote area are primarily related to personal injuries. If an injury is sustained, getting help or getting to help is extremely difficult. This places the burden of safety on the individual. Physical conditioning and an awareness of the intrinsic dangers that exist are the best possible safety precautions. To minimize these dangers the Forest Service will caution users about them. It will inform these users about whom to contact in case of emergency, and how they may be reached. A voluntary check-in and check-out arrangement will be necessary as the use increases. Details will be presented in Safety and Search and Rescue Plans.

Waste disposal will be a major consideration, especially in the wild sections where the language of the Act refers to waters unpolluted. This includes both solid waste and human waste disposal. In an area as large as that within the proposed corridor, when people are introduced solid waste disposal becomes a problem.

Access points, primitive campsites and areas where spectacular water features are located will tend to concentrate people. The impact on these areas, if not controlled, will result in depletion of available firewood, water pollution, insensitive disposal of garbage and waste, and a general deterioration of the environment. Recreation use will be regulated on the basis of carrying capacity of the land and water rather than on demand.

At the present time, the Chattooga River is not overused. Saturation levels based on "the experience" have been determined. Close observation and records of recreation use within the river will be maintained. This information will be correlated with the benchmarks discussed in Section X-C of this report. When recreation use on any section of the river approaches the saturation point, as determined through evaluating the experience, or deterioration of the environment begins to show as checked against the benchmarks, saturation levels will be revised and regulation of use will be enforced within the saturation level. Rationale for determining saturation level can be found in Appendix F.

State agencies will cooperate in certain phases of administration of the river. In each State, the Game and Fish regulations of that State will be enforced by employees of the State Game and Fish Commission. Water quality and pollution abatement provisions will be enforced by State officials.

Yearly cost estimates for administration, operation and maintenance for the first five years of operation are shown in Appendix G.

Timber

Though the production of timber products will be restricted within the proposed corridor, timber management in its broad sense will be practiced. Beautiful timber stands are becoming more and more important in the overall outdoor recreation picture.

The perpetuation of these timber stands cannot be left to chance but must be produced through proper management, which includes protection from wildfire and insect and disease attacks.

The role and objective of timber management will be the protection and production of healthy vigorous stands of trees of all ages and species common to the area, managed and utilized only to enhance recreation and other resources. The objective will be the same on all segments regardless of whether classified as Wild, Scenic or Recreation.

Timber will be managed for recreation, watershed protection, aesthetic and wildlife values, rather than for commercial production. Some cutting may be designed for scenic improvement or specific wildlife habitat improvement.

Wildlife - Fisheries

In general, wildlife habitat management activities on a large scale will not be attempted. The narrow corridor limits habitat management opportunity.

State Game and Fish organizations have made recommendations for the Chattooga as a "Wild River" fishery.

North Carolina Game and Fish Commission

1. Only single hook lures or baits allowed.

2. No minimum size limit on any species of trout.

3. Seven fish creel limit.

4. Regular fishing season from the first Saturday in April through Labor Day.

5. Special season for trophy fish, from Labor Day through October 31, in which creel limit for brown and rainbow trout is reduced to one fish per day with a minimum size of 16 inches, or one brook trout per day with a minimum size of 12 inches. During this extended season no bait or lures shall be used other than an artificial lure having one single hook.

6. Stocking will be carried out with yearling or fingerling trout as needed and in proportion to the availability of such fish in relation to our other public waters.

Georgia Game and Fish Commission

1. No restriction on lures.

2. No size limit.

3. Eight fish creel limit.

4. Year round season on the mainstream and the portion of the West Fork from Three Forks downstream.

5. Seasons on tributaries in the zone open from April 1 through October 15.

6. Fish stocking limited to use of subadults. No stocking in section proposed for "wild" status above Highway 28 Bridge.

South Carolina Wildlife Resources Department

1. No restriction on lures.

2. No size limit.

3. Ten fish creel limit.

4. Year round season on mainstream and tributaries.

5. Provide stocking access at one point below Highway 28. Continue to utilize the existing access points now available along Highway 28 and at Burrells Ford.

6. Stock all sizes of fish.

Regulations between States should be as near alike as is possible. The following proposal applying to all three States would be desirable for management of the Chattooga as a "Wild River" fishery.

1. Only artifical lures (single or treble hook) allowed in the sections above the Burrells Ford Bridge on the mainstream and above Overflow Bridge on the West Fork. Live bait and artificial lures allowed below these bridges.

2. No size limit on trout.

3. Seven fish creel limit on trout.

4. Year round season on mainstreams and tributaries.

5. Stocking of subadults or fingerlings only (no catchable-sized fish) allowed in wild and scenic zones.

6. Stocking of any size fish allowable in recreation zones.

7. Vehicular stocking access provided only into recreation zones. (If Burrells Ford Bridge and Bull Pen Bridge are left open to vehicular traffic, these could also be used as stocking points for subadult fish.)

8. No restriction on night fishing.

All States are in agreement that the Redeye bass fishery in the lower reaches should be protected and enhanced and that further stocking of smallmouth bass should be discontinued there.

Water

At the present time, management of the Chattooga River area produces high quality water above Stekoa Creek. The production of high quality water will continue under Wild and Scenic River management.

The only major problem needing attention is sewage discharge from the City of Clayton, Georgia, into Stekoa Creek which flows directly into the Chattooga River. The city is aware of this problem and is correcting it.

Because of habitation on the tributaries of the Chattooga River in North Carolina and Georgia, additional pollution is possible. A sanitation survey is being made to locate possible sources of pollution and to determine the action needed to minimize their effect. State water quality agencies are interested in maintaining the quality of water in the river. No insurmountable problems are anticipated.

Minerals

The extraction of minerals through surface disturbance is not compatible with Wild and Scenic River status for the Chattooga River. The only mining activity existing within the proposed boundary is sand mining. Since other sources for sand already exist, this activity will be terminated and no future prospecting or mining involving surface disturbance will be permitted. Since natural action of the river will obliterate any evidence of the previous sand mining, no corrective action will be necessary. Prohibiting mining activity will have no adverse affect on local economy.

Land Uses

All existing land uses in the Chattooga corridor are discussed by river sections with emphasis on how they affect the recreation environment, modifications needed, methods to achieve such modifications, and resource and activity use foregone because of such modification.

Section I - Chattooga River mile 53.9 to 48.4

Section I on the upper headwaters of the river flows entirely through private lands. These lands are mostly owned for summer home and resort or estate purposes. Most landowners here would object to Forest Service acquisition of their lands within the proposed river boundary, but many will agree to scenic easements. Although acquisition is desirable for complete control, it is not extremely important from a watershed-protection standpoint. These upper watersheds are probably in a condition as good as any in the Savannah River Drainage. Waters here flow through estates and lands maintained primarily for "scenery". Little farming or logging is done; and soil disturbance, erosion and stream siltation is kept to a minimum. These lands will generally continue to be maintained in good watershed condition. Scenic and use easements can assure protection of the river and allow public use of it, while private landowners keep title to their lands and continue present uses within the boundary.

Some construction of summer homes, roads and driveways, and occasional small impoundments will occur on private lands within the watershed outside the proposed boundary. These are not expected to create erosion, pollution or diversion problems affecting the main river. The North Carolina Department of Water and Air Resources will enforce state stream quality standards to protect these tributaries and the main river.

Section I meets the criteria for Scenic River classification and except for the following uses and dvelopments, is in a forested state--

--a summer home within one-fourth mile of Silver Slipper Falls within the boundary. This summer home is completely out of sight from the river and is compatible with Scenic River classification. Scenic easements can be used here to control any future development which might be incompatible.

--two powerlines crossing the river above Grimshawes. These are single strand lines crossing at right angles and are hard to see. The rights-of-way are about 30 feet wide and can be seen only when directly adjacent to them. These detract little from the qualities of the river and are compatible with Scenic River classification. They do impose a brief reminder of modern civilization, and efforts should be made to have them located underground to further improve this section.

--approximately one-half mile of eroding riverbank along a section of old fields which are now growing up in young trees above Grimshawes. Natural reestablishment of forest cover along the banks should stabilize and control sloughing of the banks. Some special planting of native trees and grasses may be needed to hasten control of erosion.

--some past logging and evidence of old fields growing up into woods in scattered places along the extreme upper headwaters down to Chattooga Cliffs. These scattered spots detract only slightly from the overall primitive qualities of this first section of the river. All are growing naturally to forest. Scenic easements on these lands should allow this process to continue.

--remains of an old, fallen-down house and an old barn within one-third mile of the river between Silver Slipper and Ribbon Falls. These are out of sight from the river and have an interesting early American architecture completely compatible with Scenic River classification.

--a log summer home located below Timber Ridge just within the boundary. This structure is not visible from the river and is compatible with Scenic River classification. Scenic easement should limit further development here.

--paralleling pastures for one-fourth mile on the west side of the river one-half mile above Grimshawes Bridge. A two-story white frame farm house, two barns, a shed, a brick caretaker's residence, and a summer cabin are visible from the river. Four additional cabins and a garage-apartment are located

in this complex out of sight from the river. This pastoral scene, its uses, and an outstanding view of Whitesides Mountain are definitely compatible with Scenic River classification and a scenic easement is needed to preserve the scene. Some stipulations should be included to limit further development and possibly screen several homes with vegetation.

--Grimshawes Bridge is a wooden structure crossing the river through a wooded, closed landscape. It is the only access road crossing the first 5 1/2 mile section of river and is compatible with proposed Scenic River classification.

--a rustic, darkly painted log summer home on the west bank of the river just below Grimshawes Bridge. It is well sited, blends in well with screening vegetation and detracts little or none from this part of the river--particularly with Grimshawes Bridge crossing just above it. It is compatible with Scenic classification.

--scattered trails exist up and down this section. Many are fisherman trails used by local landowners and private hunting and fishing clubs. These trails are compatible with all river classes and additional ones are needed to provide hiking access. Most existing trails need substantial reinforcement and some relocation to withstand any appreciable visitor impact.

--Monroe House - an old rustic house on the east bank of the river two miles below Grimshawes Bridge. This interesting pioneer structure blends in well with the river and is compatible with Scenic River classification. Efforts should be made to acquire this historical structure so that it can be restored and maintained.

--old timber bridges - one just past Greens Creek, and one above Chattooga Cliffs providing access to Monroe House. Both are built of two log stringers covered with plank decking. The log bridge past Greens Creek is rotting and appears abandoned and unused. The bridge below Monroe House is located on a steep jeep road which is used infrequently by the owners of this land. These old bridges are compatible with Scenic River classification, but, if possible, should be removed to improve the quality of these sections.

Removal of abandoned log bridges, restoration of eroding banks, etc., will have no effect on resource and activity use of the private lands along this section of the river. Scenic easements are the only part of the protection-improvement needs for this section that will have an immediate and long range effect on present and future uses of these private lands. Scenic easements are needed to assure that the headwaters of the river continue in a relatively undeveloped condition and provide for public use of this portion of the river. The landowners along this section have no important existing uses which would be foreclosed by scenic easements; the few pastures, houses, and summer homes in this section are compatible with Scenic River classification. The majority of these landowners will agree with the provisions of scenic and use easements; some will agree and some will object to limitations on further development within the river boundary; and many can be expected to object to public uses of their lands within the boundary.

The protection provisions of scenic easements will agree with most private land management objectives along the river. Many of the landowners would be concerned about possible non-compatible development on adjacent private lands; the protection provisions of scenic easements for the boundary of the river will act as a form of "zoning", assuring these landowners that adjoining private lands will be maintained in a primitive condition compatible with their own lands. This should also help protect land values in this area.

Landowners may object to limitations on their own future development of their lands within the boundary. Although most would be in agreement with maintaining the river in a primitive condition, some will want to build additional cabins and summer homes or expand existing developments.

The provisions of use easements will probably receive the most opposition from the private landowners. Most of these landowners are summer home folk, some quite wealthy, who own these lands for their exclusive use as summer mountain retreats. Many have stocked this part of the river with trout at their personal expense and are quite proud of the excellent fishing they have produced. Most will naturally oppose the public "trespassing" on their lands, or fishing or floating the Chattooga across their lands. The few with homes, pastures or summer homes within the boundary of the river will certainly not tolerate recreation users encroaching on their private properties, trampling through their yards and invading their personal privacy. Several of these landowners have no intention of ever selling or giving up their lands, even for a much higher-than-average market value. They certainly would not look with favor on a forced condemnation program on

the Chattooga, even of scenic easements. Many of the landowners will cooperate with the Forest Service in working out a responsible program of protective scenic easements. The Forest Service must do everything possible to work out a system of public access for this portion of the river that will cause the least amount of disruption to these private landowners' uses and privacy.

The following factors should be considered in obtaining the right of public access through use easements for this section of the river--

--If this river is included in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System, all portions of it should be open so all persons are free to enjoy it.

--As a minimum, the public should be able to fish, float, or hike along the river through these private lands.

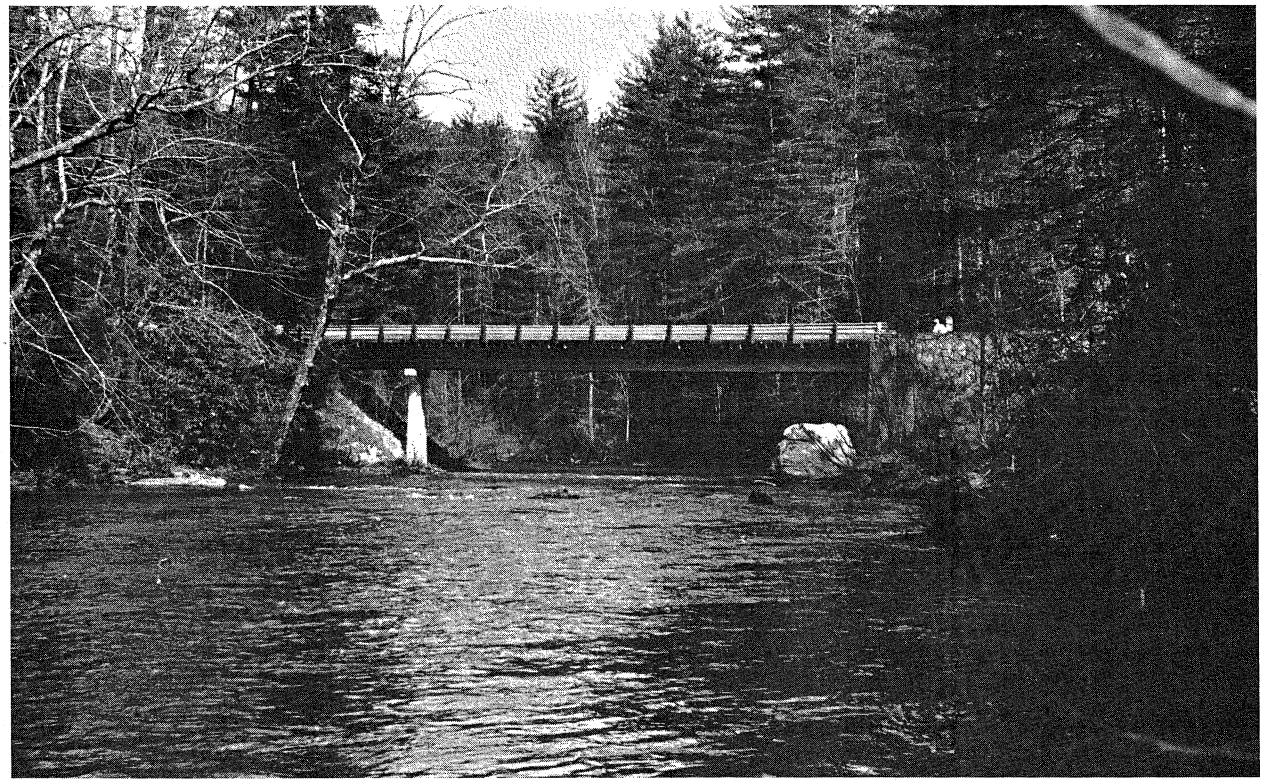
--In order to protect the privacy of private landowners along the developed portions of this section, the public should be restricted to the river or to developed trails across these lands. This should be strictly enforced by the Forest Service, and if necessary, some means of physical restraint should be used to correct any problem areas.

--Use easement rates must adequately recognize situations in which public access causes a loss of privacy to the private landowner, and provide for adequate compensation for the values of exclusive solitude and privacy which are lost.

--Immediate public use of these lands is not of first importance, and should not be insisted upon if it hinders the more important program of obtaining protective scenic easements to assure that the river is protected and maintained in a primitive condition. Use easements might allow for deferment of actual public use of these lands for a period up to 10 years, if necessary, to help gain easements, cooperation and goodwill from the private landowners along the river.

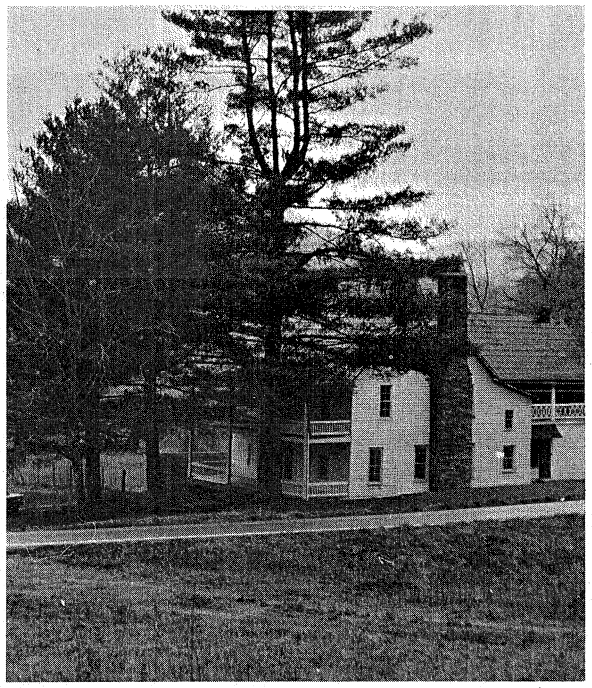
--The public should be allowed access to the private lands within the river boundary only after an adequate reinforced system of trails is completed through these sections and only when the Forest Service can provide reasonable cleanup, policing, and administration of these lands.

--Trails and other provisions for public use of the river should be located to minimize conflicts with the existing private uses.



Burrells Ford Bridge.

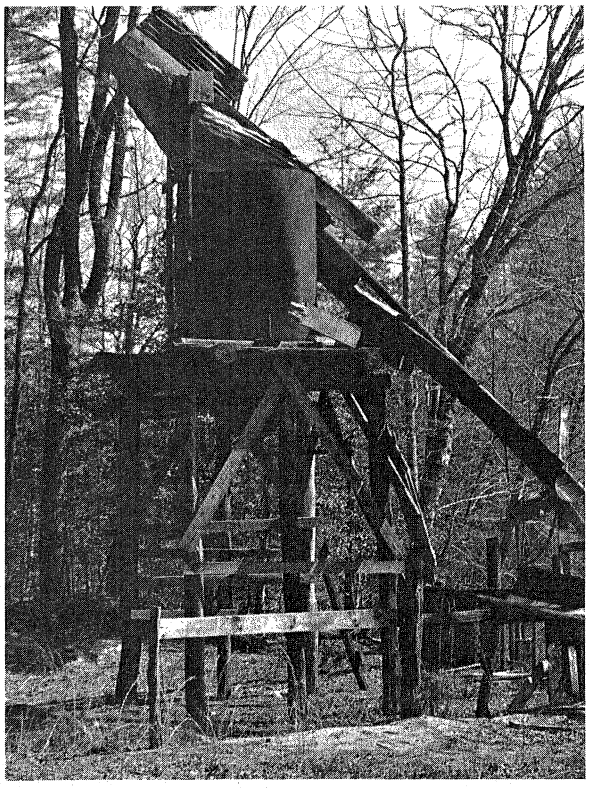
Bull Pen Bridge.



Russell Farm can be seen from the river near Highway 28 bridge.

A summer home on Georgia Power Company land along the West Fork.

Abandoned mining equipment on the West Fork.



House trailer along river in Section III.

Section II - Chattooga River mile 48.4 to 32.5

Section II of the river is in a near-natural state, with only two roads crossing in 15.9 miles. These are Bull Pen and Burrells Ford Roads, two dirt Forest Service roads which cross the river in a section proposed for Wild classification. The portions of the river above, between and below these two roads are so rough and inaccessible that they take one or two days to hike or raft. These roads cross through dense woods and detract little from the characteristics of this section. Because they could cause excessive concentrations of use resulting in site deterioration, both of these bridges will be removed and the approaches restored. Access will be by trail from the corridor boundary. In both cases, there will be little effect on the local transportation system by removing the bridges.

Except for 26 acres of private ownership at the very beginning of this section, all lands within the boundary of this section are National Forest. Private tracts within this section are undeveloped and probably can be purchased at fair market value. All lands within this section are proposed for fee acquisition by the Forest Service. There are no important private uses or developments to be foregone if these lands are acquired by the Forest Service.

Ellicott's Rock Scenic Area was established around Ellicott's Rock in 1966 by the Regional Forester under Regulation U-3 of the Secretary of Agriculture. This 3,584 acre area was "set apart and reserved for public recreation and closed to all other occupancy and use." Seven hundred and thirteen acres of the proposed river boundary fall within Ellicott's Rock Scenic Area. Management objectives for both areas are similar and no changes are needed in existing or proposed administration and management to make these two areas compatible.

Utilization of the timber on both private and National Forest lands is the only present use in this section which would be appreciably affected by Wild River status.

Burrells Ford Campground, a partially completed Forest Service camping area, is located below Burrells Ford Bridge. This campground will be reduced to a development scale 1 (foot access) camping area compatible with Wild River classification.

The present access road into this area will be restored to natural condition. Parking areas at Burrells Ford will be located outside the proposed corridor. This camping area is a new, partially completed area and restriction of use to walk-in campers will not change long-established use patterns.

There are approximately five miles of old jeep roads which should be closed in this section. Most are grown over and disappearing; some can be travelled and show evidence of continued use. They are used only by hunters, fishermen and infrequently by the Wildlife Officers to stock the river with catchable size trout. Closing these roads will have minor effects on existing uses within this section.

Section III - Chattooga River mile 32.5 to 26.4

Section III of the river is entirely different from all other sections. This 6.1 mile stretch is developed with fields, houses and a paralleling highway along a major portion of its length. It meets Recreation River criteria.

Most of the land along this section was acquired from Georgia Power Company. About half of these Georgia Power lands are old fields or meadows growing up in planted pines. These fields and pastures provide a pleasant pastoral variety to this section of the river and are compatible with Recreation River status.

A number of unattractive buildings are along this portion of the river. Most of these detract from the overall pastoral quality and should be removed. There are a total of 42 buildings and two house trailers in this section. Two of the buildings are in Georgia and the trailers and other buildings are in South Carolina. Nineteen cabins and one trailer are located on 13 acres divided into 19 individual lots in South Carolina. The remaining are abandoned structures on lands recently acquired by the Forest Service.

On the Georgia side of the river along the three mile stretch at Highway 28 there are no visible buildings.

Highway 28 is one of the two major, paved highways crossing the river. This highway crosses at Russell Bridge in a stretch of large old fields and pastures, and then parallels within 100 - 150 feet of the river for 1.8 miles on the South Carolina side. The river flows very slowly and smoothly through this section with no sound of cascading whitewater, and the sound of traffic from the highway creates a sound intrusion. This paralleling highway is compatible with Recreation River classification. Once the buildings are removed between the highway and river, these lands should be allowed to revert to a natural state. Natural vegetative screening between the highway and river will help improve the quality of this section and act as a sound barrier.

Two miles below Highway 28 Bridge, a dirt access road drops down to a wooden low-water bridge. This access point, heavily used by experienced canoeists and floaters to bypass the slow flowing easy stretch of water above the bridge, is needed. It will help disperse the large numbers of canoeists who might otherwise start at Highway 28 Bridge. It also serves as a termination point for novice canoeists who want only a short ride over easy water. The dirt access road and low-water bridge are compatible with Recreation River classification and should be reinforced as necessary to withstand use by floaters. If parking facilities are provided here, they should be located out of sight of the river.

About 3 1/2 miles of jeep roads are located in this section. These should be stabilized and brought up to a useable standard for access. They can provide access for fishermen, canoeists, Wildlife Officers and administrative personnel and help take pressure off the more fragile Wild River sections above and below this section.

Section IV - Chattooga River mile 26.4 to 10.5

Section IV of the river meets Wild River criteria. Three tracts of private land are within this section; the rest is National Forest land. Private lands within this section are undeveloped and probably can be purchased from willing private landowners at fair market value. All lands within this section are proposed for fee acquisition by the Forest Service. No measurable private uses or developments will be foregone if these lands are acquired by the Forest Service.

The traces of two old roads should be obliterated from this section to further improve its quality. The lands around these roads should be acquired by the Forest Service so they can be restored. The first of these is Earls Ford, the