Guided Wade Fishing on the AP

Ranger Sitzlar,

The application for a special use permit for guided fishing trips on the Chattooga should be denied. It completely contradicts every reason for restricting boating on the river. It also introduces a “new” user and increases the human impacts on a resource you have already deemed stressed.

There are already guided fishing trips on the Chattooga Headwaters that are not permitted, monitored or acknowledged.

Actually most of the fishing is neither monitored nor enforced. On several occasions, during stocking, I have witnessed people from Alabama “fishing” with nets and loading 80 quart coolers on hand trucks and hauling fish out at Burrell’s Ford. I have also reported this to no avail.

During the boating vs fishing free-for-all, that the Forest Service has perpetuated over the years, the preferred users’, Trout Unlimited, main concerns were:

1—overcrowding and 2- loss of solitude.

Boating has been restricted, not by a more reasonable metric—Mother Nature and rain, but instead limited to the coldest months when it is actually more difficult to enjoy the scenic beauty and grandeur of the river. Both of these were the key points in the river’s Outstanding and Remarkable Values for designation as a National Wild and Scenic River.

So once again you would like to increase fishing use, and also amazingly so--make it commercial, by at least 10 times what you allow for private boating on the Headwaters. If you are going to increase a parameter, it should be open private boating up to restriction by Mother Nature. As proven she does an exceptional job on her own.

Also any commercial use would require the “shuttle permit” which are accounted for except for that mystery one no one admits to knowledge of being owned. So, also----no increase in shuttle permits.

The lower river could support fishing, contradictory to some urban legend the fish aren’t below Hwy 28. I know this to be false for I have caught many fish on all 3 sections of river below Hwy 28. There again the Shuttle issue is in question.
The Chauga and its more demanding hiking is the only real solitary fishing left here. Let’s not ruin that too. Please

Your more responsible and pressing need is registration for all users to aid in searching for people that get lost or becoming “missing”. As a rescue professional I find this incredibly hard to understand and irresponsible for a government agency responsible for safe human interaction with nature. You register boating, which by nature is relatively easy to logically assume, they went down stream.

To repeat, I request this application be denied. I also request registration for all users and some better enforcement of fishing regulations, both would be incredibly appreciated.

Please include me on the list of notifications/announcements from the Andrews Pickens Forest.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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