



"Karen Nicolai"
<karennicolai_2@hotmail.com>

09/11/2007 03:05 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
cc:
Subject: equal rights to the river

To whom it may concern:

I am an avid outdoor enthusiast and whitewater kayaker from Asheville, North Carolina, who enjoys paddling and hiking the many rivers and wilderness in the area. I believe working toward conservation and protection of the wilderness is one of the most important efforts in my lifetime. It takes one who loves and appreciates the wilderness to spend the precious time and effort to work towards conservation.

By allowing use of certain national forests, it peaks awareness of the importance of respecting and living in harmony with nature. A fisherman, hiker, or kayaker, all have one common love, the outdoors. It seems unfair to limit and even forbid access to a certain beauty, in this particular instance, it is the Chattooga River.

Kayaking a river down a mountain creates a minimal impact on the environment. In many cases river cleanups and other forms of improving the quality of the river are sparked by the very ones that are forbidden to use the river: those crazy kayakers. I have read through the different alternatives to use of the Chattooga wilderness, and think any one that does not allow boating on any section of the river, is unacceptable and illegal. It is not just a coincidence that the Chattooga River is the only river managed by the national forest service that does not allow boating. I am amazed that in the age where mountains can be bulldozed for a highway and million dollar homes are destroying million dollar views, paddling a non motorized craft down a river is not allowed.

Option number six in the proposal for alternatives seems to be the most favorable and the only one that honors the basic right of all the parties that have interest in the Chattooga Wilderness. I know I was taught when I was a child the importance of sharing and respecting others, and I know am not the only one who grew up with these values. I just wish that people would carry those lessons throughout life, because we all have to live on this planet and should have equal rights to its resources. I thank you for your time and hope that this effort will allow some to reconsider prior decisions regarding the Chattooga River.

Sincerely
Karen Nicolai

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"Tim Hawkins"
<timh@riverlandhills.org
>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>
cc:
Subject: In Support of Allowing Paddling on the Upper Chattooga

09/11/2007 03:08 PM
Please respond to timh

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am a 45-year-old, married, father of three, who has enjoyed paddling South Carolina rivers for only 4 years. Our rivers are indeed a treasure to be preserved for future generations. Since paddling I have gained a whole new appreciation and perspective of each river's beauty, scope, and power. Most of the paddlers I meet feel the same way. In general, the paddling community is respectful in the way we treat the river and other users. Opening the Upper Chattooga to those of us who paddle is simply the right thing to do. Ultimately, doing so will do more to preserve it than to threaten it. Thanks for your consideration and your service to our great country.

Tim Hawkins
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Stevescarb@aol.com

09/11/2007 03:52 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

cc:

Subject: USFS project manager, John Cleeves

John Cleeves

USFS project manager

This is a difficult letter for me to write but I feel I must.

Throughout this Nation and even the world, I have felt that I as a paddler have shared a common goal with fishermen of preserving our river heritage for all generations that will follow. Having long ago kayaked a small portion of the Chattooga river now closed to boaters, and having chosen to live and have my children born near the Chattooga river, I feel deeply that the river needs advocates and a deeper constituency than it has now.

Wilderness advocates of every stripe and color must cease this senseless bickering among themselves and share, not only the ability to experience the beauty of the Chattooga river, but the hard work that will face generations to come in preserving its heritage for the future. Nowhere in this country do wilderness advocates, fishermen and paddlers oppose each other except for here on the Chattooga. Small and vocal advocacy groups representing one or the other have villainized paddlers in ways that no one who has ever been paddling can accept as truthful.

In truth and in fact, **paddlers have the absolute least and smallest effect** in a wilderness area of all the user groups designated by the act of Congress that created the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Corridor.

Paddlers have a near zero effect when compared to hikers, who need a manufactured and maintained trail through the entire length of the Wilderness, and especially when compared to trout fishermen, who by the very existence of their sport require that an exotic species be continually introduced into a natural river that it is foreign and invasive to, and who have treated the banks of the upper Chattooga as a stomping ground, ruining miles of riverbank and crushing the native flora into extinction.

The national Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service are strong advocates of a "Leave No Trace" ethic in the wilderness. Ask yourself which, of the Congressionally mandated uses in the Chattooga River Corridor "Leaves No Trace?" There is only one user of which this can be stated and that is the responsible paddler.

After reading the results of the Forest Service Study, it is with amazement that I see that only one of the alternatives offers the paddling experience. I find it incredible, in the dictionary sense of that word, that after spending over a million dollars on a study that invalidated every single claim by those who would ban boating, that the Forest Service would produce such impossible to justify alternatives.

Paddling must be allowed on the upper Chattooga and there is no justifiable alternative that would do otherwise. Paddlers have long suffered banishment while at the same time fishermen and hikers were allowed to stomp the banks of the river into the seriously degraded state we see today.

If any user group is to be banished...No informed honest person can possibly advocate that it be the paddlers.

I therefore call for the USFS to reject the illegal and unprecedented ban on boating on the Upper Chattooga and establish limits and procedures that will correct the extensive damage to the banks of the Chattooga directly caused by the user groups who are currently allowed into this sacred wilderness area.

Thank you for you time and consideration,

Steve Scarborough

Long Creek, South Carolina 29658

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