# DECISION MEMO

## Andrew Pickens Guided Wade Fishing

**Andrew Pickens Ranger District**
**Sumter National Forest**
**Oconee County, South Carolina**

## DECISION

I have decided to issue a special use permit to Chattooga River Fly Shop and Unicoi Outfitters to conduct commercial guided wade fishing trips on the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River, and the Chauga Scenic River in Oconee County, South Carolina.

Outfitters will be permitted up to 200 client service days in a 180-day period. Only one permit will be issued to each company within the 180-period. A client service day is defined as one calendar day multiplied by the number of clients on each trip. Trip size will be limited to a total of 12 people (clients + guides). Any trip being conducted upriver of the Highway 28 Bridge (Russell Bridge) will be limited to a group size of 4 people (clients + guides). This activity will be authorized and administered under a commercial temporary recreation special-use permit.

Both outfitters have stated that they do not need to access Ellicott Rock Wilderness, at this time. Therefore, they will not be authorized to conduct commercial activities in the wilderness.

## PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

This project was scoped through US Post Office and an email letter sent to the full mailing list of stakeholders interested in proposed activities on the Andrew Pickens Ranger District. Ten responses were received and a response to comments document has been completed and is attached in the project record. The full list of comments and responses can be found at http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/scnfs/home/?cid=fseprd525746

## REQUIRED FINDINGS

The scope is limited based on the number of service days requested for use, and the low use recreation time-period. Most use is expected to occur in the Delayed Harvest Areas (Highway 28 to Reed Creek and Cassidy's Bridge/Hell Hole area) and Burrell's Ford on the Chattooga. Please refer to the attached maps for authorized use areas.

Use levels will adhere to capacity limits established in the Forest Plan (including Amendment #1 addressing recreation use in the upper segment of the Chattooga River). The degree of potential effects are within Forest Plan standards and effects evaluated in the *Revised Final Environmental Impact Statement, Sumter National Forest* and *Managing Recreation Uses in the Upper Segment of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor* (2012 Environmental Assessment). The 2012 Environmental Assessment (EA) considered future impacts of Outfitter/Guide special use

permits in the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River and Ellicott Rock (cumulative effects - pages 58 and 108).

There will be no impacts to threatened or endangered species, inventoried Roadless areas, potential Wilderness areas or research natural areas, floodplains, municipal watersheds, wetlands or heritage sites. Existing access locations will be used and there will be no additional biophysical disturbance from this type of activity. No extraordinary circumstances exist that would warrant further analysis and documentation in an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement.

## CATEGORY OF EXCLUSION

Though not required, I have decided to document this decision with this Decision Memo (FSH 1909.15, 32.1). I have determined that this action is categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to National Environmental Policy Act, Revised Policy and Procedures Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 30, Paragraph 32.12 Number 8 ("Approval, modification or continuation of minor short-term (1 year or less) special uses of National Forest System lands" [(36 CFR 220.6(e)(3)].

## IMPLEMENTATION DATE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITY

This decision is not appealable and may be implemented immediately.

## CONTACT PERSON

For further information concerning this decision, contact Plinio Beres at 864-638-9568 or by email to pwberes@fs.fed.us.

Robert L. Sitzlar

ROBERT L. SITZLAR
District Ranger
Andrew Pickens Ranger District

12/20/2016
DATE