

# NEWS RELEASE



U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## FOREST SERVICE VOLUNTARILY WITHDRAWS DECISIONS ON RECREATION USES ON UPPER CHATTOOGA RIVER

ATLANTA (December 21, 2009) –USDA Forest Service officials announced today that the Sumter, Chattahoochee and Nantahala national forests have withdrawn their decisions on recreation uses on the upper Chattooga River.

“Effective immediately, the three national forests in South Carolina, Georgia and North Carolina have withdrawn their decisions to allow for additional analysis,” said Liz Agpaoa, regional forester for the USDA Forest Service, Southern Region. “Once the analysis is complete, the forests intend to issue three new decisions, probably in early spring.”

The decisions, announced in August 2009, would have, among other things, allowed limited boating on the main stem upper Chattooga River. Five appeals were filed as part of the Forest Service’s planning process. The Southern Region granted a stay while the appeals were under review, preserving the status quo on the river (meaning no boating is allowed above the Highway 28 bridge). That condition remains unchanged.

During the appeal process, the Forest Service discovered some inconsistencies between various components of the decision documents, according to Paul Bradley, forest supervisor of the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. While none of the appellants raised these inconsistencies in their appeals, the Forest Service decided to voluntarily withdraw the decisions.

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FOREST SERVICE WITHDRAWS DECISIONS ON UPPER CHATTOOGA RIVER — 2/2/2

“Inconsistencies sometimes occur in large documents with multiple authors,” Bradley said. “We are taking this step to ensure that the final documents are complete and accurate.”

When Forest Service officials sign the new decision documents, they also will be subject to the agency’s administrative appeals process, Bradley added.

For more information on the decisions on recreation uses on the upper Chattooga River, please visit <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/sumter/resources/Chattooga.php>.