



**Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests**  
**U.S. Department of Agriculture**  
**Forest Service, Southern Region**  
**4931 Broad River Road Columbia, SC 29212**  
(FMS-11-11)

**Contact: Michelle Burnett 803-561-4091**

**USDA FOREST SERVICE ASKS PUBLIC TO REVIEW ASSESSMENT OF RECREATION  
USES ON THE UPPER SEGMENT OF THE CHATTOOGA WILD AND SCENIC RIVER**

*Public given 30 days to review environmental assessment, preferred alternative*

Columbia, S.C. (July 15, 2011) - USDA Forest Service officials today released an environmental assessment (EA) on managing recreation uses on the upper segment of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River for 30-day public review. The announcement includes selection of a preferred alternative that would allow high-quality whitewater boating on the upper river in the winter and preserve a boat-free experience for other users the rest of the year. It also would protect the trout angling experience year round in the Nicholson Fields Reach which includes the popular Delayed Harvest trout fishery between Reed Creek and the Highway 28 bridge.

“We chose Alternative 12 as our preferred alternative because it would protect the river’s outstandingly remarkable values while allowing whitewater boaters, trout anglers and other forest visitors to co-exist on the upper Chattooga with minimal conflict,” said Paul Bradley, forest supervisor on the Francis Marion and Sumter National Forests. “Our preferred alternative also would set new capacities to protect opportunities for solitude, something people who visit this special place value more than anything else.”

The release of the EA marks another milestone in the agency’s efforts to examine visitor-use capacity on the upper segment of the Chattooga, including private boat use. Under Alternative 12, the three national forests that manage the Chattooga River—the Sumter in South Carolina, the Nantahala in North Carolina and the Chattahoochee in Georgia—would take action to improve campsites and trails. Other actions would prevent the cutting of large woody debris which provides vital habitat for the native brook trout and other aquatic species, as well as prohibit commercial boating on the upper river and boating in the tributaries.

Bradley encouraged the public to stay involved.

“Comments on our analysis and on our preferred alternative are extremely valuable,” said Bradley. “Depending on the information we get, we could modify the EA, change some elements of our preferred alternative, or choose a different alternative altogether when we make our decision later this year.”

Under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Forest Service is specifically mandated to protect and enhance the river’s outstanding natural, cultural and recreational values (recreation, biology, scenery, history and geology), preserve its free-flowing condition and protect its water quality for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

(more)

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Comments on Alternative 12 and the EA can be e-mailed to:

[comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us). Hard copy letters can be mailed to:

Comments on the Upper Chattooga EA  
c/o USDA Forest Service Supervisor's Office  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212

All related material and comments previously submitted to the USDA Forest Service have been considered in today's environmental assessment. This information and more can be found at <http://fs.usda.gov/scnfs>.

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