



"David"  
<LORCZAKFOTO@hotmail.com>

09/13/2007 12:05 PM

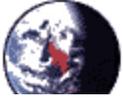
To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: UPPER CHATTOOGA

Mr. Cleeves,

As an avid outdoorsman, boy scout, and NOLS graduate I implore you to reconsider your position on access to the Upper Chattooga. Access should be equal to ALL, and limits made based on properly applied science.

Thank you for your time.

David Lorzak  
Boiling Springs, SC



Howard Tidwell  
<hktidwell@yahoo.com>

09/13/2007 12:07 PM

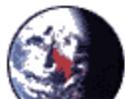
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: open up access on theupper chattooga

Dear Sir:

I am writing to request support for open access for boaters on the Upper Chattooga. Boating in a non-motorized craft would not impact the area and would allow for more enjoyment. I can begin to think that boating would create as much of an impact as fishing since foot traffic except in designated areas of put in and take out would be nonexistent. Boating provides a way to enjoy the rivers with friend and family promoting a healthy lifestyle. Please allow equal opportunity for boaters. I am sure you will be getting much more influence from other users like fishermen because they are probably more of them. Boaters respectfully request the same consideration. Thank you,  
Kelli Tidwell

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**davelandry@comcast.net**  
t

09/13/2007 12:08 PM

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

Please see the attached document for my comments on the Chatooga.



Chattooga\_Letter.doc



"Dale Perry"  
<acreekfreak@gmail.com>  
m>

09/13/2007 12:10 PM

To: "comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us"  
<comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters

John Cleeves,  
USFS Project Manager

While I think this option is just barely acceptable, as it is the best that is offered to the boating community, I would like to see option # 6 put in place.

After reading some of the comments from those who would support the boating ban, I feel it necessary to say a thing or 2 in response.

First, there are several comments from individuals who claim to be boaters who don't appear to know much about boating. I suspect these individuals are not boaters at all, but are over zealous boating ban supporters. I have to have faith that the individuals making the decisions can wade through the more obvious poo poo. Good luck with that.

Some of my earliest memories(40+years ago) are of hanging out on Nolin lake here in Kentucky. Our family had a hodge podge of motor boats and houseboats. When we would go camping for the weekend, we would tie the boats up to the bank and the first thing that would happen is all the children would be given trash bags and all the garbage in the area would be cleaned up. This has been a life long habit. When we picnic, boat, camp, whatever... any trash that is there is picked up first and foremost. This allows us to enjoy our chosen wild environment without the disturbing reminder of how thoughtless and crude our fellow humans can be.

Almost all the regular fishing spots that can be driven to or easily hiked to are always trashed up. I've been involved in many campaigns to try to change this trend. It's sad indeed when the landowners want to try to keep their land open for fisherman and families to enjoy, yet the repayment is trash by the truckload. Many places that used to be open to the public are now closed for various reasons. These places are now litter free. It's truly a sad note on human nature. I'll note that fly fishermen are almost completely exempt from this behavior.

When I started kayaking 11ish years ago, the first thing that struck me was how like minded the whitewater community was about trash and cleanliness. When we go boating, we only take the bare necessities. We really don't have any trash to throw away. Generally speaking, our access points on rivers and creeks get cleaner, the more we paddle. We don't like to hang out around trash. While I can't tell you that each and every WW boater lives a litter free life, I can tell you that the hundreds of boaters I've come into contact with over the years are very litter conscious and sometimes go to extremes to make sure they don't leave trash in their wake, whether it's their litter or was left behind by fishermen.

Some would have you believe that opening the headwaters to boating would provide a carnival atmosphere similar to the Ocoee, Nantahala, Gauley, Cheoah, etc... While I'll agree that these "dam release" rivers can be a crazy atmosphere, this really has no relationship with the Chattooga, unless you build a dam and start having scheduled releases. It's the schedule of the dam and the fact that often when these dams are releasing that there is not much else running that entices the hordes of boaters to over populate these rivers. In the case of the Chattooga, when the headwaters are running, there are all kinds of other rivers running. The Chattooga will never, ever have the atmosphere of the afore mentioned "dam release" runs. It's comparing apples and oranges.

For a more realistic representation of what the effect of boating in the headwaters would be like, all you have to do is wait until it rains, then go try to find some boaters(the lower sections of the Chattooga would not be a proper representation for a variety of reasons). We're so few that we often have to resort to bicycle shuttles. We usually travel in pairs or small groups and more often than not, never see another soul on the river, be it fishermen, boaters or hikers. After all, the best stuff runs while it's raining and very few other user groups are out under cold, rainy conditions. That is what whitewater boating is truly like.

I understand that freedom is a relative thing, but... it's certainly something to strive for. I would like the freedom to float peaceably & legally in this watershed. I've not heard any comments that give a good reason why my freedom in this regard should be restricted.

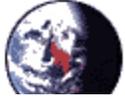
I'm saddened that this whole affair seems to have come down to a boater vs. fishermen. These two groups have an enormous overlap, though the fishermen probably outnumber boaters thousands to one. We should easily be able to coexist, as we do all over the country already. Why this tiny spot on the globe has been singled out for controversy is beyond me. When there is enough water to go boating, the fishing is not going to be good and when the fishing is good, the water will be too low for boating.

If we really want to protect the headwaters of the Chattooga, our main focus should be on containing/banning development upstream. Development is our single biggest threat to wild places. I find it ironic that many of those who claim to want to protect this area by banning boaters, seem unconcerned about development upstream.

I would like to see this area protected, just as I try to do my part to fight for and protect many of the wild areas close to my home. The boating ban does nothing to protect this area. In my opinion, it harms the effort to protect this area by not allowing this environmentally conscious user group to use & help protect the area.

Respectfully,

Dale Perry  
474 Woodview Drive  
Lexington, KY  
40515



"Spence Inman"  
<sinman@citlink.net>

09/13/2007 12:12 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Ban on canoeing and kayaking

I am against the Chattooga Headwaters ban on canoeing and kayaking. I am also against putting restrictions on when and how many boaters can go down the river at the same time. Canoeing and kayaking are low-impact sports. A vast majority of paddlers are conservation-minded folks who clean up after themselves and others. We care about water quality, environmental impact, and preservation of these resources.

I also believe that the high-water conditions required for us to paddle the headwaters would make for difficult/poor fishing conditions. This would make it unlikely that paddlers and fisherman would cross paths. By the way, I am also a fisherman. I love to fish for trout and smallmouth bass in streams. I often do this in a canoe.

Spence Inman



annette@drvandongen.com

09/13/2007 12:14 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Managing Recreation Uses on the Chattooga River - OPPOSITION TO BOATING

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I strongly favor RESTRICTING boating on the Chattooga river. In order to protect and enhance the Chattooga river's value, as is your stated intention, the human footprint must be limited. Additional numbers of people, attracted to the area by an invitation to boat, bring with them additional garbage, environmental toxins, human waste, fire hazards, emergency services requirements, disturbance of fauna, and trampling of flora. The sum total of which will irreparably harm the Chattooga river. Lifting the prohibition on boating may also require additional park staff to manage the increased numbers of visitors. It is in the public's best interest to protect and preserve the Chattooga river by limiting the public's opportunity to damage it.

I respectfully request your consideration of my opposition to boating.

Sincerely yours,

Annette van Dongen  
[annette@drvandongen.com](mailto:annette@drvandongen.com)



Chris Kirkman  
<chris.kirkman@db.com  
>  
09/13/2007 12:16 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: I oppose discriminatory treatment of low-impact user groups on the  
North Fork of the Upper Chatooga River: Support Alternative #6

Dear Sir or Madam:

Exercising discriminatory treatment by restricting non-motorized boating access to the Upper Chatooga while not doing the same for other low-impact user groups is clearly inconsistent with the tenets of the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers program. For this reason, I support alternative #6 as the least discriminatory option.

I strongly support wilderness preservation and would support a fair policy limiting access of all user groups. The current policy clearly demonstrates preferential treatment for certain user groups. There are numerous precedents for non-motorized boating access being consistent with the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers program. No findings suggest that non-motorized boating inherently has more impact or is more disruptive than other traditional activities such as hiking or fishing.

Best regards,

Chris Kirkman

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"Martin, R.M. \(\Robert\)"  
<Robert.Martin@Diosynt  
h-RTP.com>

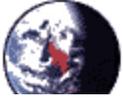
09/13/2007 12:33 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Hiaku

My paddle slaps  
Sun sparkling on water  
Chattooga symphony  
Robert Martin  
Durham NC

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**Todd.Morin@austenrigg  
s.net**

09/13/2007 12:57 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Access to the Chatooga River

To whom it may concern,

Please consider lifting the boating ban on the Chatooga river.

Sincerely,

Todd Morin  
15 Martin Avenue  
Lee Massachusetts, 01238



"Kenny Unser"  
<kennyunser@gmail.com>

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

09/13/2007 12:58 PM

Please include recreational boating in any usage regulations that apply to the upper Chattooga River. I travel to the Southeast each Spring from Connecticut to paddle and would love to have the opportunity to access the upper Chattooga.

Thank you,  
Kenny Unser  
26 Franklin St #4  
Westport, CT 06880



"Bob Mckee"  
<badassbobbyboy@hotmail.com>

09/13/2007 01:02 PM

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

Hi

I'm a whitewater canoeist based in the UK.

Over the past two years I have travelled to the USA in order to boat on the fantastic rivers which you have in the South Eastern States.

I have paddled sections of the Chattooga several times now apart from the upper reaches which for unknown reasons are closed to boaters. My friends and I consider the Chattooga to be one of the highlights of any visit to the SE.

Every year we plans at least two trips outside of the UK. If the Chattooga were to be fully open to boaters, I have no doubt that it would be more than enough to bring us back to the region to yet again experience the magic of a new section of this river.

I cannot think of many sports which are of lower impact to a river system than paddling. These craft have been used for thousands of years on rivers all ove the world causing next to know impact on the environment. I have witnessed first hand the reverence that boaters show to the lower reaches of the Chattooga and I can see no reason why the upper stretches would not be held in the same respect.

Please take note of the above comments and consider re-opening the upper reaches of the river to recreational boater.

Yours Sincerely

Bob Mckee  
Manchester, UK

[www.bobscanoestuff.blogspot.com](http://www.bobscanoestuff.blogspot.com)

---

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<http://maps.live.com>



"Sidener, Scott E."  
<sidenese@westinghouse.com>

09/13/2007 01:04 PM

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

cc:

Subject: Comments on alternatives for managing recreation uses on the upper Chattooga River

\*Please make this part of the public record\*

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

I just wanted to provide a brief statement for my support of alternative 6. There are a lot of irrational excuses being proposed for banning non-motorized boats. Any neutral rational party can quickly see that they are not realistic, simply wrong, or could equally apply to support a ban on fishing, hiking, or swimming in the same area. I plead with you not to make decisions based on opinions and emotions. Just use simple facts. Boaters have equal rights and privileges of use as fishermen, hikers, swimmers, etc. Of all of the outdoor activities, boating arguably leaves the smallest footprint. I am in favor of at least alternative 6, or some improved version of alternative 6. Everyone should have the right to enjoy the river we all so much love.

Thank you,

Scott Sidener  
Principal Engineer  
Outdoor Enthusiast  
Lexington, SC



"gabriel latini"  
<gabriellatini@gmail.com>  
m>

09/13/2007 01:05 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Management Alternatives.

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Thank You for taking the time to read this letter. I am writing you in response to the six alternatives outlined in the Scoping Document detailing possible future management plans for the Upper Chattooga River corridor.

To tell you a little about myself, I live in Asheville, NC. I am an Avid Outdoorsman and I travel extensively throughout the South-East and the entire world to enjoy recreation in the Out-of – Doors. I enjoy a wide variety of backcountry activities including, Hiking and Backpacking, Fly-Fishing, Swimming, and Paddling. In the modern world, the demand for land to be developed to meet the ever-increasing needs of a growing population threaten places where Americans can go to enjoy the natural wonders of our world. Luckily, we have programs in place that protect land and preserve it for the enjoyment of all. The Wild and Scenic Rivers of our country are a great gift and I am happy that the government sees the value in protecting such places to provide a place for people to relax and enjoy these special rivers.

In the case of the Upper Chattooga, there has been an unfair ban on paddling. This ban must be lifted to ensure fair management of this wild and scenic corridor. Of all user groups that would visit the Upper Chattooga, Paddlers have the least impact due to the specific nature of the sport. Of course paddlers would use the trails to get to the river, but that is where their impacts end. On the flipside, all other users use the trails exclusively (let's hope they stick to the trails.) They actually have a more significant impact on the corridor than any paddler.

At this point it seems like it is quite obvious that the ecological impacts that paddlers would add

are next to non-existent, in fact, I believe by and large that paddlers would improve the area by cleaning up litter left by other users, I myself always leave a river with several new pieces of trash in my boat that I found in the corridor and this is a common practice of all my paddling friends. As a Fly –Fisherman, I have never noticed any adverse effects from paddlers, they pass by silently and do not disturb the fish any more than a floating log would. But this last point seems to make little difference as Fly-Fisherman and Paddlers rarely use the same Stream at the same time.

The Different flows preferred by Anglers and Paddlers would naturally separate them from each other. Paddlers are adamant about checking water levels so they know what they are getting into, Anglers do not seem to be as tuned in to water levels as paddlers. Any angler out on a high flow day is showing an ignorance to the conditions and may very well be putting himself into a potentially dangerous situation. He may find himself lucky to have a group of paddlers on the river. The upper Chattooga (class IV-V whitewater) is no place to be after heavy rains unless you are an expert whitewater paddler, Consequently paddlers (relatively few) will only be found in this stretch during high flow events. Any friction between paddlers and other groups is merely speculation, I think that once the ban is lifted we will get to see the true nature of user interaction.

Of the Six Alternatives outlined in the Scoping Document, Only #6 even comes close to being a fair plan. At this point I would urge you to choose #6, but only if a better alternative can not be found. I would like to offer some suggestions about creating an alternative.

1. All stretches of river above highway 28 completely open to paddling. Any restrictions to floating should only state requirements in water-craft. This is to ensure that paddlers are using safe equipment. (whitewater boat vs. wal mart raft) Several precedents exist locally, namely the Ocoee river.
2. Group Size: limit to twelve (this still seems like a big group and If I were part of this trip I would split us into two groups of six)
3. Limited Woody debris Removal: Paddlers sometimes remove woody debris to make a rapid safer. I think that removal of woody debris should be prohibited. If a paddler must portage a rapid due to great risk posed by woody debris, then so be it. The only case I see for removal is if the portage trail would impact the riparian zone. If a paddler can portage on Bedrock then he continues to leave no trace, damaging streamside vegetation is not acceptable to me
4. Trails: No new trails, closure of existing trails where damage cannot be mitigated.
5. Camping: no new fire rings, removal of existing fire rings that are poorly placed. Camping only in designated areas
6. Parking: No increase in parking capacity, no improvement of access points, We want Wild and Scenic to stay Wild and Scenic.
7. Self Registration for all users/visitors.

Further more I would like to see lands adjacent to the present corridor aquired and managed as wilderness. The Stream should be managed for Fishing as a Catch-and Release, single hook artificial lure Stream. No stocking new stocking should occur. If there is to be stocking, it should be limited to species native to the Chattooga.

We see that there is no real basis to uphold the ban on paddling. We see that there are no adverse ecological impacts presented by a new user group. Rather it is a social conflict between current users in favor of maintaining the Status Quo, and a group who is very honestly trying to bring fair and equitable management to a Nationally dedicated Wild and Scenic River. Thank You for taking the time to read my letter, I know it can't be easy trying to come to a conclusion on this Issue and I applaud your hard work. Good luck working this all out.

Sincerely,

Gabriel Latini

37 Majestic Ave.

Asheville, NC 28806

[gabriellatini@gmail.com](mailto:gabriellatini@gmail.com)



caraw@CLEMSON.EDU

09/13/2007 01:33 PM

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

cc:

Subject: Boating Access on the Upper Chattooga

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

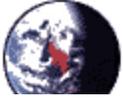
I am writing to comment on the proposed management plans for the Upper Chattooga River. I am an avid kayaker, backpacker, and outdoors enthusiast. I would like to say that I am in favor of any proposal that protects this wilderness area as long as it is fair to all user groups.

However, I believe that the boating ban on the Upper Chattooga unfairly singles out one low-impact user group. Please consider opening the Upper Chattooga to boaters. Many of the reasons that are given for perpetuating the ban are stereotypical and not based on fact. Boaters produce no greater impact than the other groups (hikers, swimmers, and fisherman) who are already allowed unlimited access.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Cara Jill Wrenn  
Greenville, SC



"Cloud, Keith"  
<hc0987@att.com>

09/13/2007 01:38 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc: <keithcloud@yahoo.com>  
Subject: Recreation Management Alternatives for the Upper Chattooga River

Attn: **US Forest Service**

Re: **Recreation Management Alternatives for the Upper Chattooga River**

Thanks for your willingness to accept comments, allowing me to state my concerns regarding this pristine wilderness area. I am sure that all the alternatives have been well thought out and many hours have been involved in getting us to this point. I thank each person who had a part in this worthwhile debate.

Clearly the alternatives that I prefer are of the first three presented. I have visited this river and recreated by fishing, boating and hiking this beautiful pristine area. The Chattooga is a very special place, in fact I proposed to my wife on this river. It was also our first date as we set out for a nice hike and a picnic on one of the huge boulders that overlooks the vibrant Chattooga River. Clearly, I recognized the beauty of the river and the beauty of the woman that I would come to marry. I was satisfied then with the management of the river and had come to know that it was truly a blessing that should someone wish to only fish, then they could enjoy a wonderful section of river above the Hwy 28 bridge. The solitude, remoteness, esthetic values, and certain intangibles have guided my thoughts concerning the proposals.

When I look at the first 3 proposals, it is definitely alternative 1 that I prefer. My reason is that it has very clear and concise points and is not filled with more upon more regulations. That is clearly the difference between alternative 1 and all of the other alternatives. The current management style is fine and has not taken away the pleasant experience of the Chattooga River. Although there is some degradation that occurs with foot travel along the river, I see very little reason to change the current management.

In regards to proposals 4-6, my concerns are that the river simply cannot and should not be managed in this light. Quite simply the solitude and remoteness of this pristine river would be damaged. Removal of woody debris in order to make way for boaters could damage viable systems of ecological importance. Also, keep in mind that the Chattooga is a very fragile river. With persistent drought, water flows are at an all time low. It is during these times of low water that water temperatures become a major concern in protection of trout and the many other species of God's creation that make up the river system. Personally, I would like to see all of the river above Hwy 28 become catch and release for the whole year. We all know that with more recreation, more people are going to attempt to access the river. I seriously doubt governments ability to enforce any of the existing laws and future management of the river. Budget cuts in areas of enforcement have NOT resulted in reassuring me of an ability to enforce laws and regulations that WILL be broken. Many of you in the Forest Service and Dept of Natural Resources probably know someone that has lost a job due to budget cuts. It could be one of you who are reading this comment, that may be next to go. Also, I have yet to believe that an increase in funding will take place. Personally, I think this is something that some folks want so bad and they will compromise their values in order to achieve the objective. It is my belief that if they were to get what they want, the experience they are seeking will not be worth it. However, I am very well aware that once an activity is established, it will be very difficult to change back to the way it was and should be. I urge you to make the correct decision to maintain and protect this beautiful pristine area.

**Sincerely and Best Fishes,**

**Keith Cloud  
915 Koon Rd  
Irmo, SC. 29063**



"Chattooga  
Conservancy"  
<info@chattoogariver.or  
g>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: scoping comments

09/13/2007 01:44 PM

Please accept our comments on the management of the upper Chattooga River.

Buzz  
Chattooga Conservancy  
2368 Pinnacle Drive  
Clayton, GA 30525  
706-782-6097



<http://www.chattoogariver.org> Boating scoping comments9-07.doc

Jerome Thomas, Forest Supervisor  
Francis Marion and Sumter National Forest  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, South Carolina 29212

September 13, 2007

Jerome,

This letter is in regard to the very important decision that you must soon make about user management of the upper Chattooga River. The central issue at the heart of the intense controversy over whether or not to allow floating use north of the Highway 28 Bridge is: Will there be negative impacts to the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the upper Chattooga River if boating is allowed? The question spills over into many other issues concerning other rivers and streams where boating is either not allowed or restricted, from nearby Overflow Creek to Yellowstone National Park. It also raises questions of whether or not we need restrictions on existing uses of the upper Chattooga River.

Consequently, your decision about the possibility of allowing boating on the upper Chattooga River north of the Highway 28 Bridge will undoubtedly set a new milestone for wildlands management, not only for the Chattooga River but for the whole wilderness preservation system in the United States. The Chattooga Conservancy and the Forest Service are both organizations dedicated to protecting the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Chattooga River that caused it be designated as a National Wild and Scenic River, while at the same time promoting its use and enjoyment by the public. Our objective must be to promote use but not overuse in order to protect a resource that is becoming especially rare in the eastern United States. Clearly, the dramatic increase in pressure on the Chattooga River to provide compatible and balanced uses will require some restriction on these competing uses. To that end we offer the following comments that are aimed at helping you make this important decision.

The upper Chattooga River has outstanding scenery, unique and abundant biological diversity, monumental geologic features and an outstanding opportunity for a wilderness experience in remote backcountry. It is our opinion that unrestricted floating use on the upper Chattooga River would cause irreparable damage to the opportunity for a wilderness experience in the last place left in the whole Chattooga Wild and Scenic Corridor where that possibility still exists. This opportunity still exists because the upper Chattooga is relatively inaccessible.

Floating use should not be allowed on the Grimshawes Bridge to Bull Pen Bridge section of the Chattooga River because currently there is no feasible access. The property at and below Grimshawes Bridge to just below Corkscrew Falls is private property on both sides of the river. If the Forest Service were to allow floating use on this section of the river it would surely result in damage to private property. This question of navigability is one that will have to be settled in court given the ripeness for a new ruling on the issue due to

the fact that navigability laws have not adequately addressed new and unforeseen questions of burgeoning recreational use. The Forest Service would be putting itself squarely in the middle of this unsettled legal issue and would certainly be liable for private property damage by allowing floating use in an area where the determining factor in a navigability suit could likely hinge on private property damage that is sure to occur due to unavoidable encroachment on adjacent private lands.

There is currently no good access to the Chattooga River for floating use below Grimshawes Bridge and above Bull Pen Bridge. The Chattooga River trail from Whiteside Church parking lot is steep and long. County Line Road is over a mile and a half long and traverses many streams and seeps where soils are highly erodible. This section should remain closed to floating use because if permitted, floating use would cause damage to natural resources and would require more access to accommodate floating use. (Boaters are not likely to carry canoes and kayaks down steep, long trails very many times before demanding new access and trails.) This section is one of the last places on the river where the opportunity for a wilderness experience still exists. The reason that this opportunity exists is because it is inaccessible.

Floating use below Bull Pen Bridge could be accommodated below Bull Pen Bridge to Highway 28 if use numbers and group sizes were restricted to protect the opportunity for solitude, and if these restrictions were enforced. There are no navigability issues on these sections and no new access would be required. Based on observations from other creek runs in the area, boaters generally travel in groups of about 4 to 6 people. This section could probably accommodate up to 4 groups of 4 to 6 paddlers during a river surge at runnable levels with reasonable spacing between groups. Floating use should be restricted to above 2.8 feet on the Highway 76 gauge or, better yet, on a comparable level on a gauge at Bull Pen and or at Burrells Ford Bridge. American Whitewater's website in 2006 recommended 2.6 to 4.0 ft. on the Highway 76 gauge as the upper and lower limits for floating these sections of the river. All boaters surveyed by the Chattooga Conservancy recommended 3.0 feet on the Highway 76 gauge as around optimum paddling levels. A 2.8 cutoff for these sections would not only insure a quality run but would set a limit that would not overlap with trout fishing on these sections, which does not normally occur above this level. If these restrictions along with adequate enforcement were in place, floating use should be allowed on these sections from Bull Pen Bridge to Highway 28.

The question about what to do about down woody debris is paramount to the question of allowing boating above Highway 28. There is nothing more dangerous than a "strainer" in a rapid. Hemlock Woolly Adelgid die off in the headwaters is now occurring at an alarming rate. Once these trees begin to fall into the Chattooga River, strainers will be common in the headwaters. It would not be consistent with wildlands management to permit removal of down woody debris in wild sections of the Chattooga River or in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area. The sections where floating is permitted must be contingent on the understanding by paddlers that down woody debris cannot be removed and that floating will be permitted at the user's own risk.

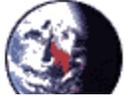
The user analysis of the upper Chattooga River has also raised questions of regulating other uses, and designating new trails and campsites. Overuse problems near access points should be limited to prevent resource damage. However, in the backcountry, overuse does not seem to be a great problem. New trails should be addressed on a case by case basis, otherwise this would be an arbitrary decision.

None of the alternatives address all these concerns as stated above. We respectfully submit that a new alternative based on our comments be crafted to form the basis for balanced use where all users can enjoy the Chattooga River while protecting the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of this unique section of the Chattooga River.

Thank you for your attention to these comments. If I can be of further assistance in this important decision please give me a call at 706-782-6097.

Sincerely,

Buzz Williams, Executive Director  
Chattooga Conservancy



**Bryan Mills**  
<bmills\_5@yahoo.com>  
09/13/2007 01:46 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Access

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

My name is Bryan Mills and I would like to comment on USFS's decision regarding the ban of kayaking on the upper Chattooga river. I have been a member of the boating community for close to 10 years and have long supported American Whitewater. I'll be honest, I don't know the full extent of the ban on boating in this area and was recently informed of the upcoming decision to extend this ban. First off, I don't understand why there would ever be a ban on kayaking a river period, unless somehow it is considered private property? Our impact on wilderness areas rivals that of the courteous hiker. Some of the comments made regarding our impact are absolutely ridiculous! To say kayaking access is comparable to ATV access is just untrue! The environmental impact of ATV's in a wilderness area is so far beyond that of kayaking that the comparison should never be made, much less the carelessness that is sometimes associated with the people that use ATV's and 4wd vehicles! Also to say that kayakers would cause accidents with swimmers and inner tubers is again, ridiculous. If people are actually on inner tubes when there's enough water to kayak these upper sections, then the sanity of these tubers needs to be the real question because their in serious danger of drowning!

I've started to ramble. I just wanted to voice my concerns for this issue. I believe that all wilderness areas need to be protected but banning kayaking on a wild and scenic river is not the answer! Kayakers are the people you actually WANT using the area! We are probably some of the most environmentally conscious groups out there. The most that is left behind by our presence is the occasional footprint and possibly a shard of plastic. All I ask is that remove of the ban be seriously considered without bias and unrealistic comparisons. Thanks you for time and consideration.

Bryan Mills

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Mark Buterbaugh  
<atlbuterbaugh@yahoo.  
com>

09/13/2007 01:51 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Comments Re: Management Plan for Chattooga River Corridor

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212

emailed to:  
comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

I am writing to register my comments regarding management of recreation within the upper Chattooga Wild and Scenic River corridor. While I have concerns with all six options presented, I find Option #6 the least objectionable.

The current management, which prohibits boating above Highway 28, is inconsistent with the WSR designation for this area. There is no precedent for excluding this use, nor is there any presented evidence to support the ban. Therefore, Options 1-3 should be rejected.

I find no evidence to support the user limits included in options 4 and 5. These proposed limits are targeted to one user group and are not applied equitably across all users. I suggest these options should also be rejected.

Although my comments above support restoration of legal boating above Highway 28, my primary interest is not as a boater, but as a hiker and backpacker. Over the last 26 years I have hiked frequently in the Chattooga WSR area including the headwaters region.

I have only boated between Highway 28 and Woodall Shoals a few times, and am not likely to ever boat in the headwaters. I would like to see the area managed in consideration of all uses compatible with the appropriate WSR or Wilderness Area designations.

The most notable user impacts that I have observed are related to unmanaged user created trails and campsites. I would like any management plan to include focus on the following areas:

No parking lots within the WSR corridor

No camping within 1/4th mile of roads or bridges

No campsites within 50 feet of the river

Mitigate damage at existing campsites

Self registration for all users - monitor for future

capacity recommendations

No new trail creation except to re route existing trails to mitigate damage

No enhancement or removal of woody debris from the river channel

No stocking of non native fish species

Thank you for your consideration,  
Mark Buterbaugh  
3686 Winters Hill Dr  
Atlanta, GA 30360

---

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<http://autos.yahoo.com/index.html>



**Digthepast@aol.com**

09/13/2007 02:00 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chatooga Scoping Study

Please find comments on above proceeding attached



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## **North Carolina Wildlife Federation**

*Affiliated with the National Wildlife  
Federation*

2155 McClintock Rd.  
Charlotte, NC 28205  
(704) 332-5696  
[www.ncwf.org](http://www.ncwf.org)

To: Mr. John Cleeves, USDA Forest Service, Sumter National Forest, 4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212 [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

Re: Chattooga River Comments

Submitted: via electronic transmittal on September 13, 2007

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation (NCWF) is offering comments to the USDA Forest Service on the alternatives for possible changes in management practices on the North Fork of the Chattooga watershed. Since 1945, NCWF has worked for all NC wildlife and its habitat. Over 58,000 members, supporters and affiliate club constituents support NCWF's wildlife conservation work.

In 1974, the Chattooga River was designated as a National Wild and Scenic River because of its biodiversity, largely unimpacted watershed, and beautiful scenery. The river and surrounding area provides places for fishing, hiking, swimming, hunting, wildlife viewing, and whitewater boating. The Chattooga North Fork is listed in *Trout Unlimited 100 Best Trout Rivers in America* and is prime undisturbed habitat for black bear, white-tailed deer, ruffed grouse, and wild turkey. The entire Chattooga watershed remains one of the largest wilderness areas in the Eastern US. It is one of the largest free-flowing trout streams in southern Appalachia that supports healthy trout reproduction. The area is one of the southeast region's and country's prime habitat and wild places; well deserving of sound management practices.

The original 1976 Chattooga Management Plan instituted a zoning policy that balanced use between potential competing recreational activities. The lower 36 miles of the designated river were open to boating while the upper 21 miles were preserved for anglers, birders and hikers. The policy transformed the lower Chattooga into a world-class whitewater resource while the upper Chattooga remained a haven for anglers, hikers and wildlife. Even though more emphasis was placed on meeting boating needs, the balanced policy is an exemplary model for river management that has resulted in high visitor satisfaction by offering a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities while protecting the resource from overuse. This balanced policy was continued under the 1985 and 2004 revised management plans. NCWF believes that Fish and wildlife habitat is currently being managed effectively.

As populations increase in NC, SC and GA, outdoor recreation pursuits will in turn see increased demands. The US Forest Service has the opportunity to manage effectively this resource if the balanced approach continues to be realized. NCWF is fully aware of the broad user constituents and their respective recreation pursuits that the Chattooga River beckons and supports. Boats currently enjoy 96% of the watershed without restrictions; while only 4% of the watershed is protected from creek boating to protect anglers and fish habitat. The area offers hundreds of alternate boatable streams including thirty miles of the lower Chattooga and both flanking creeks: Overflow Creek and the Whitewater River.

Every visitor incrementally and invariably increases the impact on a resource. Each activity impact is distinctive and alters an ecosystem's natural character. For hikers it is a trail system, for ATVs it is roads, for boaters it is turning a small mountain stream into a trail for travel. Boat impacts may include displacement of wildlife, riparian corridor degradation, and potential user conflicts with regards to habitat management e.g. woody debris removal. A variety of aquatic species depends on natural accumulations of trees, branches, and root wads, which comprises woody debris, as this is the biological keystone of any river system. No alternative that would allow removal of woody debris from the upper river is acceptable to NCWF.

The Chattooga headwater contains the last section of public creek in Southern Appalachia protected against the escalating growth of whitewater boating. It currently offers the only alternative to boat-filled creeks during high-water times. The Upper Chattooga is the last boat-free creek for a quiet angling experience especially during the higher water periods when other creeks are filled with kayaks.

As our population increases, human intrusion into wild areas will also increase. Unless this intrusion is controlled, the potential for adverse impact on wildlife and habitat will only increase. Likewise, conflicts between various users in the Upper Chattooga watershed, as well as many other areas within the National Forest system, will become more frequent and more disturbing to user enjoyment. Because of these factors, the Forest Service needs to retain all of its management options available, including segregation of users. To abandon this successful management tool because a sector of the boating community claim unfair treatment will open the door for similar challenges by boaters and other user groups in National Forests and National Parks all over the country. It is the opinion of NCWF that this would not be positive for wildlife or wildlife enthusiasts now or for future generations.

NCWF feels strongly that the best policy for the Chattooga River would be NO changes to the current management policy of boating below Highway 28 and angling above. NCWF supports Alternative 1 as the best and most preferable option, yet understands that Alternatives 2 and 3 also are basically in line with the option to not change the current management policy so they would be acceptable as well. Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 simply are unacceptable for fish, wildlife nor a true management policy that balances user needs and interests with avoiding user conflicts. The current Chattooga management policy is a balanced model that should be continued. Maintaining minor limits on boating will ensure anglers, birders and wildlife enthusiasts have a section to also enjoy their respective outdoor hobby.

Thank you for the opportunity to offer comments. NCWF looks forward to a continued balanced management policy for the Upper Chattooga-a policy that allows the USDA

Forest Service to adhere to its mission while providing a broad array of recreation pursuits in a truly pristine ecosystem.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. John Benbow  
President,  
North Carolina Wildlife Federation

Tim Gestwicki  
Deputy Director, Conservation Programs  
North Carolina Wildlife Federation

**John C Cleeves**  
09/13/2007 02:01 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@FSNOTES  
cc:  
Subject: Fw: Upper Chattooga River

See below\

\*\*\*\*\*

John Cleeves  
Forest Planner  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
Email:jcleeves@fs.fed.us  
Phone: (803) 561-4058  
Fax:(803) 561-4004

\*\*\*\*\*

----- Forwarded by John C Cleeves/R8/USDAFS on 09/13/2007 02:00 PM -----



**Catherine Kennedy**  
<cathead\_03@yahoo.com>  
09/13/2007 01:05 PM

To jcleeves@fs.fed.us  
cc  
Subject Upper Chattooga River

Dr. Jerome Thomas,

I am writing to express my desire to see the Upper Chattooga River Headwaters remain off limits to commercial boating and fishing. This is an area in which I have played since the tender age of 16, and am grateful for its continued preservation.

I implore you to take a moment to consider what is at stake. Our country is being overrun by big money with little regard to the environment and water sources. The Chattooga River, as a Wild and Scenic River, should be a high priority for protection. The water is some of the cleanest in the state, and probably some of the cleanest in the world, as far as rivers go. I went swimming in it last weekend. With my goggles, I was able to see over 6 feet to the sandy bottom, and counted numerous mature trout swimming below and around me.

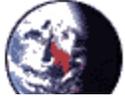
To open the river for commercial boating would allow the degradation of the river banks, causing erosion and sedimentation. Please don't let this happen. Boaters already are granted access to the lower half of the river. If people want to enjoy this precious natural resource, they should walk themselves there.

Consider the woolly adelgid and the crisis our rivers are already currently facing with the loss of the Hemlocks. Why continue to stress these areas by exposing them to intense human impact?

Thank you for your time,  
Catherine Kennedy

---

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"Richard Hopley"  
<rhopley@wfubmc.edu>  
09/13/2007 02:04 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan Comment

Richard Hopley

Research Associate

Division of Public Health Sciences

Wake Forest University School of Medicine

Winston-Salem, NC

September 13, 2007

Mr. John Cleeves

Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests

4931 Broad River Road

Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Re: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan

Dear Mr. Cleeves:

Though I have given my business address, to describe myself and to give you some idea of my attitudes and thinking processes, I am writing you as a concerned private citizen: a 60 year old professional man who has been paddling whitewater for 15 years (and an avid outdoorsman for much longer) and an ACA-certified Swiftwater Safety and Rescue instructor.

Our protected national wilderness areas must be held equally accessible to all citizens (and legal visitors to our country) who are engaged in any non-destructive recreational use. Carrying a kayak or a canoe to the riverside, then floating down the river, is demonstrably less destructive than bicycling, horseback riding, hiking, or any fishing that involves extensive walking on the banks or river bottom.

Canoeists and kayakers, as demonstrated by both organized river clean-up days and by *ad hoc* trash pickup during paddling trips (particularly at access areas while awaiting "shuttle") are remarkably conscientious stewards of our waterways. Much of the riverbank and access-area trash collected is, in fact, bait cans and fast-food containers left behind by fisherman and swimmers -- that is to say, user-groups that are currently permitted on the Chatooga headwaters,

while boaters are banned. I would imagine, though, that the fly-fishermen who use the Chattooga headwaters are amongst the more conscientious of fishermen. I know that they and you would be correct to assume that similarly, the high-end kayakers and canoeists who have committed the time and effort to acquire the skills necessary to boat such technical whitewater are at least as conscientious.

I love being the lead boat in a group proceeding down an isolated watercourse. The sight of hikers or fishermen degrades that experience for me, yet I could never dream of restricting their access for the sake of enhancing my experience. I have read that "boaters have all of the rest of the river to paddle in", yet nowhere have I seen the corollary: "fishermen have all the rest of the river to fish in." The idea that the fishing lobby should argue in favor of preventing access by fellow citizens who engage in a different recreational activity is counter to all the principles of equality and fair play that our country is built upon.

When I see someone fishing, I keep as far to the opposite side of the stream as possible, if it is a wide watercourse, even if the best channel is on "his" side of the river. In a narrow watercourse, if I come upon a fisherman working a pool, I wait in an upstream eddy for him to signal me to proceed. In other words, I endeavor to avoid disrupting his recreation, at cost of disrupting my own recreation while awaiting his signal. I once enquired of a Virginia state wildlife biologist, and was told that passing boaters in no way "spook" fish, but I know that trout are thought to be wily beasts, so I paddle as gently and quietly as possible whenever I am anywhere near a fisherman in a trout stream. Yet, one of the more worrisome dangers I must avoid on any river is a snagged fishing line; whenever I pass under a branch and encounter a dangling line, I must be ready for the sharp hook which I might inadvertently sweep into my boat.

You ask several questions:

Q1. Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites?

A1: The standards should be periodically reviewed, and whenever existing standards are found to be inadequate to protect the resource, new standards should be drawn up and applied equally to all users.

Q2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?

A2: In general, see A1. But please be aware that imposing standards limiting encounters between groups will carry with it a basis for antagonism, for blame by one group of another. Far better to encourage a sense of a shared resource enjoyed by many users engaging in disparate activities.

Q3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?

A3: No, I think it should be sufficient to restore to boaters the access privilege they formerly

enjoyed, and which, had any sense of fair play been exhibited by the Forest Service in the past, they would still enjoy.

Q4. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?

A4: Absent the fallacy implicit in the use of the phrase "new boating opportunities", and the answer must be the same as my A1 and A2.

Finally, you ask which of six management plans I support.

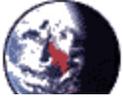
I support Option 6, but it is seriously flawed. It fails the "fairness and decency" test, by applying a different limitation to paddlers than to all other users. It fails to consider such circumstances as this: for many years I lead (and continue to lead, for my former club) a week-long "Smokey Mountains Trip" for my Maryland paddling club. The number of participants varies from year to year, from a dozen to a score or more, but the upshot is that this group will come from out of state to enjoy the Southern Appalachian streams every May (and incidentally, infuse no small amount of cash into the economies around the rivers we visit). When necessary, we have divided into two separate parties to boat Section III or Section IV within the 12-person restriction. But, imagine if a group of seven from Ohio or Colorado, or maybe Toronto, were to arrive at the Chatooga headwaters and discover that they must exclude one participant, or perhaps split up into what might be a stronger and a weaker group (were the limitation raised to 12, a group of 13 could split up into two reasonably strong groups). "6 boaters" is an arbitrary small number, and will inevitably discriminate against perfectly responsible paddling groups. Let all groups, including boaters, be limited to 12 participants, or let there be no limits, but do not single out one user group for discriminatory limitations.

I notice, too, that option 6 suggests "[l]imit user-created fire rings". "*Limit* "? A single fire ring represents more environmental impact that could be cumulatively caused by scores, if not hundreds, of conscientious boaters day-tripping on the river. The very idea that the same option would seek to reduce paddling-party size to 6, yet permit, however limited, user-created fire rings, borders upon bizarre.

Thank you for taking the time to read my thoughts. I look forward to the day you apply fair access policies to all users, so that I may have the opportunity to see this lovely stretch of river by boat before I am too old.

Sincerely,

Richard Hopley



"Stephanie Fitchett"  
<sfitchet@fau.edu>

09/13/2007 02:04 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan Comment

Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan Comment

Mr. John Cleeves  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am disappointed with the alternatives the USFS has proposed for managing the Chattooga River. The current scoping document lists six alternatives, none of which aptly protects the wilderness corridor while providing equal access to all minimal impact users. The document requests input on a number of questions, and I would like to comment on those questions as well as the proposed management alternatives.

First, in response to "Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites?" the answer is yes, there should absolutely be standards limiting the creation of new trails and campsites in order to protect the area. Since I am not familiar with the current standards (where, please, can I find them?), I cannot comment on whether or not new standards are needed, but definitely, as the scoping document states, there is clear demand from everyone involved to "protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Chattooga River (geology, biology, scenery, recreation and history); maintain a sense of solitude away from modern life; offer a remote wilderness experience; preserve the spectacular scenery and setting; and protect the natural resources of the upper section of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River that make this area a special and unique place." That protection will necessarily involve management of trailheads, trails and campsites to minimize impact.

"Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?" Again, yes, absolutely limit sizes and encounters to protect the area and the enjoyment of users. But again, those limits must be set after data on use and capacity have been gathered, and must apply to all minimal impact user groups. The limits cannot and should not be arbitrarily set and imposed, nor should limits be imposed on just one user group (as is the current situation, in which non-motorized boaters are allowed no access) while other user groups (fisherpersons and hikers) have no restrictions whatsoever.

"Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?" The upper Chattooga should be opened to legal boating for single capacity, non-motorized craft. How and why it has been closed to boaters, but open to other minimal impact users for so long, is a mystery to me, but this inequitable treatment of users should be corrected.

"Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?" This question only reiterates the continuing unfair treatment of boaters compared to other user groups. Standards should be applied to preserve the wilderness corridor for all users, and the standards should be applied to all user groups, based on data about use and capacity.

The proposed alternatives divide clearly into two groups: Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 all prohibit boating, propose to "enhance woody debris recruitment," and are presumably favored by anglers and opposed by boaters. On the other hand, Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 allow some amount of boating, propose "limited debris removal," and are presumably favored by boaters and opposed by anglers. I strongly oppose Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 for their failure to allow boating access to the river, but I do not understand why no alternatives make any attempt to meet the needs and desires of both anglers and boaters. We coexist peacefully and respectfully on most rivers in the country, and there is no reason for the USFS to promote only divisive management plans. For instance, why is it the case that woody debris management must either "enhance recruitment" or include "limited removal?" Why do none of the alternatives allow the minimal amount of management: neither recruiting nor removing woody debris? While I know some boaters will desire limited debris removal for safety reasons, many other wild rivers have no debris removal and most boaters are completely content with that management practice. If there's a log jam, we portage around it.

Among the alternatives that allow boating, alternatives 4 and 5 include limits on group numbers and group sizes for boating. I am in favor of limiting the number of all users including boaters, but I do not believe it is fair to limit the number of boating groups while not limiting the number of groups of other users. Nor do I believe it is fair to limit the group size for boaters to just half the size allowed for other groups. Moreover, I have seen no research by the USFS that would indicate any basis for the proposed limits of party size or number of parties per day. Research is needed to establish the reasonable limits not only for boaters, but for all users. Until that research is undertaken, access for boaters should be no more limited than for any other user group. Single capacity boating as proposed in Alternatives 4, 5 & 6 has negligible environmental impact. Existing infrastructure is more than adequate to serve this use if it is made legal.

The management plan I would like to see for the Chattooga headwaters would legalize boating above Highway 28 with no more restrictions than are imposed on other user groups. It would permit and reasonably limit the sizes of all user groups, to limit encounters and collect hard data for tweaking the management plan in the future. It would allow no woody debris removal, or perhaps removal only in rapids where it might endanger the life of a boater. It would stop the stocking of non-native aquatic species. It would close all but Forest Service sanctioned trails, and would restrict camping areas. In short, it would let the Upper Chattooga become a more remote wilderness experience without denying any environmentally friendly user group the opportunity to enjoy the area.

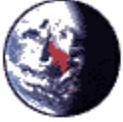
I believe that the Chattooga should be managed in a way that allows it to return as much as possible to its natural state, and with equitable treatment of all user groups within the framework of allowing the corridor to return to its natural state. None of the alternatives matches these desires especially well. The closest one is Alternative #6, but I believe it should be modified to have group numbers and size limits for all users, with little or no woody debris management. There should be an alternative which both anglers and boaters can support.

I look forward to the next step. I can only hope that the USFS sees the wisdom in fair access.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Fitchett

\*\*\*\*\*  
Stephanie Fitchett  
Associate Professor of Mathematics  
Harriet L. Wilkes Honors College  
Florida Atlantic University  
5353 Parkside Drive  
Jupiter, FL 33458



Tom Welander  
<tomwelander@abraxis.  
com>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Comment on Chattooga alternatives

09/13/2007 02:04 PM

Mr. Cleaves, Mr. Thomas, and staff,

Thank you for the work that you have done to craft the six Management Alternatives for the Chattooga W&S corridor above Hwy 28.

I participated in the July 14th Walhalla workshop. The following amendments are recommended to bring your alternatives closer into alignment with provisions that were sensible and popular across the spectrum of workshop participants.

1. Permits/registration for all users should be included in all alternatives except for the status quo.
  - A permit system and count of users are necessary to accomplish Objective of #3 "manage biophysical impacts on natural resources by limiting trails, campsites, group size, parking and types of use."
  
2. Eliminate parking at Burrells Ford and move it outside the W&S corridor.
  - In the July 14th workshop, my entire table comprised of boaters and anti-boaters supported this.
  - This would substantially reduce litter, wear & tear and encounters with nonconforming users. - Parking rules are far easier to enforce than anti-boating rules.
  
3. Certain limits imposed on boating are reasonable and sensible. They might take the form of group sizes and/or minimum flow levels. However, limits absolutely must be based on data measuring user encounters and biophysical impacts over time.
  - More research is needed to establish the correct limits. Likewise, data are needed to establish limits on other types of users.
  - Start with a minimum flow of, say 400 cfs, at the Hwy 28 bridge or at Burrell's Ford and ratchet that threshold up or down once annually to achieve a specified mix of boating and angler solitude.
  - Sections III and IV have triggers that enact limits when boating traffic levels exceed stated thresholds. This could work in the headwaters. To properly establish thresholds, you must collect data on all users/uses in order to count those encounters.
  
4. To my knowledge, no user groups at the July 14th workshop advocated woody debris removal. - Boaters loudly and clearly advocate allowing the river to assume its most natural state.
  - Woody debris should neither be recruited nor removed.
  - To discourage sabotage, the rules should mandate the removal of deliberately recruited wood.

Thanks for your consideration.

Yours in citizenship,  
Tom Welander  
591 Grant Street SE  
Atlanta GA 30312

+=====  
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+=====



"Daniel Cash"  
<danjocash@gmail.com  
>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Usage

09/13/2007 02:07 PM

Dear John Cleaves,

I am writing to you as a Georgia native who grew up enjoying the great wilderness in and around the Chattooga River since I was very young. Having lived in other states, I now can see that the USFS in Georgia did an amazing job in preserving the natural forest while still maintaining the public's ability to use those areas. The outdoor community is truly grateful for the job that you and other state and federal departments have done to ensure that these natural resources are preserved for future generations.

However, in the case of the Upper Chattooga, I believe that the opinions of a few are infringing on the rights of others to use this public land in a responsible manner. The current boating ban on the Upper Chattooga is unfounded and unnecessary. I have been whitewater kayaking for 14 years, 10 of which were spent primarily on Georgian Rivers, and I have yet to see an area where kayakers had done substantial damage to the environment, scenery, or made other users unable to enjoy the river. As a whitewater community, kayakers and canoeists take pride in the wilderness rivers that we paddle. In several occasions it is members of the whitewater community that spear-head conservation efforts. American Whitewater Association has endeavoured to increase awareness of boater impact so that whitewater enthusiasts leave as little a foot print as possible.

Let me respond to some of the questions that the USFS has posted:

1. *Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, and/or campsites?* Yes, the current management has lead to unacceptable impacts (this is during the 31 year boating ban). The USFS could monitor use by ALL users through a self-registration permitting system.
2. *Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?* Every river area has a definite capacity. If the USFS can demonstrate that the upper Chattooga's capacity is met, then ALL users' access (not just boaters) should be limited. To penalize one specific group of users is unjust and against the spirit of wilderness use.
3. *Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?* I would like to point out that boating is not a new opportunity – it is an old one with a rich history prior to the USFS ban. The boating ban is unjust and unfounded and should have never been instituted in the first place. The question should really read "Should the Forest Service RESTORE boating access on the upper Chattooga?" Absolutely! Boating should be allowed on the Upper Chattooga River to the same extent that hiking, angling, swimming and other wilderness compliant.
4. *Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?* Restoration of boating access has nothing to do with this underlying question, so the whitewater community's stance would be the same. This question is no different than #2 above, and the answer is no different either. Every river corridor has a certain capacity. If/when the USFS can demonstrate that the upper Chattooga's capacity is met, all users' access (not just boaters) should be limited consistent with sustainability of the resource.

The whitewater community takes great pride in our rivers and each of us feels the same responsibility to cherish and respect these natural resources and to preserve them for other users

and future generations. Kayakers and canoeists do not try to bar the access of other users by any means, whether politically, or physically at rivers. We believe that rivers should be enjoyed responsibly by all, not just kayakers and not just anglers. The whitewater community is full of people who would be willing to take an active role in the conservation of the Upper Chattooga River Corridor. We trust that you will see that we have been and are being unfairly barred from this river for reasons that are unfounded and untrue. This is not the legacy that the USFS wants to leave behind. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,  
Dan Cash  
Georgia Native, Whitewater Enthusiast



"Wade H. Davis"  
<wadehdavis@bellsouth  
.net>

09/13/2007 02:13 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga River

Mr. John Cleeves  
Project Coordinator  
Sumter National Forest  
4391 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am against expanding boating opportunities on the Upper Chattooga and feel the Forest Service should keep in effect the existing ban to help maintain the nature of the river. As it stands, boaters and commercial rafting companies have adequate access to the lower section of the Chattooga as well as any number of other creeks and streams. My family and I would prefer that Slide Rock and the Old Iron Bridge remain family oriented as a swimming hole and a picnic location. In this time of expanding population and demands on our natural recourses, it seems more prudent to increase the number of protected rivers and land under the Forest Service, not decrease them. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Wade H. Davis  
Cashiers, NC



"Lee Bruce"  
<leedbruce@gmail.com>  
>

09/13/2007 02:17 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc: "atibalak@aol.com" <atibalak@aol.com>, "Craig Hyams"  
<rhyams80@gmail.com>, "drewr@refshauge.com"  
<drewr@refshauge.com>, "Michael W. Holmes, Jr."  
<mwholmesjr@hotmail.com>  
Subject: Chattooga Issue

Mr. Cleeves,

I realize you are probably receiving plenty of mail today, so I will try to keep this brief. I appreciate your attention to this matter.

1. Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites?

The current restrictions on camping along the Chattooga corridor are fair and necessary for the protection of the river corridor, that is the 50 foot rule. I am not aware of other restrictions beyond that and do not think that current usage dictates a deviation, change or new regulation.

2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?

Should it be determined that the Chattooga area has reached it's capacity for usage, these questions can be addressed. From my experience, no new standards are needed at this time and I am unaware of USFS reports or studies that prove otherwise.

3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?

I'm not sure I agree with the phrasing of this question. Whitewater boating has been around for 50+ years and white water enthusiasts have been enjoying the Chattooga for at least 40 years. If the question is in reference to the unfair restrictions on the upper portions of the Chattooga river then yes, I absolutely believe that these arbitrary restrictions on usage be lifted immediately, as there is no precedent or valid reason for them.

4. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?

Similar to question 2, once the USFS can prove that the Chattooga river corridor is at or beyond capacity then questions of size or access regulation can be visited.

The simple and most important fact of the matter is that the Chattooga river is self regulating due to changing (natural) water levels. There is no need for additional and artificial regulation.

Mr. Cleeves, I very much appreciate your attention to this matter. I hope that through a civilized and honest discussion and realistic and unbiased perspective the removal of the unfair and unnecessary restrictions will happen as soon as possible. Thank you very much.

Lee Bruce  
501 Twin Falls Drive  
Simpsonville, SC 29680  
864-275-4245





"dave"  
<dave@careygroupky.com>

09/13/2007 02:18 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Scoping Document

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
[comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

RE: Chattooga Scoping Document

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The key concept that must be the basis of any new regulations is that we are only rightfully restoring legal boating to the Headwaters. Boaters were there before the ban, during the ban, and will be there in the future. All that is needed is to treat all users equally and the history of "conflict" will fade to distant memory. Many of the key opponents to paddling were active fishermen during the years I regularly paddled the Headwaters. I never met them (on the river) until we started attending the meetings to discuss our "conflict" and during the boater trials where we were bussed to the same point at the same time.

The Chattooga Headwaters have a capacity for use. The capacity will vary by location and historical use patterns. Highway 28 Bridge, Burrell's Ford, Bull Pen Bridge, and Grimshaws Bridge have always been high use "Frontcountry" areas and visitors expect to have many encounters. The addition of a delayed harvest reach created by stocking "Put and Catch" exotic trout has pushed the high use area upstream from Highway 28 an additional 2.3 miles. The remainder of the river is remote and has a more "Backcountry" feel and creates an expectation of fewer encounters with others.

The mission of the Forest Service as directed by the Chief was to assess the capacity of the Headwaters.

"No capacity analysis is provided to support restrictions or a ban on recreation use or any type of recreation user. While there are multiple references in the record to resource impacts and decreasing solitude, these concerns apply to all users and do not provide the basis for excluding boaters without any limits on other users." (Manning, 4/05)

And if capacity was found to be an issue then to:

"If it becomes necessary to limit use, "ensure that all potential users have a fair and equitable chance to obtain access to the river." (Manning, 4/05)

However, in reading the Integrated Report and all its support documents no measure of capacity is ever estimated. The Integrated Report is a case of "Mission NOT Accomplished" and provides no foundation on which to build the scoping alternatives.

The alternatives proposed are a random mix of ideas and restrictions. As they currently are written none of the alternatives are acceptable. Alternative 6 presents the best starting point but it is seriously flawed due to a lack of key resource protection ideas discussed in other alternatives. No encounter standard is included in this alternative, a campsite density is assumed without analysis, and most importantly no requirement is suggested to monitor capacity. The entire focus of this project has been to determine a capacity (e.g., encounter standard) or other biophysical measure but only one alternative (Alternative Two) proposed any capacity analysis and this alternative is seriously flawed due to a lack of treating users equally.

I participated in the User Trials and only encountered other users in the “Frontcountry” areas (except Big Bend Falls where FS personnel hiked in to monitor). This lack of encounters was in spite of the Forest Service encouraging the fishing expert panel to hike to the Rock Gorge, Chattooga Cliffs, and Upper Ellicott Rock areas. While I understand, based on fishermen comments I heard in the pre-trial meeting, it was too dangerous, or there were no trails, for the fishermen to go to these reaches at high water, the lack of any encounter should have been an indicator no capacity was exceeded. If encounters do not occur during a “forced” event the actual encounters expected are likely to also be low.

The capacity can't be zero unless the Forest Service proposes to ban all access to the Headwaters to be consistent with the Chiefs decision. Assuming a capacity of some number, some number of people must be determined to be appropriate in each section of the corridor. Boaters and other user groups naturally complement and avoid each other. Boaters generally paddle in the winter when sufficient water is present, or after tropical storms. This use is typically limited to short one to two day periods of rapidly rising or falling water. The natural separation of users provided by the nature of the river protects both the biophysical environment: boaters float on the water when the ground is muddy and fishermen hike during drier weather; protecting the resource and restricting encounters.

The hydrology report states that the river exceeds 828 cfs 25 percent of the time (i.e., 91 days per year). This level is similar to the lower level for “optimal” boating. What is more fair than a natural division of use with boaters having opportunity 25 percent of the time and other users knowing they will not have encounters with boaters 75 percent of the time? Any system that does not allow these natural indirect controls to regulate use will violate the Chiefs directive from the Forest Service Manual.

“Agency policy for wilderness echoes law and policy relative to maximizing visitor freedom, directing that “direct controls and restrictions” be minimized, and that controls are to be applied only as necessary to protect the wilderness resource after indirect measures have failed (FSM 2323.12)”

No evidence exists to show why boaters should be singled out for special treatment. They are a returning user group, their impact is equal if not less than other users, and their time of use generally does not match other user's preferences. The biophysical report highlights that biophysical impacts were only noted on Section IV at hiking and fishing access locations. NO biophysical impacts were noted in the inaccessible reaches only accessible by boat. A similar result can be expected in the Headwaters.

I propose the following alternatives be analyzed:

- Self registration required by all users
- Capacity standards are established for each unique reach of river. The

standard should be based on user preferences and biophysical limits. A common wilderness standard in the sparsely populated west is seven encounters per day.

- ALL users are treated equally.
- If capacity is exceeded (allowing for isolated events), the user group primarily causing the exceedances is subjected to use permitting during times of likely capacity shortfall
- Parking areas (except handicapped) when feasible, are moved back from the river to reduce the impact of car camping.
- Self registration imposes conditions for camping and formalizes camp spacing limits and duration of stay.
- Self registration imposes conditions on boaters as has already been established on Section IV of the lower river.
- Group size is limited to 12 people for all groups.
- Woody debris is neither "enhanced" nor removed.
- Designated and user created trails are brought to a consistent standard then designated. Trails that cannot be restored are closed or rerouted.
- Boating is allowed by the Forest Service inside the Wild and Scenic corridor.
  
- Helicopter stocking is limited to Frontcountry areas.

Remember, the task is to  
PROTECT THE CHATTOOGA, NOT THE STATUS QUO

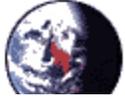
David Margavage  
Project Manager

Office 859-885-9444 Ext 25  
Cell 859-227-5886  
Fax 859-885-2704

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<franfitzpatrick@verizon  
.net>

09/13/2007 02:21 PM

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

Please choose option 6. Boaters should have equal access to the upper Chattooga River as other groups with similar impact on the resource. Boats are the ultimate in leave-no-trace and boaters make only minimal impact at put in and take out locations.

I would like to thank you in advance for choosing option 6 and allowing boating in the headwaters.

Fran Fitzpatrick  
Reston, VA



Clayton Gaar  
<hydrophilic@mac.com>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: chattooga access coments

09/13/2007 02:21 PM

Hello,

Attached is a letter containing my comments on the Chattooga scoping issue.  
Thank you for taking the time to read and consider them.

Sincerly,

Clayton Gaar  
2920 White Oak Terrace  
Marietta, GA 30060



chattooga letter.doc



"Dinver"  
<dinver@pyranhaus.com>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: chattooga headwaters

09/13/2007 02:18 PM  
Please respond to dinver

Please open the Chattooga headwaters to paddlers..... I have been a fisherman and kayaker for most of my life. I was originally a fisherman and began kayaking when I was 19 years old.....I am now 35 years old and fish a lot of streams from my whitewater kayak. However, I can say in all of my years of kayaking I have seen very few "less than 20" fisherman on any "CREEK" style stream when it was high enough to be kayaked.I appreciate your consideration on this matter.

Sincerely,  
Dinver McClure



**Clay Guerry**  
<kotarules@hotmail.com>

09/13/2007 02:38 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga comment

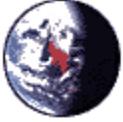
Please find the attached comments

---

Kick back and relax with hot games and cool activities at the Messenger Café. [Play now!](#)



Upper Chattooga Management Comments.doc



"Gordon Carrolton"  
<gcarrolton@gmail.com  
>

To: Comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Boats on the Chattooga

09/13/2007 02:45 PM

Dear Mr Cleeves,

I am disappointed to see that of all alternatives being considered for access to the Chattooga none include motorized watercraft. The USFS should not arbitrarily exclude legal-types of whitewater boating from public waterways outside of the legal public review process. Please also consider the use of motorized craft on the Chattooga below the Wilderness area.

Gordon Carrolton  
Atlanta, GA



"Bill"  
<wdoran@rochester.rr.com>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject:

09/13/2007 02:56 PM

Dear John Cleaves,

I would like to express my concern over the USFS's continued prohibition on boating on the Chattooga River. As a whitewater kayaker, hiker, climber and, I value our nation's wild and scenic resources. Of all the groups of outdoor enthusiasts that I've come into contact with, kayakers are by far the best stewards of the environment. We value the rivers that we paddle on, and the places they take us. We would never deface these treasures.

This is why I am astounded by the policy of singling boating out as the one human powered activity to disallow. Boating has a long history in the U.S. and the Chattooga River was renowned among kayakers and canoeists before the ban. However, I realize that each river corridor has a certain capacity and that the USFS has an interest in preventing overuse. This is why I would encourage the USFS to limit the use of all user groups if that is necessary to sustaining the resource.

Whitewater boating has a long and storied history in our country and the Chattooga River has a long history as a treasure whitewater destination. It is not known why boating was disallowed on this River. And there are no reasonable reasons that boating should continue to be prohibited. Please protect our right to kayak or canoe the Chattooga River just as you protect other activities that are consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Thank you,  
Danny Doran



"Kevin Colburn"  
<kcolburn@amwhitewater.org>

09/13/2007 02:59 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc: "Charlene Coleman" <cheetahtk@hotmail.com>, "Galbreath, Nathan" <NGalbreath@pattonboggs.com>, "Don Kinser" <dkinser@ediltd.com>, "Mark Singleton" <mark@amwhitewater.org>, "Chris N Brown" <cnbrown@fs.fed.us>, <Gary\_Marsh@blm.gov>, <daniel\_haas@fws.gov>, "Doug Whittaker" <dougwhit@alaska.net>  
Subject: American Whitewater's Chattooga Scoping Comments

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Attached are American Whitewater's official comments on the scoping document regarding the Chattooga River. Should you have any problem reading the document, please contact me. You may also download a copy of the document at the link below.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Please protect the river, not the status quo.

[http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Document\\_view\\_documentid\\_217](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Document_view_documentid_217)

Kevin Colburn  
National Stewardship Director  
American Whitewater  
1035 Van Buren St  
Missoula, MT 59802  
(O) 406-543-1802  
(C) 828-712-4825  
kevin@amwhitewater.org



2007.09.13 Final AW Chattooga Scoping Comments.pdf



September 13, 2007

**VIA ELECTRONIC AND FIRST CLASS MAIL**

Mr. John Cleeves  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Email: [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

Re: August 24, 2007 "NEPA Scoping Package"  
File Code 1920-2  
Upper Chattooga River Management

Dear Mr. Cleeves:

On August 14, 2007, the United States Forest Service ("USFS") published a scoping letter containing a package of proposed management alternatives ("USFS Alternatives") relating to the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River above Highway 28 ("Headwaters"). American Whitewater's comments to the USFS Alternatives and scoping letter are enclosed herewith.

Thank you for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Colburn", written in a cursive style.

Kevin Colburn  
National Stewardship Director  
American Whitewater  
1035 Van Buren St.  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-543-1802  
Kevin@amwhitewater.org

cc: Mark Singleton, AW  
Don Kinser, AW  
Charlene Coleman, AW  
Brian Jacobson, AW  
Nathan Galbreath, Patton Boggs  
Chuck Myers, USFS

**COMMENTS OF AMERICAN WHITEWATER  
TO  
UPPER CHATTOOGA NEPA SCOPING PACKAGE,  
AND PROPOSAL OF REVISED MANAGEMENT ALTERNATIVES**

Prepared by:

Kevin Colburn  
American Whitewater  
National Stewardship Director  
1035 Van Buren St.  
Missoula, MT 59802  
406-543-1802  
Kevin@amwhitewater.org

September 13, 2007

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**Exhibits**

- Exhibit 1: Special Boating Permit System Available If Capacity Ever Exceeded
- Exhibit 2: Additional Resources to Consider in Formulation of Final USFS  
Proposed Alternatives
- Exhibit 3: Managing Wood in Rivers, a synopsis of a talk given in May, 2007 at the  
River Management Society Interagency Conference.

## I. Brief Background

### A. Pre-Administrative Appeal

Critical to formulation and evaluation of these alternatives is the fact that the portion of the Chattooga River north of Highway 28 (the “Headwaters”) is part of the federally protected Wild and Scenic River System. The Headwaters was protected in 1974 expressly because it provides unique and outstandingly remarkable opportunities for whitewater recreation. In fact, the Congressional Wild and Scenic River study even found that the best way to see and experience the Headwaters is “from a boat,” and labeled Grimshawes Bridge as “the beginning of rafting water.” See figure 1.

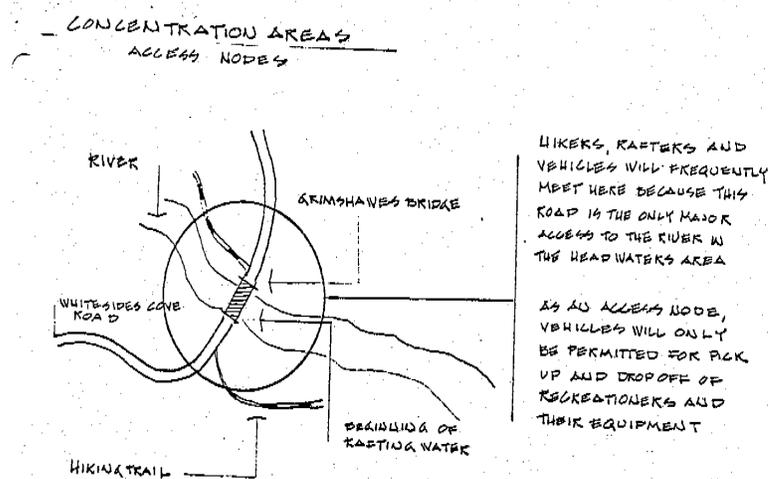


Figure 1 – USFS WSR Report: Grimshawes Bridge, “Beginning of Rafting Water”

Because whitewater boating was among the “Outstandingly Remarkable Values” that caused the Headwaters to be included in the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, federal law requires this administrative agency to “protect and enhance” hand-powered floating on the Headwaters.

Nevertheless, in 1976 and 1985 the United States Forest Service (“USFS”) inexplicably banned all whitewater boating on the Chattooga Headwaters.<sup>1</sup> Before the USFS banned paddling on the Headwaters in 1976, hand-powered floating had occurred without limitation on the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River for more than 200 years. The reason for the 1976 and 1985 bans remains a mystery. The USFS itself recently attempted to uncover the basis for the 1976 and 1985 bans. However that attempt was unsuccessful because the historical records “failed to provide data or analysis.”<sup>2</sup>

On January 30, 2004, Bob Jacobs, in his capacity as Regional Forester for the USFS’s Region Eight (Southern Region), published a *Record of Decision, Final Environmental Impact*

<sup>1</sup> Ironically, just six years earlier, adjacent landowners and the USFS had launched in canoes to study the suitability of the Chattooga River for protection under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

<sup>2</sup> From “Capacity and Conflict on the Upper Chattooga River” 2007, page 16.

*Statement and Revised Land and Resource Management Plan for the Sumter National Forest* (the “ROD”). Over the written objections of American Whitewater and more than 1000 private whitewater boaters, the ROD re-instituted a total ban on all canoeing, kayaking and rafting on the Headwaters—including the portion of the Headwaters flowing through the Ellicott Rock Wilderness, a spectacular natural wilderness that is also protected under the Wilderness Act for wilderness compliant uses like hand-powered floating.

## **B. Administrative Appeal**

On April 15, 2004, American Whitewater administratively appealed a discrete portion of the ROD, known as “Issue 13,” which prohibited boating on the Headwaters.

On April 28, 2005, Gloria Manning, as Reviewing Officer for the Chief of the USFS, issued an administrative appeal decision favorable to American Whitewater. Reasoning that the ROD had demonstrated *no basis* for the floating ban, the administrative appeal decision “reversed” the discrete portion of the ROD that banned floating on the Headwaters, and ordered the USFS to conduct a “user capacity analysis” on the Headwaters. The decision further ordered the Regional Forester to include whitewater boating in the study, and to issue a new ROD within two years.

## **C. Post-Administrative Appeal**

In an effort to comply with the order to conduct a “user capacity analysis,” the USFS hired several outside consultants to conduct various analyses of the Headwaters corridor. Confusingly, the bulk of these “user capacity analysis” efforts have focused on issues other than whitewater boating, despite the limited focus of American Whitewater’s appeal. For example, the USFS has expanded the scope of its analysis to include a variety of issues related to the Headwaters corridor generally, such as the location and condition of official and user-created trails and campsites, trash, parking, angling studies, woody debris and other general management issues.

In addition, a portion of the “user capacity analysis” focused on a perceived “conflict” between boaters and anglers despite the fact that the relevant USFS studies found no empirical evidence of any such conflict. Instead of simply restoring floating access for two or more years to determine whether any conflicts or capacity issues actually exist (as American Whitewater had recommended), the USFS has instead spent untold amounts of time and money hypothesizing about conflicts and capacity issues that “might” occur.

Amazingly, out of more than 800 days of purportedly studying the Chattooga Headwaters in response to American Whitewater’s appeal of the boating ban, the USFS has only permitted (or studied) whitewater boating on the Headwaters on two days. On January 5-6, 2007, the USFS conducted a boating trial to determine whether whitewater boating remains an outstandingly remarkable form of recreation on the Chattooga Headwaters.<sup>3</sup> The results of that trial, as embodied in the relevant USFS study report, overwhelmingly confirm that whitewater

---

<sup>3</sup> In connection with these comments, please consider the comments submitted by American Whitewater in connection with the USFS boating report, as well as the other American Whitewater comments referenced on Exhibit 2 hereto, which comments are incorporated herein for all purposes.

boating remains a viable, important and outstanding form of recreation on the Headwaters, and must therefore be protected and enhanced under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act<sup>4</sup>:

- The Chattooga Cliffs Reach received an overall rating from paddlers of 6.4 on a scale of 1-7.
  - “The boaters found that the advantages of the Chattooga Cliffs reach include: incredible aesthetics, narrow canyon, waterfalls, challenging rapids, expedition-style boating more than a typical whitewater trip, and to be physically challenging.”
  - “The panel members stated there were no similar rivers with these characteristics in the region.”
  - “The boaters found Chattooga Cliffs to be a unique slot canyon.”
- The Ellicott Rock Reach received an overall rating from paddlers of 6.7 on a scale of 1-7.
  - “The boaters stated that the advantages of the Ellicott Rock run included: lots of read-and-run Class 4 ledges and boulder gardens, continuous rapids, no portages required, few scouts, great scenery, available at a broad range of flows, and an easy shuttle ... The boaters stated that overall the run is unique for its wilderness and other attributes...”
- The Rock Gorge Reach received an overall rating from paddlers of 6.5 on a scale of 1-7.
  - “The boater panel characterized advantages of the Rock Gorge/Nicholson run at these flows to include: exploratory wilderness feel, safe, easy rescues, easy portages, and that the hydraulics were not very powerful.”
  - “The boater panel members stated that important attributes of the run include: wilderness setting, aesthetics, little evidence of visitor use, beautiful canyon walls/cliffs, length (long), remote feel, and easy access.”
  - “The boaters considered the reach to be a very unique run...”

Restoration of boating access was also supported by the following conclusions reached by the boating study:

- The entire Upper Chattooga River is safely navigable and boatable
- The paddling experience provided by the Headwaters is truly outstanding and remarkable

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<sup>4</sup> Bulleted points from the: UPPER CHATTOOGA RIVER PHASE I DATA COLLECTION: EXPERT PANEL FIELD ASSESSMENT REPORT, February 2007, by Louis Berger Group.

- Existing river access is adequate to support public use, i.e. there is no need to create new parking, access points or trails to restore whitewater boating access
- Boating use is anticipated to be minimal, especially relative to other uses
- Boating use is anticipated to have no unique measurable impacts on the resource
- Boating use will potentially overlap with other recreational use on less than 20% of days, while actual backcountry encounters will occur on vastly fewer days still, i.e., restoration of unlimited whitewater boating access would not change the status quo *at all* 292 of 365 days out of the year
- On days with boatable flows, boaters are unlikely to see other users in the backcountry of the Headwaters, and other users are similarly unlikely to see boaters

In short, the boating study concluded that there is absolutely no justification for limiting, much less prohibiting, boating on any section of the Chattooga Headwaters.

#### **D. USFS Alternatives**

Having decided that sufficient data had been collected to make a new management decision on whitewater boating, on August 14, 2007, the USFS published a scoping letter containing a package of proposed management alternatives (“USFS Alternatives”) relating to the Headwaters. Notwithstanding that the boating trial unequivocally established that floating access remains a recreation value to be protected and enhanced on the Headwaters, five out of six proposed USFS Alternatives fail to protect or enhance whitewater boating. In fact, half of the alternatives (3 of 6) *completely ban* whitewater boating on all sections of the Headwaters, and two more completely ban boating on some sections of the Headwaters. To make matters worse, the proposed USFS Alternatives confusingly intermingle a host of other complex management issues with no semblance of order. For example, each of the six proposed USFS Alternatives attempts to tackle the issue of boating access along with the location and condition of official and user-created trails and campsites, trash, parking, woody debris, permitting for other recreation opportunities, and other management issues. American Whitewater addresses these and other deficiencies below in its critique of the proposed USFS Alternatives.

## **II. Critique of Proposed USFS Alternatives**

### **A. Problems Associated with all USFS Alternatives**

All of the proposed USFS Alternatives are deficient for the following reasons:

1. All alternatives must protect and enhance whitewater boating

Federal law requires the USFS to “protect and enhance” the values that caused the Chattooga Headwaters to be protected under the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. The USFS was deficient in complying with applicable law between 1976 and 2004 because, during that time period, it banned one of the very outstanding recreation opportunities it was required to protect

and enhance: whitewater boating. The USFS has now found that the reason it was deficient in complying with applicable law is unknown because the public record relating to management during that period is insufficient and the anecdotal evidence collected is conflicting and in many cases unreliable.

Citing a handful of “unknowns,” such as *possible* problems with safety and solitude, the USFS again purported to ban boating on the headwaters in 2004. However, in 2005, the USFS Chief reversed the 2004 boating ban, reasoning: “After careful review of the record ... I am reversing the Regional Forester’s decision to continue to exclude boating on the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28. I find the Regional Forester does not provide an adequate basis for continuing the ban on boating above Highway 28. Because the record provided to me does not contain the evidence to continue the boating ban, his decision is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts.”

More than two years and two million dollars later, the USFS has made two critical determinations related to boating: (1) the USFS’s January 2007 boating trial confirmed what Congress knew in the early 1970’s: whitewater boating remains a viable, important and outstanding recreation opportunity on the Chattooga Headwaters; and (2) there is no data indicating that any direct limits on whitewater boating are currently warranted (beyond general limits that might be placed on all users of the Headwaters corridor, such as group size and self-registration permitting).

Based upon the USFS’s own capacity analysis study, therefore, all alternatives relating to whitewater boating access must restore, protect and enhance whitewater boating on the Headwaters.

2. Alternatives should recognize high use frontcountry areas and low use backcountry areas as different

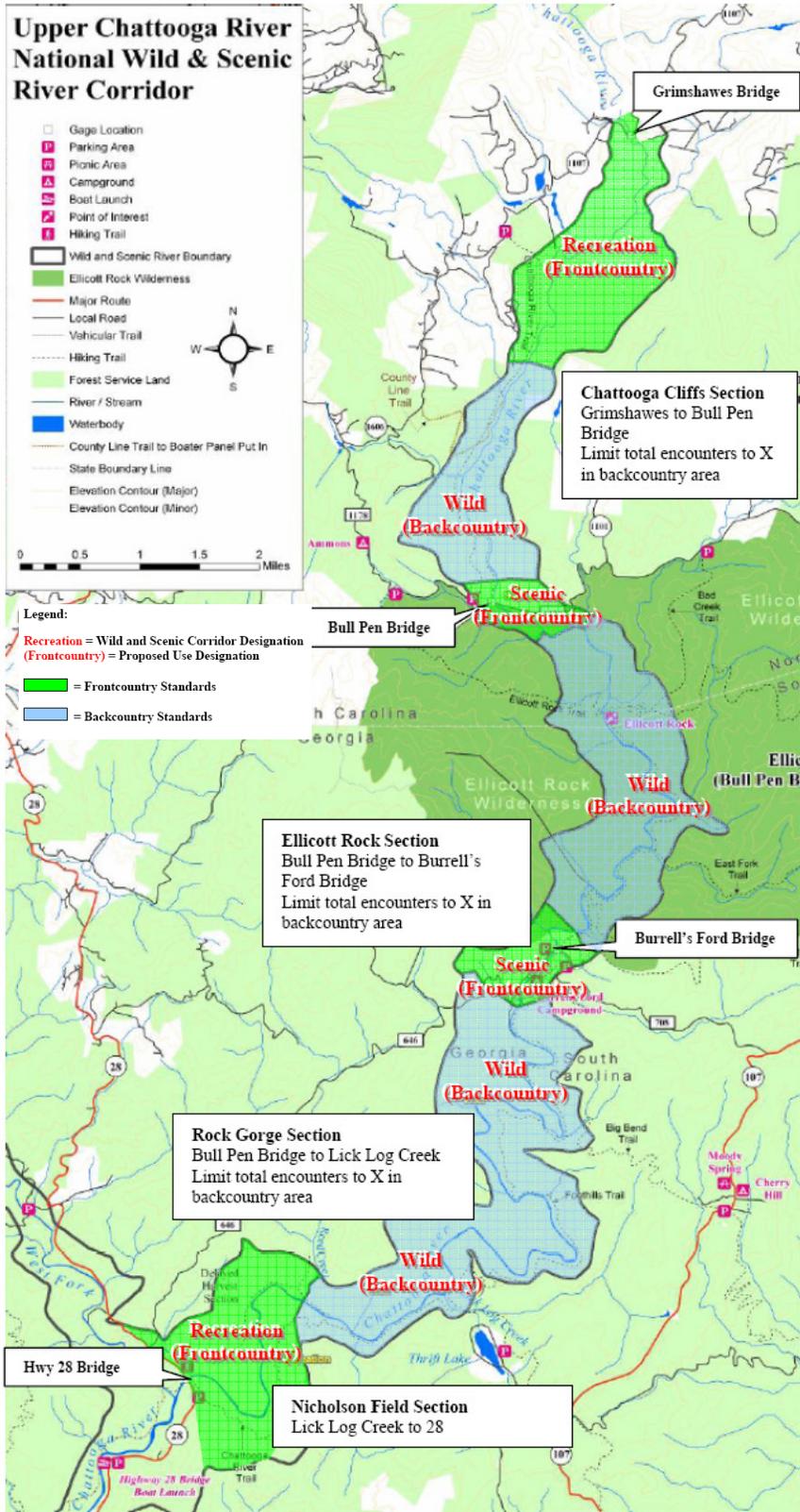
Several areas in the corridor have relatively high levels of use because of easy access, camping availability, and fisheries management designed to increase use. The USFS should recognize that the management goals, user expectations, standards, and capacities in these locations are different than backcountry areas. For example, visitors to a campground, bridge, or delayed harvest reach expect to see significantly more users than visitors to a backcountry area. We therefore propose that these higher use areas be delineated and managed differently than the rest of the corridor.

We propose higher use “frontcountry” areas at:

- Grimshawes Bridge, within the designated “Recreation” Wild and Scenic River Corridor;
- Bullpen Bridge, within the designated “Scenic” Wild and Scenic River Corridor;

- Burrell’s Ford Bridge, within the designated “Scenic” Wild and Scenic River Corridor; and
- Within the designated “recreation” Wild and Scenic River Corridor more commonly referred to as the “Delayed Harvest Reach,” ending at Highway 28.

These zones would be managed in a manner consistent with management elsewhere of access areas, campgrounds, and natural attractions. See [Figure 2](#) below for a geographic representation of American Whitewater’s proposed Frontcountry and Backcountry areas:



3. Alternatives must include a range of use limits for all users

Every USFS Alternative proposes inequitable limits on users without any basis. In fact, the USFS has not proposed a single alternative that treats whitewater boating as equal to all other wilderness compliant uses. In USFS Alternatives 1-5 paddling is limited more than all other uses. Even Alternative 6 limits group sizes for paddlers more than other users. There is no basis in the record for this distinction. Absent data demonstrating a need to directly limit a particular type of use, the USFS Chief has already directed the USFS to apply any use limits equitably among users: “If it becomes necessary to limit use, ‘ensure that all potential users have a fair and *equitable* chance to obtain access to the [Headwaters].” The USFS Chief also instructed the USFS as follows:

While there are multiple references in the record to resource impacts and decreasing solitude, these concerns apply to all users and do not provide the basis for excluding boaters without any limits on other users.

Therefore the manner in which the USFS Alternatives discriminatorily treat boating is inconsistent with the direction of the USFS Chief and is inconsistent with the federal law cited in the USFS Chief’s administrative appeal decision on this matter. Based upon the results of the Boating Study, boating is unquestionably an outstanding recreational use of the Headwaters that must be protected and enhanced.

4. Alternatives must be based on a capacity for all users and/or individual uses

How many anglers, hikers, boaters, campers, and swimmers are too many? Unless there are too many present, use should not be limited. Period. This core principal of recreational management is totally lost in the USFS Alternatives. Each alternative should clearly state capacities designed to provide different types of experiences, and propose actions for if and when those capacities are exceeded. The USFS Chief has also directed the USFS in this process to comply with the following USFS regulations: “limitation and distribution of visitor use should be based on “periodic estimates of capacity in the forest plan” (FSM 2323.14).”

5. Alternatives must include indirect limits prior to direct limits

USFS policy is clear that indirect measures of limiting use should be implemented prior to implementing direct measures. The USFS Chief has expressly instructed the USFS in this process as follows: “Agency policy for wilderness echoes law and policy relative to maximizing visitor freedom, directing that ‘direct controls and restrictions’ be minimized, and that controls are to be applied only as necessary to protect the wilderness resource after indirect measures have failed (FSM 2323.12).”

6. Alternatives, to the extent they address angling, must address stocking

The Integrated Report notes that over 70,000 exotic fish are stocked into the Chattooga River each year for recreational purposes, mostly in the Headwaters. This activity has been proven to have significant ecological impacts, as noted in our Comments on the Integrated

Report. The USFS cannot ignore this significant impact. There should be a range of alternatives regarding stocking, and the impacts of continued stocking should be assessed as part of every such alternative. The analysis must include the direct ecological impacts of stocking as well as the ecological and social impacts that result from increased recreational angling use caused by stocking.

7. Alternatives should consider impacts of management decisions on recreationists, equally with impacts those recreationists may have on one another

Imposing harsh limits on recreationists dramatically impacts those users. Paddlers' protected solitude and experience on the Upper Chattooga have been completely eliminated for more than thirty years. The proposed USFS Alternatives fail to adequately weigh the severity of total elimination of a protected use (on any portion of the Headwaters corridor) against the alleged impacts of that use on other users.

## **B. Problems Associated with Specific USFS Alternatives**

1. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #1 (No-action alternative)

While the USFS may feel compelled to always include a "no-action" alternative in its NEPA processes, the USFS Alternative #1 is nevertheless unacceptable here because:

- It violates applicable law. As set forth in the USFS Chief's decision: "the Regional Forester's decision to continue to exclude boating on the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28 .... is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts."
- The alternative will not support the USFS's stated desired conditions. By banning one of the primary intended recreational uses, the recreation ORV is not protected or enhanced. By eliminating all ORV's in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV's are not protected. By eliminating boating, boaters' personal sense of solitude away from modern life is eliminated. The solitude felt while floating down a river is special and unique for those who seek it out. This alternative has NO protections for solitude because it has no encounter standards, monitoring, or controls. There is NO evidence that the presence of paddlers will significantly impact the solitude of other users in any unique way, and an overwhelming body of evidence that paddlers will not significantly or uniquely impact the solitude of others. The USFS does not provide a wilderness experience for paddlers – whose true Wilderness experience can only be achieved in a boat, through one of the most low-impact and intimate ways of interacting with nature. The USFS does not provide a true Wilderness experience for any users because boating is a core part of Wilderness where it is possible. The alternative fails to limit or monitor use to assure that Wilderness

encounter standards are maintained. This alternative has had proven detrimental effects to the scenery and setting including trash, huge campsites, erosion, user created trails, tree damage, riparian trampling, and the artificial stocking. This alternative has proven inadequate at protecting the natural resources that make this place special. Nothing in this alternative protects any of the desired conditions in the uppermost 1.7 miles of the corridor.<sup>5</sup>

- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.
- Alternative 1 has prevented multiple generations from experiencing the Chattooga River from their canoes, kayaks and rafts. This management has had a devastating effect on Chattooga River paddlers – resulting in a 100% elimination of their experience for more than three decades. While existing users of the upper Chattooga River have had no limits imposed on their activities whatsoever – boating has been totally excluded. There is no basis for a capacity of zero paddlers on any or all sections of the upper Chattooga.
- Alternative 1 has resulted in a 12+ year conflict over the issue, and created one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history. Alternative 1 has failed every day for over 31 years.
- Alternative 1 fails to provide capacities for total use, capacities for all individual uses, or standards on which management actions will be based. Under Alternative 1, hiking, angling, and swimming could occur in vast numbers with no management triggers designed to protect the river or the recreational experience it provides. Without capacities and standards, Alternative 1 provides no guarantee of protection of the Chattooga’s ORV’s—and completely eliminates one of them (whitewater boating recreation).
- Alternative 1 fails to limit or treat wilderness compliant uses equitably as required by the USFS Chief’s appeal decision.

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<sup>5</sup> “Throughout this process, the public has expressed agreement on their desire to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Chattooga River (geology, biology, scenery, recreation and history); maintain a sense of solitude away from modern life; offer a remote wilderness experience; preserve the spectacular scenery and setting; and protect the natural resources of the upper section of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River that make this area a special and unique place. In the NEPA process, these goals collectively are called a “desired condition.” USFS Scoping Package, file code 1920-2

- Alternative 1 fails to “maximize visitor freedom in wilderness” as USFS policy demands. A ban on boating is the polar opposite of maximizing freedom.
- Alternative 1 fails to implement indirect use limitations prior to implementing the harshest possible direct limit on a single user group.
- Alternative 1 fails to protect any Outstanding Remarkable Values of the uppermost 1.7 miles of the Chattooga River. By banning boating, the alternative eliminates what may be the only option for protecting and enhancing recreation – *or any ORV* - in this reach because recreationists can only enjoy most of this reach by boat due to private property and geographic impediments. We remind the USFS that the Wild and Scenic studies and the congressional intent behind designation clearly intended that Grimshawes Bridge be the put-in for floating down the Chattooga River below that point. Figure 1, from the original USFS WSR studies reflects that fact. Alternative 1 thus fails to follow the congressional intent of designation and the USFS’s own description of the “recreation” ORV in this “recreation” designated river reach.<sup>6</sup> The USFS has the authority and many would argue the obligation to protect the scenic (i.e., riparian areas and other viewshed areas), water quality, and biophysical conditions in this reach.
- Alternative 1 is unnecessarily divisive in that it maintains gross inequities and entitlements.
- Alternative 1 fails to manage frontcountry and backcountry areas differently, with the exception of one small frontcountry location. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, encounter standards, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections.
- Alternative 1 is deficient for the reasons set forth in the section above entitled “*Problems associated with all proposed USFS Alternatives.*”

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<sup>6</sup> See also “In the management of the Chattooga River as a unit of the National Wild and Scenic River System, one objective will be to provide a recreation experience where a feeling of adventure, challenge, and physical achievement is dominant. In addition a maximum of outdoor skills, without comfort or convenience facilities will be provided. **To provide this experience, river access will be primarily by trail, including canoe launch sites. Only three points will have road access—Grimshawes Bridge, Highway 28 bridge, and Highway 76 Bridge**” emphasis added, from: USDA Forest Service—Southern Region. (1971). *Chattooga River as a Wild and Scenic River*.

## 2. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #2

Alternative 2 is the only alternative that includes an actual standard that presumably reflects some concept of capacity. However, the 3 encounters per day standard is highly limiting and would trigger an all-user permit system almost immediately, especially if it was applied strictly on every day of the year. In theory this is a worthwhile concept to analyze, however there are significant problems with this alternative that render it unacceptable. Specifically:

- It violates applicable law. As set forth in the USFS Chief's decision: "the Regional Forester's decision to continue to exclude boating on the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28 .... is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts."
- The alternative will not support the USFS's stated desired conditions. By banning one of the primary intended recreational uses, the recreation ORV is not protected or enhanced. By eliminating all ORV's in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV's are not protected. By eliminating boating, boaters' personal sense of solitude away from modern life is eliminated. The solitude felt while floating down a river is special and unique for those who seek it out. There is NO evidence that the presence of paddlers will significantly impact the solitude of other users in any unique way, and an overwhelming body of evidence that paddlers will not significantly or uniquely impact the solitude of others. The USFS does not provide a wilderness experience for paddlers – whose true Wilderness experience can only be achieved in a boat, through one of the most low-impact and intimate ways of interacting with nature. The USFS does not provide a true Wilderness experience for any users because boating is a core part of Wilderness where it is possible.
- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.
- Alternative 2 provides no boating opportunities on the Upper Chattooga. This management alternative would have a devastating effect on Chattooga River paddlers – resulting in a 100% elimination of their experience. There is no basis for a capacity of zero paddlers on any or all sections of the upper Chattooga.
- Alternative 2 would continue the 12+ year conflict over the ability of citizens to float the river, and one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history.
- Alternative 2 fails to limit or treat wilderness compliant uses equitably as is required by the binding and relevant Record of Decision.

- Alternative 2 fails to “maximize visitor freedom in wilderness” as USFS policy demands. A ban on boating is the polar opposite of maximizing freedom.
- Alternative 2 fails to implement indirect use limitations prior to implementing the harshest possible direct limit on paddlers and other direct limits on other users.
- Alternative 2 fails to protect *any* Outstanding Remarkable Values of the uppermost 1.7 miles of the Chattooga River. By banning boating, the alternative eliminates what may be the only option for protecting and enhancing recreation in this reach because recreationists can only enjoy most of this reach by boat due to private property and geographic impediments. We remind the USFS that the Wild and Scenic studies and the congressional intent behind designation (see figure 1) clearly intended that Grimshawes Bridge be the put-in for floating down the Chattooga River below that point.<sup>7</sup> Alternative 2 thus fails to follow the congressional intent of designation and the USFS’s own description of the “recreation” ORV in this “recreation” designated river reach. The USFS has the authority and many would argue the obligation to protect the scenic (i.e., riparian areas and other viewshed areas), water quality, and biophysical conditions in this reach.
- Alternative 2 is unnecessarily divisive in that it maintains gross inequities and entitlements.
- Alternative 2 fails to manage frontcountry and backcountry areas differently, with the exception of one small frontcountry location. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, encounter standards, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections.
- We are unsure of what “enhance woody debris recruitment” means specifically, however such a management objective could have significant negative ecological and recreational impacts. Active falling of trees into the river would damage vital riparian function, create stream bank erosion, threaten nearby trees to wind-throw and

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<sup>7</sup> See also “In the management of the Chattooga River as a unit of the National Wild and Scenic River System, one objective will be to provide a recreation experience where a feeling of adventure, challenge, and physical achievement is dominant. In addition a maximum of outdoor skills, without comfort or convenience facilities will be provided. **To provide this experience, river access will be primarily by trail, including canoe launch sites. Only three points will have road access—Grimshawes Bridge, Highway 28 bridge, and Highway 76 Bridge**” emphasis added, from: USDA Forest Service—Southern Region. (1971). *Chattooga River as a Wild and Scenic River*.

destabilization of roots, and leave unaesthetic stumps and cut logs in what should be a natural appearing stream. Use of chainsaws or other motorized equipment should not take place in the backcountry. Trees fallen intentionally into the river would also pose a serious risk of death to generations of anglers, swimmers, hikers, and boaters. We support the natural process of trees entering and exiting the river. We cannot support the unnatural addition of wood by human action to a fully functional, natural bedrock and boulder controlled channel with ample complexity and habitat.

- Alternative 2 is barely an alternative at all since the only other option is unlimited use by all non-paddler recreationists. If the USFS is going to analyze a standard of 3 encounters per day, they must also analyze a range of standards that should include at least standards of 6 and 10 encounters.
- We fully support the registration of all users in the W&S corridor. This information will be critical in future management decisions.
- We are not opposed to closing parking lots in the corridor although we see little need or value in doing so, except as a passive measure to limit use naturally.
- While Alternative 2 is aimed at limiting encounters, it also takes the same biophysical measures as Alternative 3 and others. Alternatives should be different.
- Alternative 2 is also deficient because the reasons set forth in the section above entitled “*Problems associated with all proposed USFS Alternatives.*”

### 3. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #3

This is a radically flawed alternative. Alternative 3’s stated objective is to manage biophysical impacts, yet bans floating in the entire river while allowing all other uses to go unlimited and unchecked. This runs counter to all reason and counter to the record.<sup>8</sup> How does banning the lowest impact and smallest use while allowing all other uses to exist unlimited and untracked lead to strong biophysical protection?

Camping is unlimited yet has demonstrated biophysical impacts noted throughout the IR including ground clearing, vegetation damage, fire risk, soil compaction, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance.

Hiking and angling are unlimited yet have demonstrated biophysical impacts including vegetation damage, riparian area clearing, soil compaction, user created trail creation,

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<sup>8</sup> The USFS Integrated Report (i.e. Capacity and Conflict on the Upper Chattooga River) states on page 57 that “It is relatively rare (because it is usually less effective) to address biophysical impacts through use limits.”

erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Furthermore, angling use is encouraged and enhanced through stocking of 70,000 exotic fish which likely have an enormous biophysical impact in and of themselves.

Yet, somehow, this alternative limits only floating use which has so little biophysical impact that it is anticipated to be scarcely measurable.

In addition, Alternative 3 is deficient because:

- It violates applicable law. As set forth in the USFS Chief's decision: "the Regional Forester's decision to continue to exclude boating on the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28 .... is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts."
- Alternative 3 provides no boating opportunities on the Upper Chattooga. This management alternative would have a devastating effect on Chattooga River paddlers – resulting in a 100% elimination of their experience. There is no basis for a capacity of zero paddlers on any or all sections of the upper Chattooga.
- The alternative will not support the USFS's stated desired conditions. By banning one of the primary intended recreational uses, the recreation ORV is not protected or enhanced. By eliminating all ORV's in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV's are not protected. By eliminating boating, boaters' personal sense of solitude away from modern life is eliminated. The solitude felt while floating down a river is special and unique for those who seek it out. This alternative has NO protections for solitude because it has no encounter standards, monitoring, or controls. There is NO evidence that the presence of paddlers will significantly impact the solitude of other users in any unique way, and an overwhelming body of evidence that paddlers will not significantly or uniquely impact the solitude of others. The USFS does not provide a wilderness experience for paddlers – whose true Wilderness experience can only be achieved in a boat, through one of the most low-impact and intimate ways of interacting with nature. The USFS does not provide a true Wilderness experience for any users because boating is a core part of Wilderness where it is possible. The alternative fails to limit or monitor use to assure that Wilderness encounter standards are maintained.
- Alternative 3 would continue the 12+ year conflict over the ability of citizens to float the river, and one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history.
- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.

- Alternative 3 has no physical carrying capacity or standards for any user group and is therefore flawed.
- Alternative 3 fails to limit or treat wilderness compliant uses equitably as is required by the binding and relevant Record of Decision.
- Alternative 3 fails to “maximize visitor freedom in wilderness” as USFS policy demands. A ban on boating is the polar opposite of maximizing freedom.
- Alternative 3 does not track use to determine trends and therefore leaves biophysical resources at risk of overuse.
- Alternative 3 fails to implement indirect use limitations prior to implementing the harshest possible direct limit on paddlers.
- Alternative 3 fails to protect *any* Outstanding Remarkable Values of the uppermost 1.7 miles of the Chattooga River (including biophysical conditions). The USFS has the authority and obligation to protect the scenic (i.e., riparian areas and other viewshed areas), water quality, and biophysical conditions in this reach.
- Alternative 3 is unnecessarily divisive in that it maintains gross inequities and entitlements.
- Alternative 3 fails to manage frontcountry and backcountry areas differently, with the exception of one small frontcountry location. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections. This should be factored into any alternative.
- We are unsure of what “enhance woody debris recruitment” means as referenced in Alternative 3, however this alternative element could have significant ecological and recreational impacts. Active falling of trees into the river would damage vital riparian function, create stream bank erosion, threaten nearby trees to wind-throw and destabilization of roots, and leave unaesthetic stumps and cut logs in what should be a natural appearing stream. Use of chainsaws or other motorized equipment should not take place in the backcountry. Trees fallen intentionally into the river would also pose a serious risk of death to generations of anglers, swimmers, hikers, and boaters. While we support the natural process of trees entering and exiting the river, we cannot support addition of wood to a functional, natural, and largely bedrock and boulder controlled channel with ample complexity and habitat.

- Alternative 3 is also deficient for the reasons set forth in the section above entitled “*Problems associated with all proposed USFS Alternatives.*”

#### 4. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #4

- It violates applicable law. As set forth in the USFS Chief’s decision: “the Regional Forester’s decision to continue to exclude boating on a portion of the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28 .... is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts.”
- This alternative totally bans boating on the Rock Gorge, Delayed Harvest, and private reaches – making it wholly unacceptable. There is no justification for these boating bans whatsoever, and no evidence that there is a zero capacity for recreational boating on these reaches.
- The alternative will not support the USFS’s stated desired conditions. By banning one of the primary intended recreational uses on several sections and on most days, the recreation ORV is not protected or enhanced. By eliminating all ORV’s in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV’s are not protected. By eliminating boating, boaters’ personal sense of solitude away from modern life is eliminated. The solitude felt while floating down a river is special and unique for those who seek it out. This alternative has NO protections for solitude because it has no encounter standards, monitoring, or controls. There is NO evidence that the presence of paddlers will significantly impact the solitude of other users in any unique way, and an overwhelming body of evidence that paddlers will not significantly or uniquely impact the solitude of others. The USFS does not provide an adequate wilderness experience for paddlers – whose true Wilderness experience can only be achieved in a boat, at flows and seasons of their choosing, through one of the most low-impact and intimate ways of interacting with nature. The USFS does not provide a true Wilderness experience for any users because boating is a core part of Wilderness where it is possible. The alternative fails to limit or monitor use to assure that Wilderness encounter standards are maintained. Nothing in this alternative protects any of the desired conditions in the uppermost 1.7 miles of the corridor.
- Alternative 4 would continue the 12+ year conflict over the ability of citizens to float the river, and one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history.
- Alternative 4 has no physical carrying capacity or standards for any user group, except group size for paddlers on 2 of 5 reaches, and is therefore flawed.

- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.
- Alternative 4 fails to limit or treat wilderness compliant uses equitably.
- Seasonal and water level based closures on this section do not “maximize visitor freedom” as should occur in wilderness areas.
- Alternative 4 fails to implement indirect use limitations prior to implementing harsh direct limits on paddlers.
- Alternative 4 fails to protect any Outstanding Remarkable Values of the uppermost 1.7 miles of the Chattooga River. By banning boating, the alternative eliminates what may be the only option for protecting and enhancing recreation – *or any ORV* - in this reach because recreationists can only enjoy most of this reach by boat due to private property and geographic impediments. We remind the USFS that the Wild and Scenic studies and the congressional intent behind designation clearly intended that Grimshawes Bridge be the put-in for floating down the Chattooga River below that point. Figure 1, from the original USFS WSR studies reflects that fact. Alternative 4 thus fails to follow the congressional intent of designation and the USFS’s own description of the “recreation” ORV in this “recreation” designated river reach. The USFS has the authority and many would argue the obligation to protect the scenic (i.e., riparian areas and other viewshed areas), water quality, and biophysical conditions in this reach.
- Alternative 4 is unnecessarily divisive in that it maintains gross inequities and entitlements.
- Alternative 4 fails to manage frontcountry and backcountry areas differently. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections. This should be factored into any alternative.
- Alternative 4 limits boating to single capacity craft. The USFS has no information that indicates tandem canoes, tandem inflatable kayaks, or 2-4 person rafts are unacceptable on these reaches. This limit is arbitrary.
- Alternatives 4 and 5 limit paddling to four groups per day. The only other alternative is zero groups per day. We expect a broader range of group numbers for analysis.

- This alternative limits floating to only December through March in the Ellicott Rock section. This limit is without basis. It does not prevent overlap with other in-stream river users, and forces paddlers to only enjoy the river on relatively cold, short days.
- This alternative limits paddling the Ellicott Rock section to above 400 cfs at Burrell's Ford. This limit totally eliminates significant boating opportunities without basis, and forces paddlers to explore a river under unnatural constraints that may reduce personal safety.
- The alternatives state that group number will be managed through "self-registration only until records indicate the maximum number of groups is exceeding four; then permits in advance." The alternative fails to mention the number of days per year on which groups exceed four that will actually trigger permits. 1 day per year, 20 days per year, 20 days per year for 3 consecutive years?
- This alternative has a trigger for permits to be required, however offers no details on these permits. We are aware of no other permit system on a small flashy headwater creek run – and cannot envision one that would not result in lost paddling opportunities purely due to delays within the system. The alternative should describe this in greater detail.
- This alternative includes "limited wood removal." We are unsure of what this means but we are concerned. There are ways of responsibly managing wood in rivers to support ecological and recreational values but they are not captured under the title "limited wood removal." We would prefer that two wood alternatives be analyzed, 1) allow natural processes to manage wood (prohibit removal and additions), and 2) actively manage wood to protect and enhance ecological and recreational values. Boating does not require wood removal and alternatives should not infer this.
- Alternatives that allow boating should acknowledge that portaging and scouting may occur in some predictable locations. In these locations, the IR confirms that boaters only exited the river channel once during the expert panel study, and predicts that less than 500 feet of trail would be necessary to support paddling.
- Alternative 4's stated objective is to manage biophysical impacts, yet bans floating on three river reaches while allowing all other uses to go unlimited. This runs counter to all reason. Camping is unlimited yet has demonstrated biophysical impacts noted throughout the IR including ground clearing, vegetation damage, fire risk, soil compaction, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Hiking and angling is unlimited yet have demonstrated

biophysical impacts including vegetation damage, riparian area clearing, soil compaction, user created trail creation, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Angling is enhanced through stocking of 70,000 exotic fish which likely has an enormous biophysical impact. Yet, somehow, this alternative limits only floating which has so little biophysical impact that it is anticipated to not even be measurable. This is a radically flawed alternative. How does banning the lowest impact and smallest use while allowing all other uses to exist unlimited and untracked lead to strong biophysical protection? How is the paddling ban part of this alternative? There is simply no logical rationale for including a boating ban in this alternative.

- Alternative 4 would allow some reaches to be floated but would prohibit a complete run of the entire Chattooga River which is a unique 50+ mile multi-day paddling opportunity that is possible nowhere else in the region.
- We fully support the registration of all users in the W&S corridor. This information will be critical in future management decisions.
- Alternative 4 is also deficient for the reasons set forth in the section above entitled “*Problems associated with all proposed USFS Alternatives.*”

#### 5. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #5

- It violates applicable law. As set forth in the USFS Chief’s decision: “the Regional Forester’s decision to continue to exclude boating on a portion of the Chattooga WSR above Highway 28 .... is not consistent with the direction in Section 10(a) of the WSRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the Wilderness Act or agency regulations implementing these Acts.”
- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.
- We are aware of no reason to ban floating below Lick Log Creek, especially given that congress clearly intended for this use to be protected and enhanced.
- The alternative will not support the USFS’s stated desired conditions. By banning on one reach and at some flows throughout the river, one of the primary intended recreational uses, the recreation ORV is not protected or enhanced. By eliminating all ORV’s except recreation in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV’s are not protected. By eliminating the freedom of paddlers to select their own preferred

flows, their Wilderness experience is damaged. By eliminating boating on one reach, boaters' personal sense of solitude away from modern life is eliminated from that reach. The solitude felt while floating down a river is special and unique for those who seek it out. This alternative has NO protections for solitude because it has no encounter standards, monitoring, or controls for users. There is NO evidence that the presence of paddlers will significantly impact the solitude of other users in any unique way, and an overwhelming body of evidence that paddlers will not significantly or uniquely impact the solitude of others. The alternative fails to limit or monitor use to assure that Wilderness encounter standards are maintained.

- Alternative 5 would continue the 12+ year conflict over the ability of citizens to float the river, and one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history.
- Alternative 5 has no physical carrying capacity or standards for any user group, except group numbers for paddlers on 2 of 5 reaches, and is therefore flawed.
- Alternative 5 fails to limit or treat wilderness compliant uses equitably as is required by the binding and relevant Record of Decision.
- Alternative 5 fails to implement indirect use limitations prior to implementing the harsh direct limits on paddlers.
- Alternative 5 does protect a portion of one Outstanding Remarkable Value of the uppermost 2 miles of the Chattooga River. We remind the USFS that the Wild and Scenic studies and the congressional intent behind designation clearly intended that Grimshaw's Bridge be the put-in for floating down the Chattooga River below that point. Alternative 5 thus partially follows the congressional intent of designation and the USFS's own description of the "recreation" ORV in this "recreation" designated river reach.
- Alternative 5 is unnecessarily divisive in that it maintains gross inequities and entitlements.
- Alternative 5 fails to manage frontcountry and backcountry areas differently. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections. This should be factored into any alternative.
- Alternative 5 limits boating to single capacity craft. The USFS has no information that indicates tandem canoes, tandem inflatable kayaks, or

2-4 person rafts are unacceptable on these reaches. This limit is arbitrary.

- Alternatives 4 and 5 limit paddling to four groups per day. The only other alternative is zero groups per day. We expect a broader range of group numbers for analysis.
- This alternative limits paddling the river to above 350 cfs at Burrell's Ford. This limit totally eliminates significant boating opportunities without basis, and forces paddlers to explore a river under unnatural constraints that may reduce personal safety.
- The alternatives state that group number will be managed through "self-registration only until records indicate the maximum number of groups is exceeding four; then permits in advance." The alternative fails to mention the number of days per year on which groups exceed four that will actually trigger permits. 1 day per year, 20 days per year, 20 days per year for 3 consecutive years?
- This alternative has a trigger for permits to be required, however offers no details on these permits. We are aware of no other permit system on a small flashy headwater creek run – and cannot envision one that would not result in lost paddling opportunities purely due to delays within the system. The alternative should describe this in greater detail.
- This alternative includes "limited wood removal." We are unsure of what this means but we are concerned. There are ways of responsibly managing wood in rivers to support ecological and recreational values but they are not captured under the title "limited woody debris removal." We would prefer that two wood alternatives be analyzed, 1) allow natural processes to manage wood (prohibit removal and additions), and 2) actively manage wood to enhance ecological and recreational values. Boating does not require wood removal and alternatives should not infer this.
- Alternatives that allow boating should acknowledge that portaging and scouting may occur in some predictable locations. In these locations the Integrated Report confirms that boaters only exited the river channel only once during the expert panel study, and predicts that less than 500 feet of new trails would be needed to support paddling. The boating alternatives should consider construction of these trails if needed, but also acknowledge that they are not necessary.
- This alternative totally bans boating on the bottom section of the Upper Chattooga below Lick Log Creek - making it wholly unacceptable. We are aware of no justification for this boating ban

whatsoever, and no evidence that there is a zero capacity for recreational boating on this reach. Requiring a long hike-out would unnecessarily impact canoeists, and other paddlers unable to carry a boat up the hill for any reason.

- Alternative 5's stated objective is to manage biophysical impacts, yet bans floating on one river reach while allowing all other uses to go unlimited – and in fact attracting other uses through stocking and fishing regulations. This runs counter to all reason. Camping is unlimited yet has demonstrated biophysical impacts noted throughout the IR including ground clearing, vegetation damage, fire risk, soil compaction, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Hiking and angling is unlimited yet have demonstrated biophysical impacts including vegetation damage, riparian area clearing, soil compaction, user created trail creation, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Angling is enhanced through stocking of 70,000 exotic fish which likely has an enormous biophysical impact. Yet, somehow, this alternative limits only floating which has so little biophysical impact that it is anticipated to not even be measurable. This is a radically flawed alternative. How does banning the lowest impact and smallest use while allowing all other uses to exist unlimited and untracked lead to strong biophysical protection? How is the paddling ban part of this alternative? There is simply no logical rationale for including a boating ban in this alternative.
- Alternative 5 combines the Chattooga Cliff's reach and the Rock Gorge with regards to group numbers, which erroneously assumes paddlers will always run both of these sections together. These should be considered 2 reaches.
- Alternative 5 would allow some reaches to be floated but would prohibit a complete run of the entire Chattooga River which is a unique 50+ mile multi-day paddling opportunity that is possible nowhere else in the region.
- We fully support the registration of all users in the W&S corridor. This information will be critical in future management decisions.
- Alternative 5 is also deficient for the reasons set forth in the section above entitled "*Problems associated with all proposed USFS Alternatives.*"

6. Deficiencies in USFS Alternative #6

- Alternative 6 does not single out paddlers for different treatment than other users (except for group sizes) and is more equitable. This is a

good thing and is consistent with the Record of Decision that is the root of this environmental analysis. However we see no reason or data to suggest different group sizes.

- It confuses the issue of restoring boating access by including a random assortment of other management issues.
- The alternative will not support the USFS's stated desired conditions. By eliminating all ORV's except recreation in the upper 1.7 miles of the river the ORV's are not protected. This alternative has NO protections for solitude because it has no encounter standards, monitoring, or controls. The alternative fails to limit or monitor use to assure that Wilderness encounter standards are maintained.
- Alternative 6 is not divisive and would begin the process of eliminating the senseless conflicts over the Chattooga's management.
- Alternative 6 would end the 12+ year conflict over the ability of citizens to float the river, and one of the most contentious and costly river recreation management issues in history.
- Alternative 6 would allow the entire Chattooga River to be floated and would allow complete runs of the entire Chattooga River which is a unique 50+ mile multi-day paddling opportunity that is possible nowhere else in the region.
- Alternative 6 does protect a portion of one Outstanding Remarkable Value of the uppermost 2 miles of the Chattooga River. We remind the USFS that the Wild and Scenic studies and the congressional intent behind designation clearly intended that Grimshaw's Bridge be the put-in for floating down the Chattooga River below that point. Alternative 6 thus partially follows the congressional intent of designation and the USFS's own description of the "recreation" ORV in this "recreation" designated river reach.
- However, Alternative 6 has no physical carrying capacity or standards for any user group and is therefore flawed.
- Alternative 6 limits boating to single capacity craft. The USFS has no information that indicates tandem canoes, tandem inflatable kayaks, or 2-4 person rafts are unacceptable on these reaches. This limit is arbitrary.
- This alternative includes "limited wood removal." We are unsure of what this means but we are concerned. There are ways of responsibly managing wood in rivers to support ecological and recreational values but they are not captured under the title "limited woody debris

removal.” We would prefer that two wood alternatives be analyzed, 1) allow natural processes to manage wood (prohibit removal and additions), and 2) actively manage wood to enhance ecological and recreational values. Boating does not require wood removal and alternatives should not infer this.

- Alternatives that allow boating should acknowledge that portaging and scouting may occur in some predictable locations. In these locations the Integrated Report confirms that boaters only exited the river channel only once during the expert panel study, and predicts that less than 500 feet of new trails would be needed to support paddling.
- Alternative 6’s stated objective is to manage biophysical impacts and encounters, yet offers not a single capacity or standard for any user group or total use. This runs counter to all reason. Camping is unlimited yet has demonstrated biophysical impacts noted throughout the IR including ground clearing, vegetation damage, fire risk, soil compaction, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Hiking and angling is unlimited yet have demonstrated biophysical impacts including vegetation damage, riparian area clearing, soil compaction, user created trail creation, erosion, human waste, wildlife attraction, and wildlife disturbance. Angling is enhanced through stocking of 70,000 exotic fish which likely has an enormous biophysical impact. There is a capacity of the Chattooga River to support recreation, and Alternative 6 totally ignores this most basic principle.
- Alternative 6 fails to distinguish between frontcountry and backcountry areas. The biophysical threats, acceptable biophysical conditions, and management activities differ between designated Wilderness, frontcountry areas, recreation river sections, and wild river sections. This should be factored into any alternative.
- We fully support the registration of all users in the W&S corridor. This information will be critical in future management decisions.

### **C. Deficiencies in the Scoping Document Generally**

- The Scoping Document (SD) provides that “Dispersed camping occurs at least 50 feet from lakes and streams to protect riparian areas, 50 feet from trails and ¼ mile from a road on the Andrew Pickens District.”<sup>9</sup> It says nothing of the other districts, and fails to recognize that according to the Integrated Report, “Of the 97 [camp] sites on the Upper River, about 26 (27%) are within 20 feet of the river,” and that “The median amount of cleared area was 1,000 square feet” for those sites. Therefore, while the

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<sup>9</sup> USFS Scoping Document, Page 2

USFS explanation of their current management indicates protection of the river and management of camping, the reality is quite different. A large number of generally large campsites have been created by users in the riparian corridor without USFS management.

- The SD fails to mention that historical lack of management has resulted in over 19 miles of user created trails in the Upper Chattooga Corridor, which is appalling given that the Headwater is only 21 miles long.<sup>10</sup> Worse yet, these trails have over 90 erosion problems associated with them, and almost 2 miles of the user created trails are within 20 feet of the river.<sup>11</sup> Alternative 1 has created this dire situation – and will not remedy it.
- The SD fails to mention that historical management has included stocking of over 70,000 exotic, non-native, fish each year to the Chattooga River. While this action has benefited anglers interested in catching such fish, it may impact anglers that seek native fish, as well as native organisms including macroinvertebrates, fish, salamanders, and spiders.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, such stocking artificially attracts visitor use, which impacts capacity.
- The SD fails to mention that historical management has resulted in rampant litter of which 142 gallons, or 6.7 gallons per river-mile was found while collecting data for the Integrated Report.<sup>13</sup>
- The SD fails to mention the impacts of existing recreational use on fish and wildlife, or the potential impacts of continued unlimited recreational use.<sup>14</sup>
- The SD fails to mention that the USFS has little to no data on past or existing recreational use levels, encounters, or competition impacts. Absent these data, one cannot reasonably conclude that encounter and competition impacts are not (or are) occurring.

### **III. American Whitewater’s Proposal**

It is simply not feasible to combine the myriad complex management issues currently under consideration by the USFS into one set of integrated alternatives. *See generally, the issue-by-issue organization of the 2004 ROD.* There are so many variables, that it would require hundreds or thousands of alternatives to account for all of the various combinations (as the USFS unsuccessfully attempted to do in only six integrated alternatives).

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<sup>10</sup> Integrated Report, Page 42

<sup>11</sup> Integrated Report, Page 43

<sup>12</sup> AW Comments on the Integrated Report

<sup>13</sup> Integrated Report, Page 46

<sup>14</sup> Integrated Report, Page 51-56

American Whitewater proposes that the USFS address important management issues on an issue-by-issue basis, as is the USFS's custom in Land and Resource Management Plans. The USFS should provide sets of alternatives, organized by issue, that relate to other management changes it seeks to include in this NEPA process; for example the location and condition of official and user-created trails and campsites, trash, parking, angling and hiking access, fish stocking and treatment of woody debris.

Below, American Whitewater proposes a set of three alternatives related to the issue of recreational use. These alternatives are essentially identical with the exception of the standards relied upon for management. Thereafter, American Whitewater briefly outlines other potential alternatives on an issue-by-issue basis.

#### **A. American Whitewater's Proposed Alternatives Related to Recreational Use**

1. Nationally Consistent River Management Alternative #1 (high encounter standard)<sup>15</sup>
  - Restore private, self guided boating on the Headwaters.
  - Monitor and mitigate existing and ongoing biophysical impacts of recreational use throughout the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. This action includes standard river resource protection and restoration initiatives including fixing erosion problems, closing or formalizing user created trails, and bringing all campsites and trails up to USFS standards.
  - Manage river reaches designated as "Scenic" or "Recreation" as frontcountry areas. Manage river reaches designated as "Wild" as backcountry areas. (See Figure 1)
  - Create no new river access parking, roads, or trails.
  - Require registration of all corridor visitors.
  - Educate users on "Leave No Trace" (LNT), low impact encounter protocols, difficulty of floating reaches, rules and regulations, and water level preferences.
  - Implement standard boating safety regulations similar to those in force below Woodall Shoals (life jackets, helmets, appropriate craft).

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<sup>15</sup> In alternatives 2 through 4, American Whitewater proposes a simple and commonly used method of protecting the river and assuring that biophysical and recreational standards are not exceeded. This basic concept involves implementing a range of protection and restoration initiatives, as well as recreational regulations, and then allowing wilderness compliant uses to occur until one or more standards are exceeded. Use will then be limited as needed through indirect measures first, followed by direct measures as needed.

- Prohibit the use of single chamber inflatable craft in backcountry areas.
- Prohibit commercial floating use on the entire river above Highway 28.
- Construct up to 500 feet of boating portage trails as needed for resource protection, while closing existing user created trails that are actively eroding or causing other impacts.
- Implement congruent group size limits for all uses.

Allow capacities of **frontcountry** areas to be defined passively by parking and camping availability. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **10 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management*, as follows:

Survey visitors to ensure encounter standards represent actual encounter tolerances. If this is the case, then limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If not, adjust standards to reflect user tolerances.

If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target indirect efforts at those groups first. Indirect measures may include reducing group sizes, altering stocking or fisheries management, education on alternative recreational opportunities, instituting voluntary temporal, spatial or water level based avoidance periods (ie voluntary closures), changing access areas, and/or changing camping opportunities.

If after 2 full years of implementing aggressive indirect measures, standards are still exceeded in specific frontcountry or backcountry areas, limit use by direct measures in those specific areas. If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target efforts at those groups first. The most appropriate direct means of limiting use is the requirement of limited permits for entry by all users or for participation in specific activities in specific areas during specific times as justified.<sup>16</sup>

2. Nationally Consistent River Management Alternative #2 (**moderate encounter standard**)

- Restore private, self guided boating on the Headwaters.
- Monitor and mitigate existing and ongoing biophysical impacts of recreational use throughout the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. This action includes standard resource protection and restoration initiatives including fixing erosion problems, closing or formalizing user created trails, and bringing all campsites and trails up to USFS standards.

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<sup>16</sup> See [Exhibit 1](#) for an example of a permitting system that could be applied to boating if data ultimately demonstrates a need for implementation of direct limits on whitewater boating.

- Manage river reaches designated as “Scenic” or “Recreation” as frontcountry areas. Manage river reaches designated as “Wild” as backcountry areas. (See Figure 1)
- Create no new river access parking, roads, or trails.
- Require registration of all corridor visitors.
- Educate users on “Leave No Trace” (LNT), low impact encounter protocols, difficulty of floating reaches, rules and regulations, and water level preferences.
- Implement standard boating safety regulations similar to those in force below Woodall Shoals (life jackets, helmets, appropriate craft).
- Prohibit the use of single chamber inflatable craft in backcountry areas.
- Prohibit commercial floating use on the entire river above Highway 28.
- Construct up to 500 feet of boating portage trails as needed for resource protection, while closing existing user created trails that are actively eroding or causing other impacts.
- Implement congruent group size limits for all uses.

If or when individual **frontcountry** areas meet or exceed **parking and/or camping capacity on more than 10% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **6 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management*, as follows:

Survey visitors to ensure encounter standards represent actual encounter tolerances. If this is the case, then limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If not, adjust standards to reflect user tolerances.

If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target indirect efforts at those groups first. Indirect measures may include reducing group sizes, altering stocking or fisheries management, education on alternative recreational opportunities, instituting voluntary temporal, spatial or water level based avoidance periods (ie voluntary closures), changing access areas, and/or changing camping opportunities.

If after 2 full years of implementing aggressive indirect measures, standards are still exceeded in specific frontcountry or backcountry areas, limit use by direct measures in those specific areas. If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target efforts at those groups first. The most appropriate direct means of limiting

use is the requirement of limited permits for entry by all users or for participation in specific activities in specific areas as justified.<sup>17</sup>

3. Nationally Consistent River Management Alternative #3 (low encounter standard)

- Restore private, self guided boating on the Headwaters.
- Monitor and mitigate existing and ongoing biophysical impacts of recreational use throughout the Wild and Scenic River Corridor. This action includes standard resource protection and restoration initiatives including fixing erosion problems, closing or formalizing user created trails, and bringing all campsites and trails up to USFS standards.
- Manage river reaches designated as “Scenic” or “Recreation” as frontcountry areas. Manage river reaches designated as “Wild” as backcountry areas. (See Figure 1)
- Create no new river access parking, roads, or trails.
- Require registration of all corridor visitors.
- Educate users on “Leave No Trace” (LNT), low impact encounter protocols, difficulty of floating reaches, rules and regulations, and water level preferences.
- Implement standard boating safety regulations similar to those in force below Woodall Shoals (life jackets, helmets, appropriate craft).
- Prohibit the use of single chamber inflatable craft in backcountry areas.
- Prohibit commercial floating use on the entire river above Highway 28.
- Construct up to 500 feet of boating portage trails as needed for resource protection, while closing existing user created trails that are actively eroding or causing other impacts.
- Implement congruent group size limits for all uses.

If or when individual **frontcountry** areas meet or exceed **parking and/or camping capacity on more than 5% of days** per year, limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **2 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management*, as follows:

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<sup>17</sup> See [Exhibit 1](#) for an example of a permitting system that could be applied to boating if data ultimately demonstrates a need for implementation of direct limits on whitewater boating.

Survey visitors to ensure encounter standards represent actual encounter tolerances. If this is the case, then limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If not, adjust standards to reflect user tolerances.

If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target indirect efforts at those groups first. Indirect measures may include reducing group sizes, altering stocking or fisheries management, education on alternative recreational opportunities, instituting voluntary temporal, spatial or water level based avoidance periods (ie voluntary closures), changing access areas, and/or changing camping opportunities.

If after 2 full years of implementing aggressive indirect measures, standards are still exceeded in specific frontcountry or backcountry areas, limit use by direct measures in those specific areas. If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target efforts at those groups first. The most appropriate direct means of limiting use is the requirement of limited permits for entry by all users or for participation in specific activities in specific areas as justified.<sup>18</sup>

**B. Basis for USFS Inclusion of American Whitewater's Proposed Alternatives:**

- It will protect both the Headwaters itself and the experience of visitors to that resource
- It is equitable and fair
- It will promptly begin easing tensions between user groups
- It is administratively and legally defensible assuming there is support for the standards selected, and will thus save time and money for all involved.
- It is consistent with proven river management on other rivers nationwide.
- It is consistent with USFS policy, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, and the Wilderness Act.
- It is consistent with the USFS Chief's administrative appeal decision directing the USFS in this process
- It treats problems that currently exist, and provides a formula for dealing with issues that could arise in the future.
- It is inexpensive, easy, and straightforward to implement.
- It is flexible to highly variable flows, seasons, and other factors.

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<sup>18</sup> See [Exhibit 1](#) for an example of a permitting system that could be applied to boating if data ultimately demonstrates a need for implementation of direct limits on whitewater boating.

- It will provide high quality experiences for all users, including providing angling experiences with no boaters present on an average of 80% of days, opportunistic and hassle free boating on days of acceptable flows, camping at clean, private sites, hiking without seeing too many other groups, swimming in un-crowded pools of clean water, and visiting a wild and natural river on which man has a small influence.

#### **IV. Other Important Management Issues and Proposed Alternatives**

Based upon the USFS's lines of inquiry during the user capacity analysis process, American Whitewater briefly outlines the following additional management issues related to the Chattooga Headwaters corridor and a range of alternatives for each:

##### **A. Fish Stocking:**

- Continue existing stocking rates, species, and locations
- Stock only native species, but continue existing rates<sup>19</sup>
- Reduce stocking rates, and prioritize native species.
- Eliminate helicopter stocking<sup>20</sup>
- Expand stocking to entire river

##### **B. User Created Trails:**

- Continue existing management
- Close 33% of user created trails of highest impact and/or lowest use, formalize the remaining 67%
- Close 66% of user created trails of highest impact and/or lowest use, formalize the remaining 34%
- Close all user created trails within 50 feet of the river
- Close all user created trails.

##### **C. In-stream Wood Management:**

- Continue current policy
- Promote wood recruitment

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<sup>19</sup> See our extensive comments on the impacts of stocking nonnative fish such as rainbow and brown trout in our comments on the USFS Report Titled "Capacity and Conflict on the Upper Chattooga River.

<sup>20</sup> An analysis of the recreational impacts of vehicular intrusion into the corridor via helicopter must be conducted.

- Prohibit all wood removal or addition
- Publish new guidelines on wood management that allow movement of only ecologically low-functioning and recreationally high risk wood pieces only to the degree that allows passage. Educate users on guidelines.
- On the Chattooga, several stakeholders seem to feel that paddling and wood in rivers is inconsistent. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Assessing, paddling, and portaging wood is a fundamental part of the paddling experience on *every* whitewater river. The Boating study showed that current conditions support paddling with limited interaction with in-stream wood. Changes in the amount or distribution of wood cannot be anticipated within the timeframe of the current forest plan, and therefore management must be based on current conditions and be flexible enough to address changes. Current and anticipated conditions do not require active management of wood. The most appropriate management is to educate paddlers on the ecological value that wood plays and either discourage or prohibit wood removal. We should note also that much of the Chattooga Headwaters is high-gradient and bedrock and boulder controlled, and therefore many areas are simply wood transport zones. Impacts of movement of an extremely small percentage of the wood in the system would not be found to have a significant ecological or social impact.<sup>21</sup>

#### **D. Parking**

- Maintain existing parking opportunities
- Increase parking capacity by 30%
- Decrease parking capacity by 30%
- Move all parking out of corridor

#### **E. Private Land Corridor**

- Continue existing management
- Legally establish USFS right to manage floating through the reach
- Negotiate a recreation easement along the river
- Condemn a recreational easement along the river
- Negotiate a scenic easement along the river

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<sup>21</sup> See [Exhibit 3](#) (discussing management of wood in rivers).

- Condemn a scenic easement along the river

## **V. Conclusions**

The proposed USFS Alternatives are deficient in many respects. American Whitewater asks that the USFS analyze both the framework and the specific alternatives it has presented in these comments. American Whitewater further asks the USFS to modify its proposed USFS Alternatives relating to whitewater boating access to conform to American Whitewater's proposed alternatives, as set forth above. Of the alternatives presented by the USFS, we prefer #6.

## Exhibit 1

### **Direct Limits on Boating Access: Special Permitting System<sup>22</sup>**

The special permitting system outlined below would only be appropriate if, after a sufficient period of data collection on actual boating use, the data shows that the capacity of the Chattooga Headwaters cannot accommodate existing levels of boating use (as opposed to total use of all users), and that indirect measures have failed. The following temporary permitting system could be used by the USFS to directly limit whitewater boating use:

- Paddling trip leaders would have to secure a free permit from the USFS online or via phone for the day they wish to paddle a specific section of the Headwaters (Chattooga Cliffs, Ellicott Rock, and/or the Rock Gorge/Delayed Harvest Reach). Trip leaders may secure permits for multiple sections on the same day.
- The permits will become available at 8am on the day prior to the desired paddling day, and will remain available until filled.
- Permits will be nontransferable and awarded to individual trip leaders and cover that individual's group, the members of which do not have to be named on the permit.
- Group size will be limited to 8 people, and group members must travel together.
- The permit itself will simply be an 8 digit number that paddlers must write on their registration form, which will be available online and/or at the put-in.
- Identity of permit applicants will be positively identified using some means (Driver's License Number, Social Security Number, Valid Credit Card Number, Etc) upon application.
- The USFS will make every effort to detect and prosecute fraudulent permit applications by individuals not actually intending to paddle the river. To this end, individuals may incur two no-shows per year at which point permit applications will no longer be accepted for that year, filing fraudulent permit applications must be made a punishable offence, paddlers must register at access areas as well as securing a permit, the USFS must do spot counts, and the names of trip leaders must be published on the Sumter National Forest website on a monthly basis.

Potential variations to this permit system based upon number of trips include:

**Variation A:** Permit 12 boating trips per day. (all flows)

**Variation B:** Permit 8 boating trips per day. (all flows)

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<sup>22</sup> Limits should not be imposed on users until standards are reached or exceeded. Doing so causes significant and undue burdens on both the administrating agency and the public. This certainly applies to boating on the Chattooga which we expect to be among the smallest uses in the Headwaters corridor with the smallest impacts.

**Variation C:** Permit 4 boating trips per day. (all flows)

**Variation D:** Permit 2 boating trips per day below 285cfs at Burrells Ford, and 8 boating trips per day above 285cfs. In addition to the methodology above, the following permit elements would also be required for Variation D:

- A flow trigger would be set at 285 cfs, roughly the median of the shared flow range.
- The Burrell's Ford gage would have to be online as well as physically readable, and the stage representing 285 cfs would have to be clearly marked on both versions. The gage would have to update online in 15 minute increments.
- The first two permits issued for a given day would be guaranteed, and the remaining 6 would be conditional on flows.
- Conditional permit holders may run the river on the permitted day if the river is running at least 285 cfs at 8am on the permitted day, or if/when it reaches 285 cfs at some point during the day.
- Conditional permit holders that do not run the river on the permitted day will not be penalized with a no-show penalty unless the flow is at or above 285 at 8am on their permitted day.

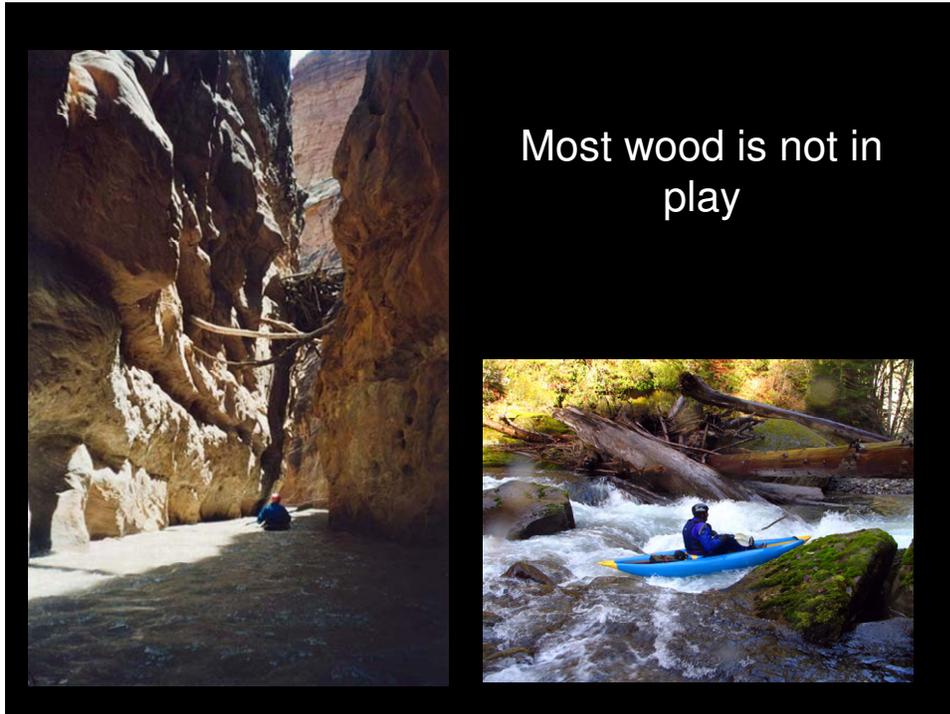
## **Exhibit 2**

### **Additional Resources to Consider in Formulation of Final USFS Proposed Alternatives**

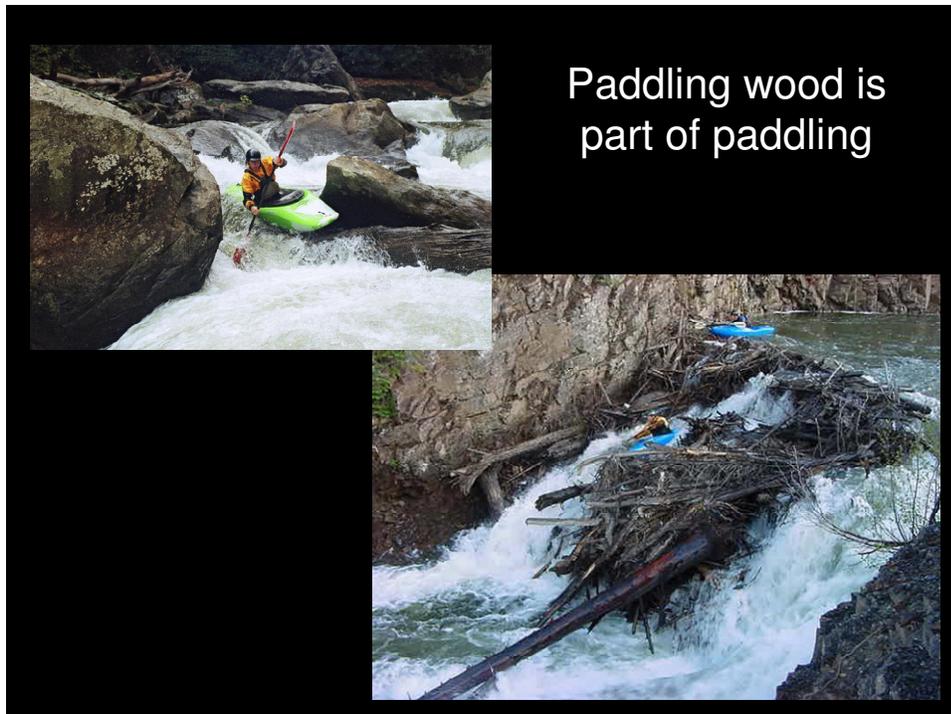
- American Whitewater's Comments and Suggested Revisions Regarding the Draft Upper Chattooga River Phase I Data Collection Expert Panel Field Assessment Report, dated February 2007, and first made available to the public on April 2, 2007, Respectfully Submitted on April 6, 2007
- American Whitewater's Comments on the "Chattooga River History Project Literature Review and Interview Summary", Respectfully Submitted on April 17, 2007
- American Whitewater's Comments on the USFS Report titled "Capacities on other Wild and Scenic Rivers: seven case studies", Respectfully Submitted on May 7, 2007
- American Whitewater's Comments on the Chattooga Literature Review Report, Respectfully Submitted May 7, 2007
- Comments on the USFS Report Titled "Capacity and Conflict on the Upper Chattooga River", Submitted on July 3rd, 2007
- American Whitewater's Notice of Appeal of the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Sumter National Forest Revised Land and Resource Management Plan (RLRMP) and its accompanying Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).
- DECISION FOR APPEAL OF THE SUMTER NATIONAL FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN REVISION, #04-13-00-0026 American Whitewater, Dated April 28<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

### Exhibit 3

On May 22nd, 2007, American Whitewater's National Stewardship Director, Kevin Colburn participated on a panel discussion at a River Management Society conference that focused on management of wood in rivers. The talk was well attended by river managers from across the country. The following is a synopsis of the talk.



**Most wood is not in play:** The vast majority of wood pieces in river and riparian systems are not recreationally problematic or especially dangerous to paddlers. Paddlers generally refer to these non-problematic pieces as being “not in play.” In general, wood is not in play when it can be paddled under, over, around, or beside without exposing paddlers to unacceptable risks.



**Paddling wood is part of paddling:** Portaging (or moving) wood requires a significant amount of time and energy, and is avoided by paddlers whenever possible. Therefore many paddlers, especially skilled paddlers, are highly adept at avoiding in-channel wood pieces. When approaching and assessing a piece of wood or accumulation of wood pieces, paddlers are faced with a variety of options:

- Most often a clear route around the wood can be taken, since the majority of wood pieces and accumulations do not completely span the full channel or all channels.
- If at least part of the wood piece or accumulation is partially or fully submerged, paddlers can often paddle over the piece of wood.
- If at least part of the wood piece or accumulation is partially or fully at least two feet above the water level, paddlers can often paddle or push under the piece of wood.

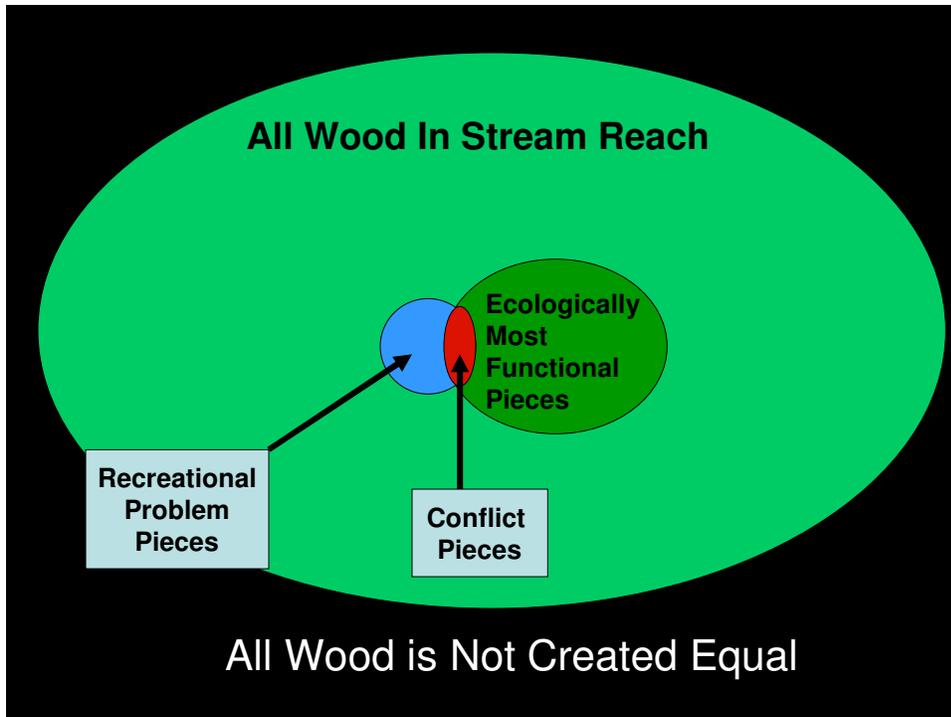
Oftentimes, wood creates interesting and enjoyable challenges for paddlers. Negotiating wood in rivers is viewed as part of the paddling experience. The presence of wood often increases risk, but is viewed as part of the natural ecosystem and natural challenge. Paddling is not inconsistent or in conflict with wood in rivers, rather wood in rivers is a fundamental element of paddling.



Portaging wood is  
part of paddling



**Portaging wood is part of paddling:** There are situations where for some period of time (ranging from minutes to decades or longer) that wood pieces or accumulations totally block recreational passage. These instances represent a very small percentage of wood pieces in a river system. In these cases, paddlers typically either portage the obstruction or avoid the reach until the obstruction naturally changes enough to allow passage. Portaging wood obstructions is an expected and integral part of the paddling experience, particularly on narrow streams. Wood portages can often be very short and accomplished within the channel.



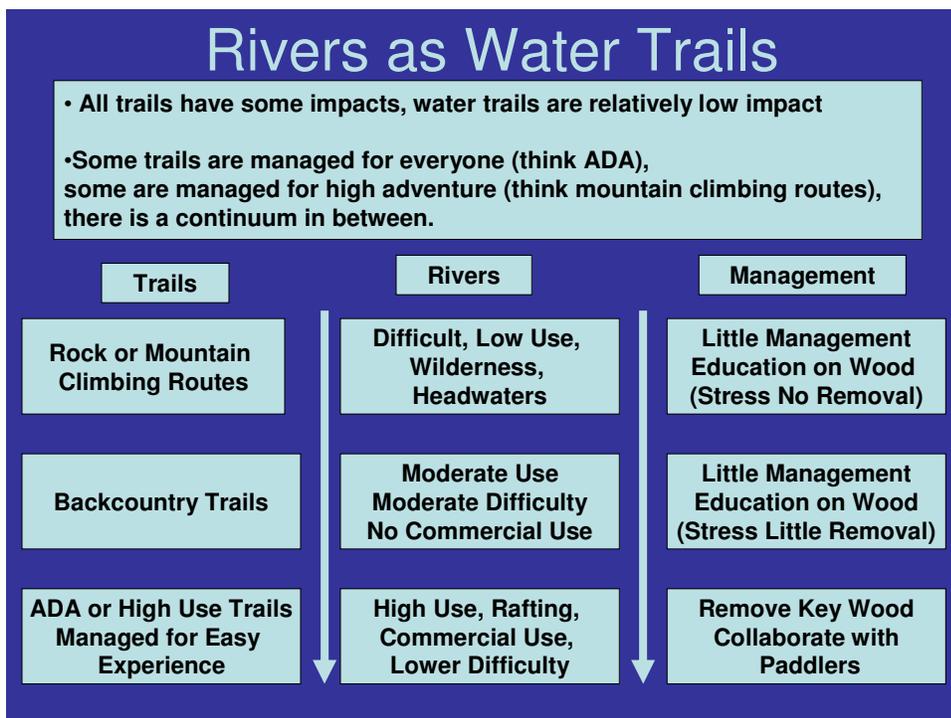
**All wood is not created equal:** Occasionally, based on a wide range of variables, river managers or users will move wood to allow passage, partially remove wood to allow passage, or fully remove wood to allow passage. Only wood pieces that require portage or pose a serious risk to paddlers' safety are candidates for being moved, partially removed, or fully removed for recreational reasons. In the figure above, these wood pieces are depicted in light blue. River managers and users prefer to alter wood as little as possible due to the significant amount of work that moving wood requires, and due to a shared commitment to maintaining a naturally functioning river environment. Therefore no movement is preferred over any management, movement is preferred over any type of removal, and partial removal is preferred over full removal.

A small percentage of wood pieces in rivers are disproportionately ecologically functional and important. The body of literature describing the factors that contribute to a wood piece or accumulation's ecological value is robust and proven. Wood pieces can provide a variety of stream functions depending on their size, shape, and location in the channel. These functions include sediment trapping, habitat complexity formation, and flow modification. Wood is not a significant food source to aquatic ecosystems as some stakeholders have claimed. In general, wood is most important and functional when the wood piece is large and long, when the log is actively trapping sediment, when the log is adjacent to floodplains, and when the bed and adjacent banks are of a fine substrate. In the figure above, these wood pieces are depicted in dark green.

There may be some pieces that are both ecologically vital and recreationally problematic - but this is a very small percentage of wood pieces - and should be the subject of careful management. In the figure above, these wood pieces are depicted in red.

The light green wood pieces in the figure above are not a concern to recreational river managers because there is no cause for movement or removal by river managers or users. The dark green wood pieces in the figure above are likewise at no risk of removal, but may deserve special attention or management because of their ecological value. The light blue wood pieces in the figure above may be best managed through public education, collaboration, and through typical agency action decision pathways. These pieces may be candidates for movement or removal in some situations as described later in this report. The dark red wood pieces in the figure above may be best managed by agency personnel following defined wood management protocols. These pieces should not be removed except in cases where agencies have formally deemed it the preferred alternative for ecological and/or recreational reasons.

All wood within the effect of a river exists in a dynamic state of decay, wear, and movement. Wood pieces may play a variety of ecological roles throughout their transition from a freshly fallen tree to assimilated molecules. The premise behind the above concept is that the subtle effect of moving as few of the light blue pieces as little as possible, while the light green, dark green, and red pieces remain unmoved, will allow this natural process to proceed at all relevant scales without any significant ecological effects.



**Rivers as water trails:** River managers may find it useful to think of rivers as extremely low impact trails. Trails are corridors through which people experience nature. It is widely accepted that some form of land trails – while they have some environmental footprint - are suitable in all settings from roadside picnic areas to remote Wilderness areas. With that said, ADA or high use trails are managed very differently from Wilderness trails. Likewise rivers are managed on a continuum of standards aimed at providing different types of experiences that are appropriate for the setting.

This may be a useful analogy in determining wood management practices. Rivers that are difficult, low use, Wilderness, and/or small in size may be analogous to rock or mountain climbing routes. River managers may wish to manage wood in these rivers primarily through educating user groups, and stressing no removal. Moderate use, moderate difficulty, rivers with no commercial use may be analogous to standard backcountry trails. River managers may wish to manage wood in these rivers primarily through educating user groups, and stressing little removal. River managers may also wish to apply some direct management of wood to these reaches. High use, commercially used, rafted, and/or easier rivers may be analogous to ADA or high use managed trails. River managers may wish to work collaboratively with the paddling community to remove wood pieces that are recreationally problematic and not highly ecologically functional. This concept was proposed primarily for discussion purposes. Discussion following the talk pointed out that this is a very oversimplified framework, and that these types of decisions must be made on a case by case basis.



Anglers can learn which fish to eat and which to release.

Paddlers can likewise learn which situations it is more OK or not OK to remove or move wood, and how to best do it.

**The role of education:** There is often hesitance on the part of river and land managers to encourage the public to participate in active management projects. This has been the case with management of wood, on which there has been little work to educate or include the public in management activities ranging from protection of all wood pieces to limited removal efforts. It is a management hot potato.

With this being said, there is ample precedent for agencies educating the public on how to participate in active management activities in cases where there is little oversight and some basic ecological knowledge required. One example is in the left hand picture above. This man is holding up a federally threatened bull trout, which he will presumably release. Agencies trust anglers to be able to differentiate between game fish and which they can kill and eat, and extremely similar endangered fish which must be handled appropriately and released. Hunters

likewise must be able to tell the difference between game and non-game (coyote and wolf for example) at long distances with lives of endangered species on the line. Even community weed-pulls are examples of agencies educating the public on the value of some organisms while working with them to manage others.

Paddlers are certainly capable of likewise learning which situations it is more OK or not OK to move or remove a piece of wood, and how to do it with the smallest ecological footprint. Educational efforts could be targeted at any chosen wood management practice, including policies enforcing no movement, collaborative movement, or movement of certain types of pieces.

<b>Do Not Move/Remove Log</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>More OK to Re/move Log</b>
<b>Ecological Considerations</b>		
<b>Sand, Gravel, Cobble Banks</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Bedrock Banks</b>
<b>Floodplain Adjacent to Channel</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Cliffs Adjacent to Channel</b>
<b>Log Trapping Sediment</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log Above Water Level</b>
<b>Log is Large and Long</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log is Small and Short</b>
<b>Stream has Endangered Species</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>No Endangered Species</b>
<b>No Riparian Vegetation</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Dense Riparian Vegetation</b>
<b>Heavily Impacted Watershed</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Intact Forested Watershed</b>
<b>Paddling Considerations</b>		
<b>Log is Obvious</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log is Hidden</b>
<b>Log is Avoidable While Paddling</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log is Unavoidable</b>
<b>Log is Easily Portaged</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log is Impossible to Portage</b>
<b>Log Unlikely to Entrap Paddler</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log Likely to Entrap Paddler</b>
<b>Log in Seldom Paddled Reach</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Log in Popular Reach</b>
<b>Class V</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Class II/III</b>
<b>Wilderness</b>	<b>↔</b>	<b>Urban</b>

**An educational model:** Paddlers currently have such a policy that they operate under that was developed in 2001 by Kevin Colburn, and published by American Whitewater on their website and in their journal. The policy educates paddlers on the ecological role that wood plays in river ecosystems, strongly discourages any wood movement, while offering an educational decision model for paddlers considering the movement of a piece of wood. This model offers continuums of both ecological and recreational considerations.



"Larry Vigil"  
<lvflyfish@mindspring.com>

09/13/2007 02:58 PM  
Please respond to  
lvflyfish

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga River Comments

I am Larry Vigil past Council Chairman for Georgia Council Trout Unlimited. I am a lifelong hiker/backpacker/fisherman.

I endorse alternative 1 for several reasons. ( some parts of 2 & 3 would help enhance alternative 1)

The back country of the upper Chattooga is unique and should remain a foot travel only setting.

The removal of Large Woody Debris will have an adverse affect on aquatic species. Alternatives 4,5& 6 allow the removal of LWD.

63% of the river is open to boating. That's more than enough!

Only one group wants the boating ban lifted. A coalition of several groups support the current zoning.

The current management has enhanced fish populations in the North Fork and should remain.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment

Larry Vigil  
4450 Oklahoma Way  
Kennesaw GA 30152

Larry Vigil  
[lvflyfish@mindspring.com](mailto:lvflyfish@mindspring.com)  
EarthLink Revolves Around You.



Joshua Ruwet  
<joshuaruwet@yahoo.com>

09/13/2007 03:02 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters

Dear Mr. Cleeves:

Thank you for taking a moment to read this e-mail. I am certain you are overwhelmed with opinions and advice. I do not envy the daunting task of making a decision as all parties involved are waiting to hear the final verdict as to non-motorized boating access to the Chattooga Headwaters.

I have read the scoping document and the 6 proposals it contains. Of all the choices presented, I would choose #6. However, it is not because I believe it is the best course of action but simply it is the best available choice from the scoping document.

As an avid paddler, hiker and angler, I can see points being made from all sides. At the same time, the core issue is allowing multiple groups legal access and use of the headwaters. It would seem prudent and consistent that if a ban (based on impact) is enforced on boating, it should be placed on all user groups. Many prior letters have already illustrated the point that boaters are equal to, if not less than, the amount of impact currently produced by anglers and hikers.

I cannot imagine this is in the best interest of any group hoping to access and enjoy this resource. My hope is that access is preserved for all groups and that a course of action takes place under the banner of wilderness stewardship. It would be good news for me to hear a new plan is underway that will unite the common goals of responsible recreation on the Chattooga Headwaters.

Again, if the decision is truly limited to the 6 options presented, then I default to #6. Yet, I sincerely hope the USFS takes the responses generated by this debate to draft a new proposal that is in the best interest of all minimal impact users and helps preserve this resource for future generations.

Sincerely,

Joshua Ruwet  
Indianapolis, IN

---

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"Chris Menges"  
<chris@coloradokayak.com>

09/13/2007 03:03 PM  
Please respond to chris

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: upper chattoga

Dear USFS-

I hope to be able to paddle the Upper Chattooga responsibly, with minimal environmental impacts. Please consider AW's following strategies to allow this kind of responsible mixed use and develop a way to allow boater to enjoy this gem.

### **An AW Draft Proposed Alternative**

--NOTE THAT AMERICAN WHITEWATER'S PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE RESOURCE AND ITS RECREATION BY LIMITING USE BASED UPON CAPACITY (I.E., THE AMOUNT OF IMPACT ALLOWABLE BEFORE THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE RESOURCE OR THE QUALITY OF RECREATION SUFFERS). All six of the current USFS alternatives fail to do this.

#### **Elements common to all variations:**

Immediately implement standard resource protection and restoration initiatives like fixing erosion problems and bringing campsites and trails up to standards. Require registration of all corridor visitors. Educate users on "Leave No Trace" (LNT), Low Impact Encounter Protocols, and water level preferences. Implement standard boating safety regulations (life jackets, helmets, appropriate craft). Prohibit commercial floating use. Construct up to 500 feet of

portage trails as needed for resource protection. Implement same group size for all users. Designate higher use areas at Grimshaws Bridge, within 600 feet of the river for a distance of a 1/4 mile upstream and downstream of Bullpen Bridge and Burrell's Ford Bridge, and within 600 feet of the river in the Delayed Harvest Reach ending at Highway 28. Designate the remaining areas as backcountry areas.

#### **Variation 1 (high encounter standard):**

Allow capacities of High Use Areas to be defined passively by parking and camping availability. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **10 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management* as defined below.

#### **Variation 2: (moderate encounter standard)**

If or when individual **high use** areas meet or exceed **parking and/or camping capacity on more than 10% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **6 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management* as defined below.

#### **Variation 3: (low encounter standard)**

If or when individual **high use** areas meet or exceed **parking and/or camping capacity on more than 5% of days** per year, limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If or when **backcountry areas** exceed **2 group encounters on more than 5% of days** per year, for 3 consecutive years, initiate *Use Reduction Management* as defined below.

#### **Use Reduction Management – All Variations**

When backcountry encounters trigger use reduction, survey visitors to ensure encounter

standards represent actual encounter tolerances. If this is the case, then limit use by indirect measures in those specific areas. If not, adjust standards to reflect user tolerances. If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target indirect efforts at those groups first. Indirect measures may include reducing group sizes, altering stocking or fisheries management, education on alternative recreational opportunities, instituting voluntary temporal or spatial or water level based avoidance periods (ie voluntary closures), changing access areas, and/or changing camping opportunities.

If after 2 full years of implementing aggressive indirect measures, standards are still exceeded in specific high use or backcountry areas, limit use by direct measures in those specific areas. If total use or encounter standard violations are primarily attributable to one or more groups, target efforts at those groups first. The most appropriate direct means of limiting use is the requirement of limited permits for entry by all users or for participation in specific activities in specific areas as justified, to allow use to occur at capacity without exceeding standards.

Thanks,

Chris Menges,

CKS Web Marketing & Brand Development

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"JT Allen"  
<jallen01@twcny.rr.com  
>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: chattooga access

09/13/2007 03:05 PM

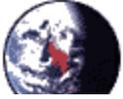
Dear John Cleeves,

I would like to express my concern over the USFS's continued prohibition on boating on the Chattooga River. As a whitewater kayaker, hiker, climber and Wilderness First Responder, I value our nation's wild and scenic resources. Of all the groups of outdoor enthusiasts that I've come into contact with, kayakers are by far the best stewards of the environment. We value the rivers that we paddle on, and the places they take us. We would never deface these treasures. This is why I am astounded by the policy of singling boating out as the one human powered activity to disallow. Boating has a long history in the U.S. and the Chattooga River was renowned among kayakers and canoeists before the ban. However, I realize that each river corridor has a certain capacity and that the USFS has an interest in preventing overuse. This is why I would encourage the USFS to limit the use of all user groups if that is necessary to sustaining the resource.

Whitewater boating has a long and storied history in our country and the Chattooga River has a long history as a treasure whitewater destination. It is not known why boating was disallowed on this River. And there are no reasonable reasons that boating should continue to be prohibited. Please protect our right to kayak or canoe the Chattooga River just as you protect other activities that are consistent with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

Thank you,

John T. and Traci L. Allen  
35934 CO RT 36  
Carthage NY 13619



"Zina Merkin"  
<zmerkin@gmail.com>

09/13/2007 03:06 PM

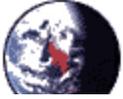
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattoga Headwaters

To whom it may concern,

Of the listed alternatives, alternative 6 is my preferred alternative, but I agree with American Whitewater National Stewardship Director that any management plan has to provide equity among all user groups in terms of access restrictions. Why is group size limited to 6 when other groups are allowed 12? Why are boaters limited to the number of groups which can be on the river when other users are not limited in number of groups? Management should be tied to measures of impact which can be monitored on an on-going basis, with responses based upon levels of impact. Kevin's suggestions have merit.

But in the absence of a more flexible and feedback directed plan, equitable to all, alternative 6 is this citizen's choice.

Zina Merkin  
120 Victory Ave.  
Lexington, KY 40502  
member of BWA (Bluegrass Wildwater Association)  
member of CCC (Carolina Canoe Club)



"Rod Baird"  
<rod Baird@yahoo.com>  
09/13/2007 03:07 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan

Mr. John Cleaves  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

RE: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan

Dear Mr. Cleaves:

Thank you for publishing your plan alternatives for comment. As a preamble, I'd like to introduce myself. I both fish for trout and whitewater canoe/kayak. During the late 1980's and early 90's I held numerous local and state (North Carolina) volunteer offices in Trout Unlimited (including State Council Chairman and Chair of the Cooperators meetings – National Forests in NC, NC Wildlife Resources Comm., and NC-TU). Since the Mid 1990's I have been the Conservation Chair for Western Carolina Paddlers and was American White Water's volunteer representative for Relicensing of the TAPOCO Hydroelectric projects (Cheoah & Little Tennessee Rivers).

Your draft document proposes six management alternatives. The least distasteful is alternative #6. However, none of these six alternatives make sense to me because they assume a conflict between various users which will not exist in practice. The headwaters of the Chattooga are steep, narrow, and shallow. They are suitable for creek boating during very limited periods of high flow. The difficulty of scheduling your boating feasibility study demonstrates the infrequent nature of adequate boating flows. The conditions that make the Chattooga suitable for creek boating are ones which make wade fishing extremely difficult and dangerous. The majority of adequate flows occur in the late fall and winter – periods of very limited trout angler activity. I have fished the Chattooga headwaters from Grimshawes Bridge south to Bull Pen Rd. Bridge on many occasions. Never, have I chosen to fish on an occasion that there was enough water to support creek boating – the water was too high for safe wading!

Further, I was aghast to see individuals claiming to represent Trout Unlimited advocate for restricting recreational boating. On a national level, this is a major access issue for which Trout Unlimited has gone to court (Virginia) and lobbied extensively to preserve boating access rights (Colorado and Montana). In all three instances, National TU is/was advocating for the right of boaters (anglers in this cases) to maintain the right to float through **private property**. How can these supposed representatives of Trout Unlimited advocate for restricting boating access to public property?

Perpetuating a boating ban in any fashion is damaging to anyone interested in preserving angling access on a national level. You may invent some natural resource based reason for continuing

banning boating but there is no sound recreational reason and anglers who support the ban are damning the rest of us to a future of restrictions in other states. While that might not be your objective, it will foster that result!

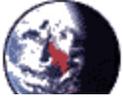
Back to you draft plan – here are my comments to the four forest level management questions you posed:

1. Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites? Trails and camp sites are the primary source of back country erosion and resulting sedimentation. To the extent these features harm riparian or aquatic resources, they should be controlled. Existing trails and campsites that are causing damage should be rerouted or closed.
2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access? This is a contentious issue and should only be considered if an actual conflict exists which degrades users' expectations for a W&S experience. Does the Forest Service, with its very limited budgets, have the resources to actually enforce a group size limit?
3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River? Boating opportunities should be RESTORED on the Chattooga River. There is no resource based reason to perpetuate this ban.
4. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed? This question is irrelevant to restoration of Boating, it is a forest level management issue. This presumes that there will be problems, an assumption which must be proved before developing a solution. Again, you have very limited resources; preserving and protecting the environment is your highest priority in my opinion. Guarding the personal preferences of a particular user group is a misuse of your limited available funds.

Again, thank you for offering the public the opportunity to comment.

Cordially,

Rod Baird  
Conservation Chairman – Western Carolina Paddlers  
Former State Council Chairman – North Carolina Trout Unlimited  
33 Grovewood Rd.  
Asheville, NC 28804



"Zina Merkin"  
<zmerkin@gmail.com>

09/13/2007 03:06 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattoga Headwaters

To whom it may concern,

Of the listed alternatives, alternative 6 is my preferred alternative, but I agree with American Whitewater National Stewardship Director that any management plan has to provide equity among all user groups in terms of access restrictions. Why is group size limited to 6 when other groups are allowed 12? Why are boaters limited to the number of groups which can be on the river when other users are not limited in number of groups? Management should be tied to measures of impact which can be monitored on an on-going basis, with responses based upon levels of impact. Kevin's suggestions have merit.

But in the absence of a more flexible and feedback directed plan, equitable to all, alternative 6 is this citizen's choice.

Zina Merkin  
120 Victory Ave.  
Lexington, KY 40502  
member of BWA (Bluegrass Wildwater Association)  
member of CCC (Carolina Canoe Club)



"Delaney Robert"  
<Robert.Delaney@us.hj  
heinz.com>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga River Ban

09/13/2007 03:13 PM

John Cleeves,

As a private boater I think it is absolutely incomprehensible that private boaters are ban from some sections of the Chattooga River. It saddens and troubles me that the decision to ban boating is based on the misrepresentation of a few and not based on data. I would argue that the private boating community has less impact on the environment the fishing community which seems to have an inappropriate amount of input on the topic. I would respectfully urge you and the USFS to do the right thing and allow everyone to use this resource in a non destructive way.

Rob Delaney  
Manager  
724-778-5690

-----  
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Alex Zendel  
<alexzendel@hotmail.com>  
m>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Comments

09/13/2007 03:19 PM

My first trip kayaking on a river 12 years ago was unforgettable. It wasn't necessarily memorable because I was embarking on a new sport in my career as an outdoor enthusiast. Instead it was unforgettable because I paddled through an absolutely beautiful setting that lacked roads and motorized vehicles - something that is increasingly difficult to find in the lower 48 states in today's world. That experience occurred on Sections II and III of the Chattooga River. Since then, my drive to visit such places while seated in a kayak has led me on paddling adventures in 20 US states and British Columbia. It's understandably difficult for those who don't paddle whitewater to understand why we whitewater boaters do it. Most people view kayakers as adrenaline crazed extremists who senselessly fling themselves into perilous predicaments to meet our insatiable desires for heart-pounding adrenaline rushes. When done correctly and judiciously by those who are experienced, paddling whitewater is not as dangerous and out of control as it appears to others. But indeed, the excitement that is inherent in whitewater boating is one reason why we paddle - and only one reason. I cannot speak for all paddlers, but I've met many other paddlers on my nation-wide paddling adventures. I've found that, like me, most boaters are like minded and seek rivers and creeks that have excellent scenery, awesome wilderness quality and clean water. In fact, wilderness and scenic quality often supersede whitewater quality when boaters search for new places to paddle. A good example is Desolation Canyon of the Green River in Utah. The class II and class III rapids found on this 90 mile stretch of river are hardly challenging for an experienced boater. Yet, to experience this sacred canyon, I spent four of my precious and limited vacation days and nearly \$1000 of my hard-earned money to make that trip happen. Why? Because it allowed me to experience an amazing wilderness while simultaneously doing one of my biggest passions in life: kayaking. Traveling through a wilderness area from a human powered watercraft is a unique experience and cannot be duplicated from the land based perspective. I also spent a considerable amount of time and money to paddle Idaho's Middle Fork of the Salmon River. This river also features stunning scenery, but it also has a good number of challenging rapids, which are qualities that I'm told can be found on the Chattooga Headwaters. Like the Upper Chattooga, the Middle Fork of the Salmon is a Wild and Scenic River and flows through a federally designated Wilderness Area. Unlike the Upper Chattooga, backpackers, anglers, hikers, hot spring lovers and paddlers all share this treasured resource ... and do so happily.

Because we boaters cherish our country's wild places, we would never trash them by littering. In fact, many boaters voluntarily participate in river clean ups. Many boaters also go through the trouble to pack out litter, trash and misplaced human belongings left by less thoughtful users of the resource. Claims that we boaters would trash the Chattooga Headwaters are absurd, blind statements backed up by nothing more than prejudice. It is also absurd to claim that we kayakers would 'run over' children while paddling the Headwaters. If parents carelessly allow their children to swim in the river's whitewater when the river is high enough to facilitate boating, their child being run over by a kayaker should be the least of their concerns; their children could drown!

These high water events that make the Chattooga Headwaters boatable only occur on about 20% of all the days in a given year. This means that other wilderness complaint user groups have five times the number of days to enjoy the resource than we boaters have. Also, these high water events, mostly caused by recent, heavy rainfall, degrade the quality of other uses of the river. Higher water frequently results in lower fishing quality. Furthermore, the trails in the river's corridor could likely be muddy and slippery and therefore less attractive to would-be hikers and backpackers. These high water events typically occur in the winter and spring when the water is too cold for daytime users to swim in the river's waters. All of these factors mean that potential conflicts between boaters and other user groups could

be naturally minimized by Mother Nature; in many ways, these different uses of the river are inherently mutually exclusive!

I agree with some aspects of the USFS document on Management Alternatives for the Upper Chattooga River, otherwise known as 'the scoping document'. First and foremost, the regulations in this document generally aim to protect this treasured resource and the experience of those who wish to use it. I strongly applaud the US Forest Service for keeping these critical goals in mind. These objectives should be the highest priority. Some of the alternatives allow boating when the water level is above the equivalent of 350 CFS on the Burrells Ford gage. If this is in fact the minimum boatable flow for all sections of the river above the Highway 28 bridge, then this regulation, in my opinion, should be upheld. Several of the alternatives stipulate that group size be limited. If large groups of users do in fact have adverse impacts on the resource or users' enjoyment of it, then I think this regulation should be enacted.

However, I disagree with many of the proposed management alternatives and their requirements. First, if group size and the number of groups are to be limited, then these regulations should be equitably applied to all user groups and not just to boaters. Second, the limits on boating that is prevalent in nearly all of the alternatives have been set somewhat arbitrarily. Instead, these limits should be set once the river's true carrying capacity is determined. This determination can only be achieved after boaters are given access to the river and over use and/or user conflicts actually occur. Should the use reach harmful levels, limits should undoubtedly be imposed to protect the resource at a sustainable level, but only if they are applied fairly and equitably. Additionally, indirect limits on use should first be applied and Mother Nature could assist in doing so. As outlined above, physical conditions that are associated with high water events may very well dissuade other user groups from using the river. If these indirect measures fail, then direct measures, such as limiting the number of groups and group size, should be equitably implemented. In general, I support and agree with the carefully crafted proposals that American Whitewater has recommended.

Finally, I would like to send these comments out to the anglers and hikers who seek to uphold the boating ban. We can all equitably and happily share this river. All of us seek the same goal: to protect the Upper Chattooga in a way that will preserve the resource for countless, future generations to enjoy. If we work together, today and in the future, we could become powerful allies to ensure that this valuable resource is protected indefinitely. Take, for example, Wilson Creek in North Carolina and the Sandy River in Oregon. In the case of Wilson Creek, individual boaters and anglers collectively joined forces to stop the proposed development that would likely have irreversible and unimaginable impacts on the creek. The same collaboration was successful on the Sandy River in Oregon, which is now free-flowing thanks to our collective efforts to have the dam removed. I ask that we, to use a cliché, 'bury the hatchet'; that we learn to coexist; that we combine our collective voices to speak out for this incredible treasure that we all refer to as the Upper Chattooga.

Thank you for your time and your consideration of my concerns, hopes and comments.

Alex Zendel  
302 Hayworth Drive  
Knoxville, TN 37920



"Paul Sanford"  
<PSanford@americanca  
noe.org>  
09/13/2007 03:22 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: American Canoe Association Comments on Chattooga River  
Management Alternatives



September 13, 2007

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
[comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

RE: Chattooga Scoping Document

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The [American Canoe Association](#) welcomes this opportunity comment on the U.S. Forest Service's proposals for management of recreation on the Upper Chattooga River.

The ACA is the nation's oldest and largest paddlesports membership organization, with more than 40,000 members. The ACA serves the paddling public by providing education on matters related to paddling, supporting stewardship of the paddling environment, and enabling programs and events to support paddlesport recreation. Our programs serve paddlers in all disciplines (canoes, kayaks and rafts) and on all types of water (whitewater, flatwater and open coastal waters).

The ACA and its members believe that the public should have safe, readily-available access to our nation's rivers, so long as use of the river does not adversely affect the resource. We strongly object to arbitrary closures of rivers that are not based on demonstrated adverse impacts, and are not applied equally to all users.

We have reviewed the Forest Service's proposed alternatives, and believe all six proposals have significant flaws that must be rectified. None of the alternatives appear to be supported by or tied to any actual capacity data. Thus, they offer no assurance that they will actually protect the Chattooga River.

According to the Forest Service's own capacity analysis, boating may be allowed on some or all of the upper river without adversely affecting the resource. Despite this, 5 of the 6 proposed alternatives contain partial or total boating bans. These alternatives proceed from the wholly incorrect assumption that the Upper Chattooga's capacity to support whitewater boating is zero. This assumption is not supported by the record. All of the proposed action alternatives must allow at least some boating on the entire river.

What is also apparent is that the proposed alternatives would unfairly target boating, and subject boating to greater restrictions than other recreational activities. The record contains no objective, scientific data showing that boating has an adverse impact while other activities do not. If that were true, the river corridor would currently be in pristine condition, since boating has been (unfairly) banned for many years. The corridor is NOT currently in pristine condition.

The boating community believes in resource conservation, and will tolerate some capacity limitations, so long as those limitations are determined by real data, and are applied equitably to all recreational users.

Among the six alternatives, only Alternative # 6 would open the river to boating. We prefer this alternative, though we believe it could be improved.

With regard to specifics, the ACA concurs in all respects with the detailed comments submitted by American Whitewater. AW's comments are thorough, well-reasoned, and if followed, would lead to a better decision regarding management of the Chattooga River corridor. In particular, we urge the Forest Service to carefully consider AW's "Proposed Alternatives Relating to Recreational Use," as set forth near the end of their comments. AW's recommended approach would ensure that management decisions are based on sound science, and have an equitable impact on all resource users.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Proposed Management Alternatives.

Sincerely,



Pamela S. Dillon  
Executive Director



Paul Sanford  
Director, Stewardship and Public Policy  
General Counsel  
American Canoe Association  
7432 Alban Station Blvd. Suite B-232

Springfield, VA 22150-2311  
Phone: 703.451.0141 ext. 20  
Fax: 703.451.2245  
[www.americancanoe.org](http://www.americancanoe.org)

*Helping people enjoy the outdoors using kayaks, canoes and rafts since 1880.*



chattooga\_comments.aca.att.pdf



**James S Norton**  
<James.Norton@celera.com>

09/13/2007 03:23 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Boating Access on Upper Chatooga

To : USFS project manager,

Dear John Cleeves,

As a whitewater open canoeist I cherish the opportunity and respect my right to paddle through Wilderness Areas and on Wild and Scenic Rivers. I enjoy the challenge and beauty encountered on these stretches of water and strive to leave no signs of my passage. All of the whitewater paddlers that I know conduct themselves in the same manner. On every trip that I go on I make it a point to remove trash that I encounter on the river, frequently consisting of fishing line, bait containers and beer/beverage bottles. The Upper Chatooga river should be opened to whitewater paddlers. This is consistent with the mandate of the USFS. The lobbying activity of fly fishing groups to prevent access by boaters is elitist and seeks to restrict the rights of fellow citizens. I myself am also a fly fisher and know that conditions (high water) for boating on creeks and rivers like the Upper Chatooga are not good for fishing. When the boaters are out the fisherman will not be there. I see no reason why both user groups can't peacefully coexist. In managing the Upper Chatooga and areas like it, when the USFS can demonstrate that the Upper Chattooga's capacity is met, all users' access (not just boaters) should be limited consistent with sustainability of the resource. A self registration permit system ( for all area users) would be an effective means for this. At the current time I am a class III-IV boater and my skills will not yet allow me to safely paddle the Upper Chattooga, but it is my hope that the USFS will lift the ban on boating so that someday, when my skill set is ready, that I will be able to enjoy paddling the Upper Chattooga.

Sincerely,

Jim Norton  
ACA certified Swiftwater Rescue Instructor



David Jones  
<david@drkayaker.com  
>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga

09/13/2007 03:27 PM

I have been sitting back watching this controversy develop and I am amazed at the lack of understanding by the two main groups, fishermen and boaters. They should not be fighting each other but working together to constructively develop a plan for use of the upper Chattooga.

I had the good fortune to run Section 1 from Burrell's Ford to Hwy 28, just before it was prohibited in 1976. As a fisherman I understand the concern over opening the river to boating traffic. It is a majestic section that needs to be preserved, however, as a boater I know that paddling the river is one of the lowest impact uses of any activity on such a resource. The boating community is usually good about packing out trash and taking care of the environment, something I cannot always say of my fellow fishermen. I will admit that the boating community has changed since the 1970's and not necessarily for the good. I am afraid it mirrors our culture as a whole today, in which people are selfish and rude. Many boaters are not respectful of the fishing community and show a total disregard for their enjoyment.

With the known conflict in mind, I suggest the follow proposal:

I suggest that the Cliffs section of the river stay closed to all boating traffic. This is a tight narrow section and approximates many private property owners. It is not compatible for boaters and fishermen at the same time.

I would open the section from Bull Pen to Burrell's Ford on a restricted permit basis. The restriction would be to three weeks in the spring, one in March, one in April and one in May. It would be closed the remainder of the year.

I would suggest opening up Section 1, Burrell's Ford to Hwy 28, on the same permit basis as the rest of the lower Chattooga. Like Sections II-III-IV, water dictates what is a runnable level, and this can only be determined by trial and error. In a few years boater will realize when it is best not to boat the section.

There should be a restriction of all raft traffic for the upper Chattooga, commercial and private. The river will become overcrowded if rafts were allowed to participate. All you have to do is look at rivers where their use is allowed.

Thank you for your consideration. I pray that the Forest Service will make a wise decision concerning this issue.

Sincerely,

David G. Jones  
Instructor/Trainer/Educator for the ACA  
Member of the USA Wildwater Team  
Eight time National Champion in Wildwater racing.

Atlanta/Highlands





"Mike"  
<mbamford123@comcast.net>

To: <Comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject:

09/13/2007 03:27 PM  
Please respond to mike

Both these were also sent to J. Cleaves

The first mailing bounced back from the comments email.



DO NOT DUPLICATE.! MB Comments on Alternatives Sept 07.pdf Wagner to USFS may-07.pdf

September 10, 2007

To the Chattooga Analysis Team,

As a swimmer, hiker, wildlife viewer and paddler, I have enjoyed the Chattooga for the past twenty years. Ten years ago the Chattooga's lure transplanted this New-Englander to the headwaters in Whiteside Cove. Throughout the USFS LAC process, I have attempted to explain how the expansion of paddling into the North Fork will destroy its' primitive character, destroy a popular swimming hole and degrade the unique wilderness experiences currently cherished by those who travel afoot. I have enjoyed the paddling on the lower Chattooga and hiking above, but most importantly appreciate the ability to enjoy either of these two contrasting experiences. The unlimited paddling playground that is the Lower Chattooga is the polar opposite to the headwaters where a few minutes of hiking rewards visitors with a remote undisturbed stream-side location.

The management of the Chattooga should seek to insure both experiences remain available for those visiting this magnificent resource, and that the resource itself retain its' primitive character and still offer its' traditional pursuits of swimming and angling.

My comments regarding the Chattooga scoping documents are attached. These comments have been organized by Standards, ORVs and Alternatives. I hope the outline is useful in developing an EA that addresses all impacts associated with the management of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River.

Sincerely,

Michael Bamford  
Cashiers, NC  
Member, Friends of the Upper Chattooga  
WSR Stewardship Director, Whiteside Cove Association.

## Comments on Chattooga Management Alternatives USFS file code 1902-2

### A: Comments regarding Standards:

This section outlines comments related directly to the WSR standards considered for decision making. The standards are further segmented into those standards included within the scoping document and those standards that were collected at the public input meetings during the Chattooga LAC process but are missing from the scoping document.

#### Standards considered within the Scoping Document

##### a) Trails [Alternatives #1- #6]

Note: Alternative specific comments are **[bold and bracketed]** for easy reference.

Dialogue about trail redesign along the Chattooga WSR and in Ellicott Wilderness is refreshing. A public discussion on the state and future of these trails could prove very beneficial to the resource.

1. It should be pointed out that the Capacity analysis did not collect ANY data on current levels of trail use, (Whom?, When? Why?). The analysis simply did not review or categorize dispersed visitor needs. Any redesign of trails at this point in time would be based on complete speculation and will not include all necessary input. Collecting data on use either by survey, permit or observation over the next few years might be helpful in addressing the long term needs within the corridor. Interviewing the hunters, hikers, scouts, families and anglers that currently camp and use the trails should be done before trails are moved or redesigned. Some visitor data could help create a Chattooga Trail systems that will protect the resource for years to come. For a fraction of the cost and under less contentious conditions, a separate EA on trail redesign might provide useful results.  
What we have learned from the LAC is that some trails have fallen into disrepair and that boats and anglers like the river at the 2.3'-2.6' water levels. This is not helpful in the initiation of trail redesigns.
2. The trail from Burrells Ford to the East Fork, is still a beautiful hike but it is showing its' age with overuse. The improvements to the Chattooga River trail above Bull Pen in 2007 greatly improved the hike (Thank You!). However, some of the "user created" spur trails that were closed above BP during the work are being rerouted and this will only lead to future problems and a proliferation of user-trails to these desired river-side destinations. One such trail, in very poor condition, on a very steep grade, is being considered for unlimited kayak access under alternative #4. This trail will require mitigation quickly and a small bridge if it going to be used by boaters after heavy rains.
3. **[#4,#5 and #6]** One cynical note regarding user-created-trails involves the situation where some trails may be closed to remote river locations while access is granted to creekers, a new user group. The elimination of local access while granting access to well-funded recreational organizations will be very controversial to area residents. Thirty years ago the WSR CLMP shut access roads creating resentment toward the WSR and USFS; some of these feelings are still harbored today. **Closing foot-travel access to remote river destinations while granting access to creek boaters creates a preferential policy favoring creekers** over all others. Any limiting of hikers/anglers while adding a creekers will not be received well by local communities. This preferential access for kayakers should be noted and explained in the EA.
4. The **Slide Rock trails** might be the most overused on the North Fork. The "improvements" to this area included gravel stairs that are carefully avoided by barefoot swimming kids; this has actually increase erosion and widened trails. This area needs a little thoughtful TLC before is becomes a barren mud-hole. Additional uses should not be considered prior to mitigation.

5. **Paved with poor intentions [#4,#5,#6]** It requires repeating that most boat access trails on the lower river required paving. The need for a paved access trail is a result of repeated use between parking lots and the river after heavy rains. Logically, all proposed new boat access trails WILL eventually require paving similar to downriver access, this eventual reality should be considered in an EA under cumulative impacts.

Any additional use of the trail just above Bull Pen -that has just been improved- will shortly require paving (especially with the forecasted 70+ boaters/day accessing this area after heavy rains). Lastly the trail to proposed access trail in [#4] and from Lick Log Creek [#5] should be evaluated as eventually requiring stairs, erosion controls and eventually paving.

6. **Portage/Scouting Trails [#4,#5,#6]:** The Chattooga analysis acknowledged the need for some new trails to accommodate paddling needs [page 43 of the *Integrated Report*]. The need for new portage/access trails coupled with the statement “no new user created trails” is contradictory and creates the “impossibility alternative” Kayak access WILL require new user created trails with the fewest limits on kayaks, alternative #6, creating the greatest number of new user-created trails; the necessity and impact of these new trails requires careful review in the EA.

- Since the expert panels were done by “experts” (all AW members) during a single flow, the portage needs for all skill levels and at all water levels, in all types of crafts remains unknown. The required high water boating flows will force portaging kayakers to create new user-trails above the bedrock damaging the rhododendron thickets and trampling the fragile banks. Over private lands portage and scouting will occur above the ordinary high-water mark resulting in trespassing onto private property.
- Scouting, like portaging, requires kayakers to survey upcoming rapids. The USFS description of North Fork in the 1971 WSR Study report indicated numerous “blind drops” and “Narrow sluices” and the obvious need to scout. The only way to scout this drop is from the shoreline. AW paddling trip reports (submitted by Don Kinser in 2002 to Michael Crane of the USFS) noted the need for “intensive scouting” and “a lot of scouting” on these illegal headwater runs. Similar to portage trails, scouting trails will result in flora trampling, erosion, water degradation and trespassing. The need to Scout from the banks is a standard safety precaution and clearly outlined in Appendix A.
- Finally the “flashy hydrology” will require hike-outs to avoid rising or receding flows. This situation also requires use of the banks and trails resulting in similar impacts as listed above.

7. USDA Soil-type surveys by the NCRS should be considered in the planning and mitigation of any new and existing trails.

#### **b) Campsites:**

We are pleased to see the USFS considering WSR classification to tier impact standards for campsite use. [#3.#4,#5,#6]

1. [#1- 6] Campsite mitigation is required since sites should be 50+ feet away from the river. However, the River’s roar or babble is the reason many people camp at the Chattooga. Sites should remain away from the trail but near the river. Regarding looking before you leap, please see (Trails 1. 2. above).
2. [#4 - 6] What is the cumulative impact of adding an entirely new group (boaters) to the already overused campsite capacity? These new users will be able to transport more gear via their easier-access crafts to remote river sites. Boat dragging will increase on riparian trails and these boats require greater space per visitor at those remote campsites.
3. [#4 , #5] Since the upper Chattooga is “extremely flashy” during the growing season, what happens when overnight boaters wake to a river either too-low or too-high for boating? I can speak from personal experience that this does happen. How can kayakers be allowed to camp when limited by flow levels to reduce fishing

disturbances. To avoid such problems boats should not be allowed at campsites along the river in wild sections. Boaters, yes... Boats, no.

4. [#1- 6] Consider moving all camping away from frontcountry areas, ie establish no camping area near access points. I have witnessed pitched tents within a few feet of the Trail/road at all front country sites. King's Creek, and Amos Branch provide developed campsites for near-car camping; these are far away from water access sites. Signs discouraging overnight use near access sites (at all three bridges) will minimize the scenic/resource impact on these highly visible areas from the associated tents, fires, trash and pit toilets. A "no camping at undeveloped sites" policy, will help maintain scenic values at front-country access sites. Another method to solve this problem would be to set a rule that no camping within ¼ mile of any bridge within "scenic" or "recreation" classified areas.

Fontcountry camping is a problem growing incrementally worst with each passing year. Camps a few feet from the road at Burrells Ford, Slide Rock and Bull Pen leave an ugly first impression for those just arriving for a wilderness visit.

### **c) Parking lots:**

Unfortunately, most study funding went toward angler/boater flow studies and the parking and traffic at all three bridges still remains problematic during peak seasons. Kids running in the road near the winding NC1107. Similar visibility problems exist at BP. BF is to another level but the wide shoulders and clear views are less of a visibility problem for drivers. All these current issues do not include the increased numbers of parked cars that will be added if floating is expanded above 28.

1. [#4,#5,#6] Alternative #4 - #6 note "no net gain in parking" and boaters (an additional user group) will be allowed; parking will become the capacity limiter. This is clearly going to **exacerbate capacity problems, and start limiting users**. What these alternatives are saying is that "boating will be added without increasing access capacity"; **This IS a *de facto* limiting and displacement of some current visitors**. Unlike current day users (birders, day hikers, picnickers, scenery seekers and swimmers at Bull Pen and Slide Rock) boaters will be parked for a larger portion of the day 5-8 hours. Once parked, boaters (with a minimum of 2 cars/ group) will essentially occupy potential spaces currently used by day users that reportedly spend short visits at Bull Pen and Slide Rock. One boating group with three cars could limit use to over ten potential short-term vehicles and many times more potential visitors. Letting a few users occupy spaces that could accommodate many more appears like a poor approach to capacity planning.

The Integrated report estimated 70 boaters putting-in at Bull Pen and possibly 20 more boaters taking-out from a Chattooga Cliffs run. That is a net demand of about 45 spaces for parking near Bull Pen, if we assume 2 persons per vehicle. Bull Pen currently has less than 30 developed parking sites. Using similar logic at Burrells Ford 60 kayak parking spaces will be required or about 60% of current capacity. These numbers do not include growth or the "latent demand" forecasted for the first few years.

During the Summer months, parking at Slide rock is already well over capacity.

If this is a capacity study, parking needs, and their indirect consequences, requires careful review. Both Put-in and Take-out parking needs requires full consideration within the EA.

The USFS should consider if the forecasted boating use-levels in the *Integrated Report* might be low. Based on the number of letters to the USFS, the demand for creek boating may be significantly higher than originally forecasted.

2. [#1 & #3] proposes no net gain in parking, but no new users. If the goal is stop growth in use, parking is a useful passive capacity limiter; this is an excellent resource protecting proposal and based on the integrated report,

required at current use levels without considering additional users or normal growth. However, with some long-term trail redesign, in conjunction with new parking away from the river, an increase in capacity may be available without creating social conflict near the bridges. Look at the Wilderness trails below BP road as an example of how- to improve the situation at BF.

Consider turning the campsite just above BP into a parking lot for the Chattooga Cliffs trail loop trail. Consider boat access below King's Creek camp only.

3. [#2] No Parking in the corridor; this is a great idea but will eliminate access at Slide Rock. This will definitely upset the locals who go to slide rock.

Again a review of parking in conjunction with a long-term trail redesign would better protect the resource and ORVs. Lots/uses/access/camps and trails should not be viewed independently from one another. Possibly consider parking with a three-hour limit to near BP and GB Bridge to accommodate swimmers at GB and short term scenery seekers at BP

4. [#1-#6] Like user created trails, users can be creative in parking. Most of this creativity can impact the environment or create an unsafe roadside situation. Solutions might involve enforcement, placement of rock obstacles, or ugly signage. For Whiteside Cove Road, NC1107, the DOT requires consultation.
5. [#1 - #6] Consider implementing a "No overnight parking near bridge access" policy in order to discourage leaving cars for entire days in what will soon be coveted parking areas. Again see the current design for Wilderness visitors below BP road.

#### **d) Encounters: [ #1-#6]**

1. The number of encounters should be considered in each alternative. Encounters could set an overall management policy that meets these capacity standards, (saturation levels as defined by the 1971 WSR study). Overall capacity levels should be reviewed for the entire river, including below 28, based on visitor preferences and maximizing overall visitor satisfaction on the entire Wild and Scenic Chattooga. The Appeal Decision noted that Sumter should "adjust or amend, as appropriate, the RLRMP to reflect a new decision based on the findings"; it did not limit policy revisions to the Chattooga's North Fork. Therefore, neither should proposed EA alternatives.

Currently, only Alternative #2 plans to use the number of encounters as a standard to establishing management policy. Collecting census encounter data is not necessary, impractical and economically wasteful. Encounter standards should be used to help set policy by limiting and adjusting visitor behavior to meet target encounter standards and periodically monitored for compliance.

2. Dispersed visitors overwhelmingly supported standards of "Few Encounters" and "No Fishing Disturbances" during the Chattooga Public Meeting in December 2005. In fact, "no fishing disturbances", AKA river encounters, was the single most requested standard in the Chattooga Public meeting. The 2004 Sumter FEIS noted this concern; *"Among trout fishermen, solitude appears to be most important to backcountry anglers. These anglers tend to fish ¼ mile or more from access points and space themselves out along the river. These fishermen would be most affected by an increase in the number of encounters with other user groups, and in particular with boaters that might float into and through waters that are being fished, or that might require the angler to move within the river in order to allow boats to pass."*[pg h-6 FEIS] Policy altering on-river encounters should be reviewed in each alternative, especially where expanding kayaking onto the North Fork is being considered.
3. Not all encounters are alike. Encounters at parking lots or along front-country hiking trails are less likely to be considered negative than those found in the backcountry or at a final destinations. For the majority of the foot travel visitors, the destination to a Wild and Scenic River is the river. The number of encounters on, and along, the river

should be more restrictive than trail encounters. Likewise, fewer encounters were desired for backcountry users ...in the “wild” areas.

4. The existing WSR classifications could be useful in establishing encounter standards.

Here is a tiered proposal for encounter standards on the North Fork.

- Less than three encounters per day on “Wild” river segments or at backcountry campsites, 97% of the time\*.
- Less than two fishing disturbances or encounters per day on WILD sections of the River, 97 % of the time.
- Less than seven encounters/day on a designated scenic sections of River, 97 % of the time.
- Less then ten trail encounters within 200 yards from a parking lot or bridge, 97% of the time.

\*97% levels will set policy at the two-times standard deviation level.

5. Agency policy can be set in many ways in order to meet Encounter Standards. Some proposed alternatives incorporate seasonal restrictions, activity restrictions, minimum flow levels, parking limits and trail redesign. Other limiting methods include time of day, and number of groups per day. These additional limiting policy should be explored in conjunction seasonal and water level limits to minimize on-river encounters in a draft EA alternative or during the upcoming workshop. Capacity below 28 should be included when setting encounter standards and regulations should be considered for the entire WSR in order to set an equitable for all users.

6. Each activity increases the number of encounters distinctly. Since dispersed visitors (anglers/hikers/etc.) spread to various locations throughout the corridor on multiple trails, one additional hiker may only increase the number of encounters on the trail slightly with an only slight probability of selecting the same river location. Kayaking must use the entire stream between access points and pass every location along the river. Therefore, boaters will have a geometrically higher probability of encountering an angler, or dispersed visitor, along the river. The unique mode of travel by kayaks and their impact on the number of river encounters or fishing disturbances requires review within the EA.

Unmanaged recreation is one of the *Four Threats to Public Lands* highlighted by the USFS in 2006. Establishing area capacities and associated policies based on encounter level is a great step in actively managing recreation policy so that the resource and diverse opportunities for visitor experiences will remain available into the future.

**e) User registration: ( cost v. benefit):[ Alt #2]**

1. [#2] Unlike floaters that enter the resource at a few key points along the river, dispersed users are hiking/driving/etc from many different points. There are 16+ access points in NC alone. In addition many users do not register. There are less expensive ways to determine who, why, and when people visit the River, these include surveys, observation cycle counts, etc. A pseudo-census from registration, and associated tabulation efforts will be expensive and will still not capture all the data.
2. There are easier, and less expensive ways of gathering visitor data; one method may be spot counts, with all use captured by a constantly changing digital camera and reviewed offsite in a fraction of the time. The USFS should use this opportunity to review the cost versus benefits of visitor permits on the entire Chattooga, including downriver.
3. If census data is required initiate a pay-to-park (like at Whitewater Falls). Charge two dollars per car but reduce it to fifty cents IF they fill out a five line questionnaire. This can be implemented on the Entire River down to Tugaloo lake; if data collection is required this will pay for that data. [ I have heard boaters brag that they pee in the pay boxes to discourage fees and assume others may do the same. Mesh-bottom drop boxes and coated envelopes are probably appropriate.]

**f) Group size:**

1. A size of 12 is too large for a wilderness experience and this is especially true ON the river. The USFS should use the already classified “wild” sections to help restrict group size. River areas classified as “wild” or declared Wilderness should have smaller group sizes. Group sizes over six in WILD segments could require a permit to accommodate scouting and field trips (children under 10 should be exempt). This still allows for organized scouting trips and school field trips. It will force larger groups out of the backcountry where solitude should remain valued.  
Group sizes of 6 or less will help keep ad-hoc commercial/guided ventures unprofitable.  
Please review the July 10<sup>th</sup> workshop notes, I believe group sizes of six or less were preferred by most groups. 12 is just too many and too easy to commercialize, this is especially true ON the river.
2. No lower limit is set for boaters even though safety guidelines suggest a minimum of two for class IV+ whitewater.
3. The Maximum number of groups per day is not explored. The USFS sets caps on commercial rafts down stream and AW has requested kayak renters also be limited in numbers per day. Caps have been found to be useful in permitting private river recreation elsewhere, If permitted daily use caps on private boaters should be considered on the entire Chattooga.

**g) Type of Craft: [#4,#5,#6]**

The alternatives limit watercrafts to “single capacity hard-boats” and “single person inflatable kayaks”; it does not consider any other type of floating craft. The Appeal Decision instructed the USFS to conduct a Visitor Capacity Analysis on “non-commercial boats”; arbitrarily eliminating some types of non-commercial boats from consideration could lead to future lawsuits and appeals from other access organizations like AWA (American Watercraft Association), ACA (American Canoe Association), or TAAIF<sup>1</sup>. WSR compatible crafts include two-person canoes, Four-person rafts, motorized fishing skiffs, PWC and basic inner tubes; these have been arbitrarily eliminated from consideration in all alternatives. At least one alternative in the EA should include ALL types of non-commercial boats with a critique and analysis each might have to the human and resource environment.

In addition, inflatable kayaks were never studied during the boating trials. These crafts require more draft than a kayak and will require more portages and associated impact to the banks.

**h) Trout Habitat LWD [#1,#4,#5,#6]**

*“Riparian corridors will be managed to retain, restore and/or enhance the inherent ecological processes and functions of the associated aquatic, riparian, and upland components within the corridor.”* Pg 16 2004 Sumter FEIS summary

1. **Large Woody Debris** Even with “limited LWD removal”, there should never be removal of woody debris in **Wild** sections of the river. The larger logs and strainers that create boating hazards today are tomorrow's LWD that keep and maintain a healthy ecosystem. Mother Nature will alter woody debris after each heavy rain. Guaranteed clear passage would be impossible with the North Fork's flashy hydrology. If there is a threat to boaters and boater property from LWD, the solution is simple, boaters should be removed not the protected natural and biological processes that are given priority over recreational demands under the WSR Act in section 10.

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<sup>1</sup> TAAIF : Those with Acute Attachment to their Inflatable Friend

- If a kayaker is not in enough control of his craft enough to miss a down tree, how could they avoid the swimmers, snorkelers or anglers visiting the Chattooga? The USFS should consider visitor safety in policy, including the safety of other in-river visitors when kayakers are crashing down the watercourse.

**2. Water temperature:** The Chattooga is at the upper limit for temperature considered suitable for healthy trout habitat. The numerous spring-feed tributaries choked with rhododendrons help keep the temperature cool enough throughout the summer to support fish reproduction<sup>2</sup>. An increase of water temperature of just a three degrees could result in large kills<sup>3</sup>.

Unfortunately, the cooling rhododendron canopy would require removal for boats to pass through these tight tributaries thus increasing overall water temperature. The current no boating policy protects the upper channel and these smaller tributaries that terminate into the Chattooga. This indirect impact onto trout habitat requires review.

**i) Flow Levels considerations. [#4 ,#5 and #6]**

We applaud the effort the USFS has put into seeking a compromise utilizing flow levels to separate conflicting activities. The kayak lobby first made this claim, and then the hired consultant made the claim prior to collecting any data<sup>4</sup>. What has been made clear in the LAC analysis is that the hypothesis that flows will naturally separate conflicting activities [boating and angling] on the North Fork is inaccurate. Additionally, flows are unlikely to reduce boat encounters for any type of visitors.

1. After completion of the flow studies the USFS published Mr. Whitakers report that noted...

**“It is clear that acceptable ranges for the two groups [anglers and boaters] overlap.”**

*page 42 of the 2007 Chattooga River Expert Panel Field Assessment Report*

The expert panels proved that flow levels alone would not separate these conflicting activities. The study was able to validate the necessity of the thirty year old management policy with a single day of recreational flow study. The flow study results were clear; boatable flows overlap with traditional angler flows. The expansion of boating above 28 will only degrade the angling experience on the Upper Chattooga similar to what paddling has done below 28.

2. The final Chattooga report went one more step, suggesting higher flows are unavoidable and difficult to plan visits around. The *Integrated Report* published that *“higher flows associated with storms are hard to predict and available for relatively short periods of time. This makes it hard for recreation users to use or avoid them”*<sup>5</sup> It is clear that not only do acceptable flows overlap but that unacceptable flows are unavoidable. This further highlights that encounters between conflicting activities are unavoidable, if boating were expanded above Highway 28.

3. [#4 – 6] Flows simply are not relevant to the majority of NC Chattooga visitors. The Integrated report cites studies that indicate “activities such as hiking, camping, walking, biking, wildlife observation, photography and similar riverside recreation can often occur along a river regardless of the flow, but flows may enrich the experience with aesthetic benefits. (Brown, 1991; Whittaker, 2002)”<sup>6</sup> Therefore opportunities for solitude for these visitors will be diminished by increased access.

<sup>2</sup> *Influence of riparian alteration on canopy coverage and macrophyte abundance in Southeastern USA blackwater streams.* Fletcher, Wilkins, McArthur and Meffe, *Ecological Engineering* 15 (2000) S67--S78, 1999

<sup>3</sup> *Spatial Modeling to Project Southern Appalachian Trout Distribution in a Warmer Climate* Flebbe, Roghair & Bruggink, *American Fisheries Society* 135:1371-1382, 2006

<sup>4</sup> Doug Whitaker made the pre-study claim at the Chattooga Presentation in the Summer 2006. His hypothesis was published just a few months before reference Whittaker, D., Shelby, B., and Gangemi, J. 2006. *Flows and Recreation: A guide to studies for river professionals.* Hydrology Reform Coalition and National Park Service. April, 2006.

<sup>5</sup> pg 76, Chattooga; Integrated Report, Whitaker, 2007

<sup>6</sup> sec 3.1.1 CHATTOOGA RIVER; LITERATURE REVIEW REPORT lois Berger group 2007 USFS]

Swimmers are not mentioned above, yet swimmers also do not consider water levels in North Carolina unless they are over the 97%. Swimming time is based on air and water temperature with a four-month season. Since swimmer's flow preferences were not studied by the USFS, and the potential hazards to swimmers is catastrophic, the USFS is obligated to review the social and economic impact boaters will have on traditional swimming holes.

4. The Chattooga studies indicate the inability of flows to separate conflicting activities worsens throughout the growing season.
  - *"In the Summer period, a boater might require a starting flow of closer to 450cfs to assure at least 225cfs remains in the channel as the hydrograph descends."*[pg 11, *North Fork Chattooga River; Streamflow Character. Hansen 2007*]
  - *"Erratic Time lags" in stream flows create uncertainties in predicting flows. The USFS Hydrologists noted "we recognize the storm and other conditions that contribute to uncertainty."*[pg 35-36, *North Fork Chattooga River; Streamflow Character. Hansen 2007*]
  - *"A storm during the growing season may cause the river may rise and fall within a matter of hours"* [*streamflow 2007*]

The growing season further worsens the inability to predict or avoid flows; this problem only become larger as you move up the flashy watershed into the popular swimming areas were encounters could be hazardous to swimming children

5. All discussion on flow levels assumes that recreational flow requirements are uniform over the 21 mile stretch; this is not true. The drainage area at Grimshawes bridge is 12% of that at Highway 28. The flow rate at Grimshawes is under 20% that found at Highway 28. An unacceptable angling flow at Highway 28 can not be assumed to be an unacceptable flow rate at Grimshawes bridge. A boatable flow at Highway 28 can not be used to conclude boatable levels twenty miles upstream. Similarly, the boatable flows near Savannah, 400 miles downstream, tell us nothing about recreating on the Chattooga.
6. Alternative [#4] suggests seasonal restrictions but allows unlimited boating in the most flashy upper reaches of the North Fork and still allows boating during higher flows. If seasonal restrictions were combined with flow restriction, and boating above Bull Pen eliminated, Alternative #4 may be a viable option. Boating below Bull Pen, between December 1<sup>st</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>. IF the flow was over 2.8', is a workable compromise that does not significantly degrade the social components associated with the recreational ORVs of swimming, angling, solitude and remoteness.
7. The suggested minimum flow levels of 2.3 or 2.4 feet will not separate anglers from Boaters. The 1989 GA DNR Report and the 1999 SC DNR Angler Survey proved that angling remains popular up to the 2.5 flow level below Burrells Ford. The Study recorded some angling activity on the SC Chattooga up to the 3.0' water level. The USFS summarized these reports and noted that angling use tapered off above 2.5' in appendix H of the Sumter 2004 FEIS.

It is no surprise that 10 miles upstream in NC with ¼ the flows, anglers report little degradation of the fishing up to the 3.0' water levels and report fishing well above that level.

In addition the hydrology report noted water levels over 400cfs (2.8') were required to insure sufficient water remained in the channel for kayaks to complete a run. (see 4.) Minimum boating levels of 2.3 or 2.4 flow levels will simply not protect angling, especially on the NC Chattooga. A minimum of 2.8' is required stop angling from degrading significantly and that is assuming boating will start at the 1971 recreational analysis recommended first access point.. Bull Pen Bridge.

8. Currently angling is not flow dependant up to the 2.8 water level. This means an angler can plan a visit to the area and be assured some site along the Chattooga will remain available for trout fishing. If boating is allowed, trout fishing will become flow dependant, because there will no longer be a kayak-free creek available for angling during higher water times. Since all other local streams remain available to kayakers during higher flows, access to this stream will only allow kayaks to spread-out to all area streams to the detriment of anglers. The special attribute of the Upper Chattooga is that it remains the ONLY Chattooga watershed stream protected for trout angling during higher flows. This rare experience should remain protected.

The data collected during the LAC clearly indicates flow levels alone will not separate conflicting activities, nor have flow levels been correlated to any activity other than whitewater boating. The reason is simple, ONLY whitewater boating is flow dependent on The North Fork. Swimming is a function of temperature, Angling is not site specific and location can be moved to make the river fishable at most any flow. Birders, hikers and most visitors knew nothing about water flows prior to the Chattooga analysis, this indicates that flow levels are irrelevant to the majority of visitors. The only other activity that indicated flow-dependent behavior were water-fall viewers that also seek the higher water for visits. The EA should not make assumptions about activities being magically separated by water flow levels, the Chattooga analysis data does not support such claims

Most people do not plan visits or vacations to the area around the water flow levels. Uncertainty in the availability of current Chattooga experiences may have an economic impact on tourism. .

### **Standards not included within Alternatives:**

#### **j) Resource Related Standards:**

*“Wild and scenic rivers are not ‘River Parks,’ a term which suggests public ownership of land given over to recreational pursuits. While some recreational use is expected,... management to protect natural and cultural values is emphasized.”* 1998 WSR coordinating council

The resource and intrinsic values associated with Ellicott Wilderness and the Chattooga’s North Fork deserve full consideration. Stewardship goes far beyond maximizing the mix of recreation that can be squeezed into an area. The 1982 National Wild and Scenic Rivers Guidelines, define carrying capacity as *“the quantity of recreation use which an area can sustain without adverse impact on the outstandingly remarkable values and free-flowing character of the river area, the quality of recreation experience, and public health and safety.”* Intrinsic, resource and esthetic values should be included in a capacity review. A similar definition is incorporated into Wilderness management guidelines in 36 CFR 219.18(a).

1. Alternatives should be evaluated based on resource related zones, not boating defined preferences. Under NEPA, study sections should not be defined by where languid visitors can most easily plop gear off their car and into the river

**[Alt #1-6]** The existing WSR classifications were not considered in outlining proposed alternatives. WSR classifications define the pre-designation condition of the resource and should help guide standards for access limitations, social impacts and impact to the resource and wildlife. A closer review of zones related to the resource, versus zones established based on the convenience of boater access, is required. A review of the Chattooga based on boater-defined segments is not what is best for the resource and indicates a high-biased toward paddling.

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<sup>7</sup> An Introduction to Wild & Scenic Rivers Interagency, published by the Wild & Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council, November 1998

2. **[Alt#4 & #5]** These alternatives suggest limits on boating but appear to be counter intuitive relative to resource protection. Areas classified as Wild (most pristine) and declared Wilderness are being considered for the highest increase in access; the opposite should be the case.
3. **[Alt #4-#6]** The North Carolina Ellicott Wilderness which currently has no riverside developed hiking or access trails will become the highest used water trail on the North Fork. This area currently with no-developed access will become a kayak freeway under these proposed alternatives. Basically this area goes from no access, to unlimited access after years of restricting access by not completing the Chattooga River trail and eliminating, horse and bike access.
4. **[Alt #3-6]:** These alternatives suggest “managing biophysical impacts on natural resources” yet the biophysical impacts associated with new users have not been studied and only sparsely researched via a literature review edited by the Kayak Lobby recommended consultant. Many potential environmental impacts remains undocumented and sparsely researched, even though many concerns relative to resource degradation are included in the public record. These concerns include trampling of the flora on the banks and in sensitive spray-cliff zones, overuse of the riverbed during inadequate flows, removal of aquatic habitat (LWD and Rhododendrons) for clear passage, wildlife displacement and increased erosion at trail and access sites

5. **Flora**

- a. **[Alt #4-6]** The USFS noted concerns that expanding boating above Highway 28 may create “trampling of understory vegetation.”<sup>8</sup> The IR indicated that boating will likely require new trails and the 2007 Wilmington Corps of Engineers Executive Summary discussed the rare species and unique spray-zone habitats found in the escarpment. The EA should consider the impact to the flora that will result from increased use and scouting trails. See appendix A (need to Portage)
- b. For references on concerns regarding trampling of vegetation on other rivers please see the The 2004 FEIS specifically regarding the South Fork of the Kings River and the AMC 2002 River Report indicating the need for bank stabilization at paddler access points due to overuse.
- c. **[#4-6]** The remote and difficult access to the NC Ellicott Rock Wilderness has helped preserve the riparian ecosystem in the backcountry areas. These rare species and unique habitats should not be ceded to scouting kayakers trampling riparian vegetation.<sup>9</sup> The forest Service manual advises "Where there are alternatives among management decisions, wilderness values shall dominate over all other considerations" [*FSM 2320.3*]. This unique backcountry area requires a thorough review.
- d. **[#4,#6]** The aquatic vegetation and moss found within the stream bed deserves equal attention. When water levels are sufficient, little boater damage will be done to the moss and wildflower on the creekbed. However during lower flows when excessive impact to the riverbed occurs [under 2.2'] much of the moss and aquatic flora will be damaged or lost. One member of the expert panel reported hitting the riverbed 40 times on two-miles of the Chattooga Cliffs section while the 76 gauge was at 2.6' or the 95<sup>th</sup> percent water level. Excessive impact to the riverbed ecology during insufficient flows requires a careful review if an alternative includes boating without sufficient flows.

6. **Fauna**

- **[Alt #4 - 6]:** There is clearly little consideration for wildlife within the list of alternatives. Turning the Chattooga into a water trail WILL displace and diminish wildlife from the beneficial riparian habitat in and along the remote sections of the Chattooga.

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<sup>8</sup> 2004 Sumter FEIS H-12

<sup>9</sup> Newsome, David; Moore, Susan A.; Dowling, Ross K. 2002. Environmental impacts. In: Newsome, David; Moore, Susan A.; Dowling, Ross K. Natural area tourism: ecology, impacts and management. Clevedon, United Kingdom: Channel View Publications. 79-145

- **[#2]:** Any Policy designed to reduce human encounters will indirectly reduce wildlife disturbances. This beneficial and indirect consequence of establishing encounter standards should be considered within the EA.
- There has been much discussion about the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Act but there are many laws protecting the ecosystem, The Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 (16 U.S.C. 742a, et seq.), the Migratory Marine Game-Fish Act 16 U.S.C. 760c-760g), the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 U.S.C. 661-666c) and The Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.) all express the will of Congress to protect the quality of the aquatic environment conserve wildlife.

## 7. **Bird disturbances:**

- Most boaters are aware that their downstream nature may disturb the same heron multiple times, but few understand the consequences. *"Despite their formidable size, herons are shy birds that can be vulnerable to human disturbance."*<sup>10</sup> . Consistent interruptions eventually lead to abandonment of the water body by herons.<sup>11</sup>
- The recommended hundred-meter buffer zone between humans and nesting waterfowl<sup>12</sup> would be impossible for boats to maintain when the Upper Chattooga's width averages between 12 and 50 feet wide.<sup>13</sup>
- Waterfowl populations decline as human activity near nesting and rearing sites increase. *"When a nesting bird flushes off a nest due to disturbance it leaves the nest susceptible to predation."*<sup>14</sup> The net result is a decrease in affected species.
- In 2004 the Forest Service noted that "riparian habitats, and forest interior habitats are the highest priority for management for migrating or breeding birds in the piedmont. Of particular interest is the recreation and restoration of water bird habitats in the piedmont for summer foraging, spring and fall migration, and wintering habitat for a wide variety of bird species."<sup>15</sup> Increasing recreational pressures to this protected water habitat appears misaligned with current objectives.

Traditionally, many policy decisions involving increased recreation demands are mitigated through compromise. David Cole argues that this approach could eventually lead to a homogenized wilderness system composed of lands that are all moderately used and impacted<sup>16</sup>. Instead, Cole recommends the allocation of separate wilderness lands to each opposing goal, thus maintaining outstanding examples of all wilderness values. His paper suggests that policy should be set so that some areas could emphasize access and recreational use, while others could be protected in a more pristine state. Cole's outlines and justifies a zoning policy like that on the Chattooga WSR, and suggests it should remain the future policy. The laws governing WSR policy repeats this message, "Management plans for any such component may establish varying degrees of intensity for its protection and development, based on the special attributes of the area." [16:28 § 1281(a)]

The classic wilderness management dilemma, is that policy must provide for both public use and enjoyment while also protecting wilderness conditions. This dilemma does not apply to Wilderness within Wild and Scenic Rivers. Any

<sup>10</sup> Vos, Diana K., Ryder, R. A., Graul, W. D. 1985. Response of breeding great blue herons to human disturbance in northcentral Colorado. Colonial Waterbirds 8 (1) :13-22.

<sup>11</sup> Kaiser, M. S., Fritzell, E. K. 1984. Effects of river recreationists on green-backed heron behavior. Journal of Wildlife Management 48 (2) :561-567.

<sup>12</sup> Rodgers, James A., Smith, H.T. 1997. Buffer zone distances to protect foraging and loafing waterbirds from human disturbance in Florida. Wildlife Society Bulletin 25 (1) :139-145.

<sup>13</sup> Carney, Karen M.; Sydeman, William J. 1999. A review of human disturbance effects on nesting colonial waterbirds. Waterbirds. 22(1): 68-79

<sup>14</sup> Kelly, L.M. 1992. The effects of human disturbance mitigation on common loon productivity in northwestern Montana. Maine Audubon Society, 3-215 Sumter 2004 FEIA

<sup>16</sup> Cole, David N. 2001. Management dilemmas that will shape wilderness in the 21st century. Journal of Forestry. 99(1): 4-8.

Chattooga policy dilemma regarding recreational-versus-conservation-policy is clearly prioritized under the governing statute [16:28 § 1281(b)]. The Wilderness Act stipulates that wilderness should be both “untrammeled” (free from human manipulation) and preserved in its natural condition (possibly requiring active management) [Public Law 88-577]; these statements supersede the “unconfined recreation” language repeated by the kayak lobby. The governing law is that “primary emphasis shall be given to protecting its’ esthetic, scenic, historic, archeologic, and scientific features[16:28 § 1281(a)] and that “with respect to preservation of such river and its immediate environment, and in case of conflict between the provisions of the Wilderness Act and this chapter, the more restrictive provisions shall apply” [16:28 § 1281(b)]. **The governing laws are indisputable and unambiguous, a new policy expanding kayaking, or any unmanaged recreation, through the Chattooga wild areas would be illegal under the governing laws of this designated Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River.**

What remains most perplexing regarding the suggested alternatives #4 and #5 is how the agency, in good faith, suggests compromise alternatives that maximize increases in access through the most pristine area protected under Wilderness and Wild and Scenic laws.

**k) Water Quality: [#4,#5,\$6]**

Two types of crafts being considered for use on the Wild & Scenic Chattooga that runs through the Ellicott Wilderness. One is a PVC inflatable craft while the other is a Cross-linked Polyolefin Kayak. Both crafts include colorants, stabilizers, plasticizers and surface coatings that contain heavy metals (lead and Cadmium), Phthalates (linked to birth defects) and other toxic substances, yet these crafts with toxins are being considered for unlimited use in a Wild & Scenic River and through a protected Wilderness. Creeking kayakers admittedly scrap and drag along the riverbed placing these substances as colorful remnants into the aquatic eco-system.

1. The list of toxins used in manufacturing these crafts include, but are not limited to...

<b>Phthalates</b> (DINP, DEHP, DOP, DBP, BBP, DNOP, DIDP)	These are used as plasticizer for PVC. Recently added to EPA lists
<b>Phenols</b>	These are found in stabilizer and pigment
<b>Nonyl Phenols</b>	These are included in stabilizers and pigments
<b>Bisphenol A and BHT</b>	in stabilizer, pigment and stiffening agents
<b>Heavy Metals</b> (Pb, Cd, Ba, Sb, Se, Cr, Hg, As)	Included in stabilizer , stiffening agents and color pigments
<b>PAH</b> (Poly Aromatics Hydrocarbons)	In stabilizers and cross-linking foaming agents

Embedded within the plastic molecules of the watercraft hulls, these toxins are not a threat to our clean water if these crafts avoid impact with the stream beds. However, insufficient water creates numerous impacts to the streambed; these impacts leave their trace on the Chattooga’s rocks, pebbles and boulders. Given the instability of these plastic molecules, each riverbed mark will breakdown, leaching these dangerous toxins into the ecosystem in a size easily absorbed by smaller organisms that initiate the ecosystems food chain.<sup>17</sup>

If each kayak impact put 1/10 of a gram of plastic into the eco-system, and a typical technical kayak run impacted the river 20 times per mile, a single low-water run of the 21 mile headwaters will put 42 grams of plastic into the Chattooga. Every 100 boaters would put Ten lbs of plastic and associated toxins into the eco system. Heavy metals and Phthalates do not breakdown, they accumulate in the ecosystem through aquatic organism. The long-term affect will be devastating.

<sup>17</sup> ref: Maedgen K., et al. 1982. Bioaccumulation of lead and cadmium in the royal tern and sandwich tern. Arch. Environm. Contam. Toxicol. 11: 99-102. Also Erickson, D.W., et al. 1983. Led and cadmium in muskrat and cattail tissues. Journal of Wildlife Management 47(2): 550-554.

2. 303 PROTECTANT<sup>tm</sup> is widely used for protecting whitewater kayaks, canoes and inflatable rafts against harmful UV rays. The material is recommended in kayak owners manuals<sup>18</sup>, by kayak retailers (like REI and the Chattooga outfitter N.O.C.) and recommended in various paddling literature to protect a kayaker's investment. However, the manufacturer does not suggest the product's use in public waterways. Page five of the Material Data Safety Sheet (MSDS) advises "Prudent Practice Would Dictate The Material Not Be Allowed To Enter The Environment". Yet kayakers and rafters lather their crafts with this material that leaches, and rubs-off, into the Chattooga waterway. The product's widespread appeal among whitewater enthusiasts and its potential toxic effects, requires consideration when evaluating use on the Chattooga.

3. Phthalates are the plasticizers used to soften the PVC in inflatable kayaks. The CPSC has banned use of phthalates in packaging materials and children's toys but they are still widely used in many products purchased today. The EPA's website warns that "*DEHP does have a tendency to accumulate in aquatic organisms*". The California EPA has added BBP, DBP and DnHP to the list of chemicals known to the state to cause reproductive toxicity; with DINP still being reviewed. Belgium, Japan and Denmark have laws to ban all use of these phthalates by 2012 while many other countries including Australia and Germany have pending legislation to do the same. The EPA detailed list of the harmful effects heavy metals have on the environment. <http://www.epa.gov/safewater/dwh/t-ioc.html>

4. The only notes included in the Integrated report regarding toxins was that "lead does not appear to accumulate in aquatic food chains (fish appear to pass lead through their systems without harm), so widespread effects of this sort appear unlikely." Lead does "accumulate" in an ecosystem because lead does not break down. Larger lead sinkers that are not swallowed by a creature may remain inert but smaller particles, like those in the plastics, break-down into smaller elements and absorbed by plants and small aquatic organisms. In time, each will accumulate to a hazardous level.

5. Currently, the CPSC does not limit the amount of harmful additives or toxins included in kayaks. If American Whitewater are the river stewards they claim, they would be working with manufacturers to impose better standards or lobbying congress to keep their members from destroying the water quality and environment they claim to be protecting

6. The frequency which creek boaters bounce off rocks through tight rapids resulted in naming the maneuver as a boof or boofing. However, the biggest threat to the ecosystem is a result of extreme-low flow (ELF), also defined as technical boating by the Chattooga reports. These types of lower-water trips encourage greater, almost constant, impacts against the streambed and bedrocks. Alternatives that allow boating at all water levels, are encouraging use during inadequate flows. A minimum water level should consider if a kayak run starting at the suggested level provides sufficient water to insure a craft can float through the sections without significantly impacting the riverbed. Possibly 2.8 feet?

Some of the many laws that protects water quality include the WSR Act Act sec. 1(b), 10(a) 10(b), the Wilderness Act 2(a) 4(b) 4(c) and the Clean Water Act 1977. Under NEPA guidelines, the Chattooga EA should make clear where the agency stands on allowing the unlimited accumulation of these toxins into the Chattooga's eco-system by ELF boating.

#### **1) The "other" Chattooga visitors:**

The USDA published that "*The recreation value of rivers extends far beyond fisherman, boaters and other [in river] users. Rivers provide a source of enjoyment and tranquility for many who use only the riverbank to view the*

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<sup>18</sup> Dagger and Necky recommend use of 303 in cleaning and protecting hard-shell kayaks.

*river, ... Since these passive users experience benefits similar to active users, their requirements deserve attention in design and management decisions.*"(Kaplan 1977)<sup>19</sup> The report discusses riverscape benefits to the passive users and the need for managers to consider the needs of dispersed near-river recreationalists.

In the 2004 FEIS the Sumter Forest Service published that dispersed visitors "may encounter and possibly be disturbed by the presence of boaters found along the main stem of the Chattooga" H-9. This claim was validated in the December 2005 Chattooga public meeting when hikers, birders, wildlife viewers and swimmers all requested LAC standards include "few encounters" and "no-boating".<sup>20</sup>

After repeated public requests to include these affected parties -as mandated by the appeal decision- in the recreational flow studies, dispersed visitors are now asked to review alternatives [#4- 6] that do not even consider the experience of dispersed visitors. By not allowing any kayak expansion, only alternatives #1, #2 and #3 offer alternatives that meet the publicly collected desired conditions of these visitors.

The Alternatives did not consider...

- ❑ Eliminating all boating between May and October to protect the Swimming holes from obvious conflict.
- ❑ Rotating limits on boating between the West Fork/overflow, North Fork and lower Chattooga so that at least one area always offers a boat-free creek experience.
- ❑ Limiting boaters to a few weekends a year and closing down the entire WSR to boats during the DH.
- ❑ Limiting boats to a single hour launch window (10-11am) with all boats being off the river by 5:00
- ❑ Limiting overall number of boaters by requiring issued permits .
- ❑ Limiting boats to areas below designated Wilderness with flow restrictions.

The visitors without a rod or paddle have been given short shrift in the LAC process yet they represented one-third of the people at the public hearing and a higher percentage at the Highlands, NC meetings. These visitors and conservationists deserve as much consideration as the anglers and boaters have been given. The Sumter F.S. published participation rates for Hikers, birders and swimmers as 50, 46 and 32 % respectively; Cold-water anglers have a 14% participation rate and kayakers a 3%. The inequity of resources applied to the recreational study reviewing flow preferences of the two smallest user groups representing the protected ORV of recreation, appears highly unbalanced. Only conclusions about flow preferences for anglers and kayakers can be made with the collected flow study data.

Fortunately, the collected opinions and desired conditions from the 2005 LAC public meetings is very clear and definitive. Dispersed visitors, representing the majority of North Fork visitors, desire a kayak-free resource. This collected social data clearly indicates most visitors feel 2/3rds of the Chattooga is enough for boats, some of the river should be protected for more passive pursuits. (see legal argument in section j above)

*"there are those whose chief purpose in visiting the forests is simply an escape from civilization. These people want to rest from the endless chain of mechanization and artificiality which bounds their lives. In the forest they temporarily abandon a routine to which they cannot become wholly reconciled, and return to that nature in which hundreds of generations of their ancestors were reared".*  
-- Aldo Leopold

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<sup>19</sup> *Down by the Riverside*, Kaplan professor Natural resources Univ of Michigan. published by the USDA 1977 River recreation and management symposium pg 285

<sup>20</sup> See Chattooga Public meeting notes, Desired Conditions December 2005

## Review of Alternatives By Outstanding and Remarkable Values

1. **Biology:** (see section j above)
2. **Geology:** Fortunately, unless the USFS was going to start mining activities, or develop stairs for portaging, there is little recreational policy will do to alter the unique geology of the area. The magnificent Chattooga gorges were around long before we walked the planet and will probably be around long after we are gone.

3. **Scenery:** “Scenic” is a value associated with the Chattooga’s designation and title to the Act protecting its’ qualities. The 2004 Sumter FEIS indicated new users [boaters] may impact the scenery for current users (pg H-16) but the LAC did not explore this topic.



- **[#4,#5,#6]** Boaters have discussed scenery “from the river” but the public record also includes concerns from bank-visitors and their visual expectation “of the river”. Paddlers scenery remains well protected on two-thirds of the river. The scenery of the river could soon be in jeopardy if unlimited boating was expanded onto the headwaters of the Chattooga. The flamboyant ensemble of garishly colored kayaks paddling, resting and portaging along the river will certainly become a wary spectacle for current North Fork visitors. The scenery for which the Chattooga was designated did not include parades of multi-colored plastic toys being dragged along the riverbed between the short stretches of floatable pools. The natural scenery should not be diminished to such an unsightly state. Policy should not be altered, unless designation is altered from a *Wild and Scenic* to a *Kayak* river.
  - **Signs:[#1-#6]:** Other WSRs have instituted no-signs within “wild” sections. Signs will detract from the scenic value of the river. There are rivers in this country that have signs IN the river to warn kayakers of upcoming hazards. These signs severely diminish the scenic value of the river. If signs are required in the wild areas to accommodate kayakers, kayaks should be excluded from use; protecting scenery is a priority over expanding recreational use. [ref WSR Act 10a]  
A maximum sq-inch/river mile of new signs should be considered for scenic areas. Alternatively a rule that no new signs greater then 100 feet of access points will be allowed would help.
4. **History:** The history of the Upper Chattooga has received little attention. The Cherokee culture, the early pioneer settlements with tales of fishing and hunting, botanical explorations, and the developed Fords for westward travels are some of the area’s unique history. There are some impacts on these historical values from the proposed alternatives.

1. The trails to the old fords have fallen into disrepair and some have only remained opened by repeated human use, some are classified as user-created and may be closed. These old roads, now foot trails, provide a pre-bridge history of how people once crossed rivers. At least one of these old fords should be celebrated and preserved. I'm not suggesting opening the river to automobiles, rather suggesting that a few of these old roads be marked on maps, remain open and celebrated for their pioneering history.
2. One negative impact increased use WILL have on the protected historic values includes the negative impact on the native plants and flora first explored by world-famous botanist William Bartram in 1775 and recorded in his book "Travels". The remote and difficult access to the Upper Chattooga has helped preserved the ecosystem in a primitive state so that future botanists or zoologists might make new discoveries including the many types of moss, lichen and aquatics. The Unique qualities associated with an area like the Upper Ellicott Wilderness and the Chattooga Cliffs reach are a direct result of difficult access resulting in few human disturbances. Expanding kayaking into these upper sections requires careful review of how increased use from scouting paddlers, paddling spectators and Extreme-Low-Flow boaters (technical boating) will impact the fragile banks and riverbed flora. This diverse ecosystem, explored by some of the worlds most celebrated botanists, should not become a playground for thrill-seekers to trample and threaten species for recreational pursuits.

## 5. **Recreation:**

- i. **Swimming:[#4-#6]** None of the boating alternatives includes a compromise that will protect swimming or swimmers on the Chattooga. Swimming is enjoyed by ten times more visitors than is kayaking according to the Cordell participation Study published in the 2004 Sumter FEIS. No boating should be allowed without protecting swimming during the summer months. Swimming is not a flow dependant activity on the Upper Chattooga; the LAC did not study swimming flow levels, even though it is the most popular activity on the North Carolina Chattooga. A summary of the car count and agency estimates indicate the popularity of the NC Chattooga swimming holes, especially Slide Rock.

There are capacity concerns related to summer parking being sufficient for new users, children's safety and, for hike-to pools,, solitude and remoteness.

Slide Rock : No alternatives consider the impact from boating above Grimshawes bridge. Since the current policy is no boating, without proper NEPA review, the future policy must remain no boats at slide rock. The local residents of Cashiers, and visitors to Slide Rock, are thrilled that the USFS has removed the popular swimming hole from consideration in the kayaker demanded expansion onto the North Fork.

A walk down Whiteside cove on September 9<sup>th</sup> and even Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup> ,2007, I still found swimmers enjoying sliding rock. The season for swimming this area appears to expand every year but it remains a popular activity from mid-May through September. According to the estimates of use there are more swimmers in September and June then there will be kayakers for the entire year. There are clearly more visitors enjoying this area as a swimming hole and it should remain protected for that purpose. Allowing a few kayakers to ruin the area, would not create a balanced policy. The USFS should protect this 1/10 of a mile stretch of river for its' traditional purpose and special attributes.

Finally, regarding the slide rock swim hole area. This summer, I overheard a woman complaining that her dog had people-poop on its' paw. After laughing for quite some time, and smirking as I am write this into the NEPA record, it is painfully clear that a portable bathroom is needed here during the busy summer time.

Whether human, dog, bear, or otter was responsible for that woman's rant, the napkin draped mounds in the

woods near this area are unmistakably human. Please include a portable toilet at Slide Rock within at least one, if not all EA alternatives.

- ii. **Hiking:** expanding boating will have impact on the solitude, feeling of remoteness, scenery, and parking for hiking visitors.
- iii. **Wildlife viewing:** expanding boating will disturb, and possible displacement, of some waterfowl from the river corridor. Moss, wildflowers, trillium, sage lichen all found along the rivers edge will be trampled if access were increased. See j) 4. above
- iv. **Boating:** It is hard to believe that 2/3rds of the Chattooga and over ninety percent of the watershed, in a geographical area that the kayakers describe as “awash with creeking opportunities”, requires further expansion of kayaking onto the upper Chattooga. The special attributes of the area, directly related to the years of limited access, are the very characteristics the kayak lobby seeks to destroy for their own amusement. Expanding easier-access crafts into the remote sections of the wilderness will destroy the character of the North Fork. The foresight in previous management policies that limited access has protected the upper Chattooga from overuse, and preserved its’ primitive character for three decades. May current policy makers have similar standards and visions of conserving the resource beyond their tenure.

Some additional considerations should be factored into an EA while reviewing impact from extending boats onto the North Fork....

- **Play boating and surfing:** The alternatives assume all boats will be moving through any section quickly but this is not the case. Playboating, rodeo or just surfing results in a kayaker group staying in one spot for hours or the entire day. This type of kayaking, more popular then creeking, may never be more then ½ mile from there car for an entire day.

This will be especially devastating to the picturesque cascades in the Bull Pen area where crowds of thrill seeking playboaters, or creekers in training, re-run the cascades or surf the rapids to display their whitewater acrobatics to unwilling spectators near the Iron Bridge.

Rapids in the Rock Gorge or Slide Rock may see similar go’in-nowhere-kayakers surfing, rerunning rapids and monopolizing the use of a desirable pool. One small group of kayakers would displace an angler, birder; a photographer, picnicking family or swimmer that may have also desired use of pool and rapid for a different purpose. Conversely, other visitors would not stop a kayaking group from monopolizing a rapid, regardless of who was enjoying the space first. This relationship is an asymmetric conflict resulting in displacement of non-paddling visitors and should be documented as a social and indirect economical impact within the EA.

- Creeking is an amphibious, not aquatic, sport. Creeking the headwaters would not involve staying in the stream for the entire run as claimed by the kayak lobby or as witnessed during the expert panels. The need for scouting and portaging around numerous strainers, boulders or a stream choked with rhododendrons, using the woods for a toilet break, or dealing with the fluctuations in the flashy rise and fall of the stream, requires impact documentation in the EA. Creeking requires extensive access to the banks creating new trails, erosion, trampling flora and trespassing.

Creeking is and expedition, not a floating trip down a lazy river. Ropes are used in tight gorges with higher flows, high or lower waters may result in portages hundreds of yards long , excessive stomping on the creekbed or abandonment of a trip.



- ❑ Extreme Low Flow (AKA Technical boating) requires review. Some creek boaters enjoy subjecting themselves to runs that require less-than-floatable water levels. This will cause excessive impact with the beds (see k. water quality above), disturbances with the gravel bed ecosystem and constant angling disturbances during optimal angler flows.

Unlike anglers that march on gravel beds, ELF boaters plow gravel beds with a shear-like impact that jumbles and devastates this fragile eco-system. These gravel beds are critical for trout spawning and supply food (crayfish and aquatic terrestrials) viable wildlife habitat. Constant turning of the gravel bed also increases silt in the stream creating a tumultuous and unproductive aquatic eco-system.

- ❑ Punting, or poleing, involves using a paddle to move a kayak forward through insufficient flows for a paddle stroke or even to float the kayak. This type of use of the paddle during lower water levels should be added to the type of impacts that will result if boating is expanded upstream.
- ❑ Since access is not predicated on kayaker skill level, all skill levels of paddler may attempt a North Fork run (with portages). The excessive impact to the riparian zone, along with trespassing concerns, should be assessed based on the required scouting and portaging trails of the least, not most skilled, boater. Without skill level limitations, and verification, these impacts are highly likely and require documenting in the EA.

- ❑ Kayak spectators whether paddling with, or joining the group, is not uncommon. The full impact associated with more use of the banks for “watching”, preparing to toss safety ropes or just groupies, requires consideration when reviewing impacts of boaters on the Chattooga.



- ❑ Alternatives # 4 and #5 suggest a compromise by allowing fewer kayak restriction on an upstream section where kayakers would stop their run, prior to an easy-access bridge, and portage/carry their craft to avoid disruption of angling. This type of alternative is impractical, completely unenforceable and entirely up to the whim of the kayaking community, that openly claim they do not disrupt anglers and publicly refuse to accept any restriction or USFS authority over their activity<sup>21</sup>. The additional budgetary and resource requirements to enforce more restrictive downriver limits would be significant and unrealistic. Any Alternative that offers fewer upstream limits should assume all downstream sections would be open to the same extent. Any area requiring limits for protection of a “special attribute” can not realistically expect greater kayak access to protect those values. Realistically the USFS and EA should assume the entire downstream corridor below the highest allowable put-in, at the maximum allowable standard, will be equally open to kayaking.

A policy opening the North Fork to easier-access crafts will destroy the character of this area. The foresight in previous management policies that limited access has protected the upper Chattooga from overuse, have saved the upper Chattooga. We only hope current policy makers have similar visions of conserving the resource beyond their tenure.

## **Fishing**

Two-thirds of the Chattooga and over 90% of the watershed is open to kayakers. The diminishing economic return on adding yet another creek to vast selection of available runs will not nearly offset the economic loss to the area, if Chattooga angling visits were contingent on “unboatable” water-levels. Allowing boaters to spread out to every creek,

<sup>21</sup> The American Whitewater Vice president and Expert panel member, Don Kinser, claimed “he will return to the Upper Chattooga regardless of what the USFS decides”. This was published in the Cashiers, Chronicle, 1/17/07 and on AW websites.

creating the asymmetric conflict everywhere, will significantly impact the ability of the area to remain a trout fishing destination.

- **Fishing disruption:** Since the first discussion of the proposed kayak expansion in 2000, anglers have claimed (in the public record) that the small headwaters stream that is the Chattooga North Fork can not simultaneously accommodate both angling and paddling. Paddling will spook the fish destroying the protected trout resource. The Integrated report noted “we believe angler-boater encounters are among the most important impacts associated with allowing boating use on the Upper River. Several other studies of angler-boater encounters have shown that anglers can be very sensitive to this impact (Heberlein & Vaske, 1977; Manning, 1979). In some studies, encounter tolerances were as low as 2 groups per day,” page 63 IR

Some simple addition and review of the fishing process is required to fully understand the impact on fly-fisherman. First, an angler will locate a rising fish and watch it feed for 10 minutes to establish a pattern. Then the angler might spend 5-10 minutes slowly getting into casting position, after resting the water for a few more minutes then starts to cast. Along comes a group of paddlers and the fish are spooked for thirty minutes and the process starts again. This process takes at least one hour, and much longer for the larger fish. This technique is taught by guides, well documented in fly-fishing books and used by many fly fisherman today. A few kayak groups in succession will eliminate the ability to fish a stream for an entire day.

This does not even consider the mental anguish and frustration a fly-fisher must endure for every reset and loss in casting rhythm; nor is the diminished experience of solitude sought by hiking miles into the backcountry, ever considered by passing kayaker.

- **Demographics:** 40% of the US population participate in fishing,<sup>22</sup> but only 14% are coldwater fishers ( 2002 Cordell study) and about 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of those are backcountry fly-fisherman<sup>22</sup> (5%). 3% of the SE population enjoy all types of kayaking (cordell 2002). 90% of kayakers use lakes, oceans and flatwater rivers with only a fraction experiencing whitewater (2005 ORPS<sup>22</sup>) A small subset of those whitewater kayakers are creekboaters (according the the Sumter 2004 FEIS Appendix H). What we are considering is if one activity representing less then 0.3% (.003) of the population should be allowed to displace fly-fisherman representing ten-time as many 5% (.05) from the only stream currently protected from potential growth and overuse, while all nearby creeks remain available for creek runs. It only takes a few creekers to spoil the fishing along an entire stretch of stream, setting aside fishing zones is imperative. The only demographics considered in the Chattooga analysis were supplied by the hired consultant, that was recommended by the kayak lobby, who referenced a demographic study completed by his own company. A review of an unbiased source of demographics should be considered. The 2002 Cordell Study conducted by the USDA’s Southern Research Station (included in the Sumter 2004 FEIS) is one such unbiased source. Another more complete source is the independent Outdoor Recreation Participation Study<sup>22</sup>, see link below.
- **Turbidity:** Higher water does not result in high turbidity on the Chattooga. Sediment studies in the 1995 Van Lear report found very low levels of suspended sediment in the Upper Chattooga. The USFS Hydrology report noted that  
*“over 90 percent of the time flow and water quality are suitable to fish the North Fork of the Chattooga. The Upper Chattooga stays low in suspended sediments and clears faster after storm events than many other streams within the Chattooga River Watershed. These observations were substantiated in a sediment study where the North Fork Chattooga River at Bull Pen Bridge and twelve other subwatershed and*

<sup>22</sup> OUTDOOR RECREATION PARTICIPATION STUDY™ [http://www.outdoorindustry.org/pdf/2005\\_Participation\\_Study.pdf](http://www.outdoorindustry.org/pdf/2005_Participation_Study.pdf)

*drainage locations within the Chattooga Watershed were compared for suspended sediment (Van Lear et. al., 1995). Even though the Bull Pen site was one of the largest streams sampled, it was among the lowest in total suspended sediment concentrations during storms*” Page two of the NF Hydrology Report

The claim that high-flows create waters too turbid for fishing is erroneous. Based on the scientific evidence and the long history of fishing above the 90% flow levels<sup>23</sup> (2.4’), it is clear that higher flows do not increase turbidity beyond fishable levels on the Upper Chattooga. Arguments regarding high flows creating un-fishable water on the North Fork is simply inaccurate.

- o Missed opportunity: The single most important standard or desired condition collected from the public, and published by the USFS as part of the Chattooga LAC process, was that fishing disturbances from paddling not be expanded upriver onto the North Fork. To a federal judge, the USFS attorneys claimed that this was basis for the Chattooga capacity analysis and the USFS published in their 2005 press release that a review of angler/fishing conflict would be part of the analysis. The analysis was later limited to a “recreational flow study” (pre-requested by American Whitewater three times in correspondence to the USFS in 2005 and 2006). A flow study would determine what flows might be preferred by anglers and boaters, but was specifically restricted from reviewing conflict information. The study never reviewed potential conflicts with anglers or impacts to the protected values of fishing resource which is the “special attribute” published in, and protected by, the original Chattooga WSR Comprehensive Land Management Plan.

What is most disturbing is that recreational flow study, that included both anglers and kayakers, was carefully designed to avoid any review of potential conflicts. On the first day, some anglers were removed from the Chattooga to avoid being on the river with kayakers. On the second day of study kayakers were allowed to pass active anglers but anglers claims of fishing disruption and spooking fish were not recorded and never documented in the study.

The final Chattooga report noted that the hired consultants were unable to find any studies that documented fish being spooked by kayakers<sup>24</sup>. While the converse is also true, that no study was found that indicates paddling a small stream will not spook fish; that was simply not how the *Integrated Report* chose to present the unavailability of a kayak-spooking-fish-on-a-small-mountain-stream-study.

The million dollar Chattooga Capacity boondoggle initiated to determine if boating will harm the fishing resource or conditions of anglers, resulted in the conclusion that no study can be found to support, or deny, kayaking on a small stream will disrupt or diminish the fishing experience. What the flow study was conclusive about is that kayakers and anglers enjoy fishing during water flow levels between 2.3 and 2.6’ on the Chattooga North Fork, nothing more.

- o Fish-Disturbances. Impacts from kayakers include, increased noise and disturbance through boats hitting the riverbed or splashing a pool, paddle strokes, paddle strikes against the boat or river bottom, talking, and increased overhead shadows. The *Integrated report* did not include any information on how kayakers impact fish behavior and therefore ability of anglers to catch them. The entire Chattooga study focused on the “social aspects” associated with fisherman “share the same space” with kayakers with little regard for how kayakers affect the anglers goal of catching fish.

There have been scientific studies of the affect passing shadows and sounds have on fish behavior. The following is an excerpt from a letter sent from Dr. Wagner to Mr. Cleaves on May 07, 2007.

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<sup>23</sup> The 1989 GA DNR report and the 1999 SC DNR Angler Survey both recorded fishing above the 90% flow levels.

<sup>24</sup> Pg 69 integrated report.

*“ Sudden, loud noises associated with boating (paddles, yelling, boats hitting bottom) will cause fish to momentarily seek shelter as far away from the noise as possible. Laboratory experiments have demonstrated fish reactions to sudden loud noises. Juvenile Chinook salmon and rainbow trout exhibited a strong flight response in relation to loud noise created by an aluminum tube and motorized piston. After multiple tests, the flight response was replaced by the fish moving as far away from the noise source as possible (Knudsen et al. 1997). Two additional laboratory studies reported that fish exhibited fright response and arousal from aquarium tapping and/or moving shadows (Laming and Ebbesson 1984; Laming 1987). In these studies the fish had nowhere to escape to, because they were living in captivity. The results in a river might be different, and would likely be more detrimental to fish and fishing. Effects will be magnified in the upper Chattooga River, which is not wide in most places. Fish will not be able to escape by moving laterally, and obstructions prevent upstream movement in many areas; downstream flight is expected, with no guarantee that the fish can return to their former position.*

*In a wild setting, fish experiencing continued disturbances will leave the disturbed area or hide to avoid what they perceive as a threat. Fish leaving a particular stretch of the river reduces their catchability in that area and ultimately has a negative impact on the fishing opportunity. Where there are physical barriers to fish passage in the upstream direction, scaring fish into flight may substantially reduce fish availability in a formerly productive fishing area. It is not difficult to envision fish being chased from pools into riffles or rapids that may limit their return. At the very least, boating will result in energy expenditures by fish not conducive to maintaining high quality fish condition. Thus angling satisfaction may be affected both by fish availability and condition.*

*Shadows and movement from humans and boats will startle fish and cause them to seek shelter away from the disturbance area. Ingram and Odum (1941) reported that pumpkinseed (*Lepomis gibbosus*) exhibited a flight response when a human shadow was reflected over the nest. This general response of fish to human presence is common in most species. Healthy salmonids will rapidly swim away from overhead shadows or from a hand waved slowly over a tank (White 2000). The increased overhead shadows and paddles breaking the surface of the water will translate to increased flight and fright responses by the fish inhabiting the river, even without considering the noise aspect. As with noise impacts, the narrowness of the upper Chattooga in many areas will maximize the impact of passing boat shadows*

*An additional concern is the conflict over habitat between humans and fish. Boaters will seek out deeper runs and pool areas for easier passage, rest breaks and possibly other recreational use (e.g., swimming). The impact of human activity in these important fish refugia will force fish to leave the area or hide at the first sign of any disturbance. The response of fish to most human activities is fright (Lassee 1995). The result of fright response is increased oxygen demand, disruption of internal balance and ultimately death if the stress is not removed (Lassee 1995). It seems unlikely that actual fish deaths will occur from boating use of the river, but the potential for added stress is noted. Clearly, increased boating disturbances will only result in deleterious affects to the fish community; no benefits accrue to the fish.*

*Beyond impacts on fish availability and condition, boating effects on angling are well known and require no special studies to elucidate. Fishermen do not enjoy having boats pass through their fishing locations any more than boaters would enjoy getting hooked by a fisherman's cast. The many pools at the base of small waterfalls constitute prime fishing areas, and would be the landing areas for watercraft coming over those falls; in addition to effects on fishing success, angler safety is a legitimate concern. The upper Chattooga River has been managed for fishing activities for over three decades and is fished over a very wide range of flows. The USFS must consider the established expectations of fishermen and the impact boating would have on the recreational experience now offered on the upper river.”*

Dr. Wagner ENSA May 07 2007

- The idea that a “study” is required to determine if paddling a kayak in a small mountain stream will disrupt fish, and fishing, is ludicrous. That a bright colored watercrafts moving downriver, while paddle strokes plunge into the water, through a narrow creek that echoes its’ presence with every tap of the bed, may traversed undetected by the trout in these shallow waters is laughable and such a claim preposterous. Anyone who has ever fished knows that sudden movements, splashing the water’s surface and loud sounds, will spook fish; these exact disruptive actions mimic the sport of kayaking. A study would not be required to determine that marching elephants WILL trample wildflowers in a meadow, likewise a study is not needed to determine what every five-year old that has ever been fishing can verify through experience.
- Alternatives # 4 and #5 that are a compromise and allow some boating appear to put fewer restrictions on the NC natural trout waters, then onto the SC stocked fisheries. To North Carolinian anglers, this is unfair and highly biased toward kayakers and SC anglers. The Chattooga covers three states and unlike boaters requires an in-state fishing license. Anglers do not have the ability to roam across state boaters without paying for expensive out-of-state fishing licenses. North Carolina anglers can not simply move downstream to the protected Nicholson field reach while boaters fill the upper headwaters.
- The USFS published how whitewater boating can and has diminished fishing on the lower Chattooga River. The Chattooga History Report concluded that..*“The number and severity of boater-angler conflicts is a major issue in need of documentation. All interviewees agreed that after the publishing of the 1971 River Study and the release of the movie Deliverance, there was a huge influx of floaters on the Chattooga River. The floaters were largely non-local tourists, and their use affected locals who used the river for fishing, swimming, and picnicking. By 1974, some lower river anglers were probably displaced due to the lack of solitude.”* [Chattooga River History Project: Literature Review and Interview Summary, 2006]



Angler enjoys solitude 100 yards above Bull Pen Bridge 07

At the time of designation it was noted that “fishing is probably the number one attraction to the river at the present time.” [P.L. 93-278] , it was therefore the primary reason for the protected ORV of recreation. The USFS policy that allowed downriver whitewater boating to grow unchecked, has driven most anglers above highway 28 where the USFS protected angling. This policy was against the “protect and enhance mandates” but anglers understood the need to balance conflicting activities on a limited resource and accepted the 1976 compromise that protected a portion of the Chattooga for future anglers while whitewater sports grew downstream.

Today the Chattooga North Fork is still considered an excellent trout resource locally and nationally.

- *The 1971 Chattooga WSR Study report labeled the NC Chattooga Cliffs reach as excellent trout waters.*
- *Chattooga is ranked #1 for trout fishing in Georgia by. [www.trails.com](http://www.trails.com)*
- *The 1985 Sumter Plan indicated the Chattooga was the premier trout stream in South Carolina.*
- *The Chattooga appears in "America's 100 Best Trout Streams"*

Decades of a USFS zoning policy allowed unmanaged growth in whitewater paddling to displace most anglers from the lower River. After a decade of kayakers berating the USFS for access, the agency must now consider if they should

expand access for kayakers and further diminish the angling opportunities on the Wild and Scenic River. Any expansion of boating onto the Chattooga North Fork should honor the 1976 compromise by providing equal improvements to the angling experience down river. If Alternative #4 is being considered a few months a year, lower river boating during the DH could be halted to expand the angling territory. Alternative #5 which opens the North Fork above certain flow levels could be mitigated by not allowing any fishing prior to 10am with all boats off the river by 5pm. No expansion of boating onto the North Fork should be considered without improving the conditions of angling and opportunities for solitude on and along the lower Wild and Scenic Chattooga River”

### Comments on Alternatives

Alternative #1: The status quo alternative.

Alternative #2: The environmental alternative suggests moving developed parking, camping and trail facilities away from sensitive areas, requires permits for all users and sets policy based on encounter levels. This alternative provides some benefit to the resource by reviewing trails, campsite and trail needs.

The complete closure of parking near access appears rash, and requires a more thorough review of overall dispersed visitor needs.

Requiring permits for all visitors appears expensive and paternal. See user registration above.

Alternative #3: is Alternative #1 with mitigation of campsites and trails. This is the most desirable alternative.

Alternatives #4: Suggests a compromise by protecting the stocked fisheries in SC, protecting the slide rock swim hole, setting some flow level and season restrictions through the Wilderness and adhering to NC trespassing laws. This alternative has some merit and problems but could provide a workable solution.

-First it suggests unlimited, year-round and unrestricted kayaking on the Chattooga Cliffs segment in North Carolina. This area experiences the most flashy water flows and reported the most impacts during the expert panel runs. There is insufficient capacity for parking at Bull Pen. Inevitable overuse requiring mitigation of a steep access trail. No protection of the swimming, hiking, solitude and birding values that are cherished by current visitors. No consideration of angling on these designated NC Wild Trout waters, that resulted in an outcry of 100 letters in the public record and was considered "excellent trout waters" in the designation literature. Additionally the unrestricted nature of this small section may create an increase in use as kayakers attempt to boat during insufficient flow because kayaking is prohibited downriver. This "unlimited" boating on the NC section while protecting a SC fisheries appears completely preferential given the SC Forest Service is setting policy for this area.

-Second the suggested water flow of 2.3' alone will not adequately protect the character and values of the North Fork.

-Finally, as worded the "Seasonal Restrictions" are not that boating will be restricted during the summer but rather that boating will be unlimited and unrestricted from December through March. If the intent is to allow unrestricted boating at all water levels during the winter, this alternative offers nothing useful in resource and ORV protection.

If this alternative eliminated all boating above Bull Pen, raised the minimum water level limit to 2.8' and limited boating to the winter season (no boating between April 1<sup>st</sup> and November 30<sup>th</sup>). It may be an acceptable alternative.

Alternative #5: This alternative allows boating above 2.4' levels and expects kayakers to stop then hike a mile once they reach Lick Log Creek. It was clear from the Chattooga reports that water level are not considered a limiting attribute by the majority of current visitors until the water was above 2.8', and over 3' at Grimshawes bridge; This alternative will not protect and enhance the experience currently found on the upper Chattooga. It does not protect the protect summer swimmers and violates NC trespassing laws.

Alternative #6: Unlimited boating. I understand the need to include this demanded, egocentric alternative within the EA; it deserves as much consideration as the kayak lobby has given to the needs of wildlife and all the other visitors along the upper Chattooga.

Alternative six will not protect the angling, birding, hiking and swimming values and will destroy the primitive character of the upper Chattooga while spoling opportunities for solitude and remoteness. This alternative is illegal under the Wilderness Act, the Wild and Scenic River Act, the Clean Water Act, the Fish and Wildlife Act, the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act, possibly the Endangered Species Act, it Violates the Fifth Amendment, trespassing laws and will endanger the well-being of swimming and angling citizens of this country unnecessarily.

However, we do appreciate the opportunity to comment on this alternative.

In Conclusion:

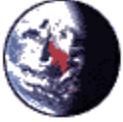
The scoping letter provides a useful array of alternatives for which to evaluate various impacts on the upper Chattooga.

Many resource managers rely on the Precautionary Principle which basically states "if it's likely to cause harm then you treat it as if it can cause harm, unless it's proven harmless". This principle puts the onus on the person who wants to change things to show that impacts will be negligible. The 2007 *Chattooga Analysis Integrated Report* using the AW recommended consultant, using the AW recommended methods of a recreational flow study with an LAC, with only AW members recruited for the boater panel, did not prove boating will not harm angling nor any other protected OR value associated with the Chattooga North Fork.

The analysis did not have to legally determine if the limits on boating, properly promulgated decades ago, was just; the analysis needed to determine if proposed agency action to expand kayaking up river would diminish the special attributes of the North Fork, [E.g., 5 U.S.C. §556(d); *Minn. Milk Producers Assc. v. Glickman*, 153 F.3d. 362, 642 (8<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998)]. The LAC analysis failed to prove that boats will not diminish Upper Chattooga values; opening the river without that proof would establish a policy that is both arbitrary and capricious.

Allowing AW, an access lobby organization, to manipulate the agency, the governing systems, and the review process to such an extreme level as witnessed in this Chattooga Appeal and Review process is daunting. The USFS should be aware that an AW win in this process may inspire other access organizations to follow the same expensive path toward access to the Chattooga and elsewhere.

Without evidence to the contrary, the USFS should not open an angling resource to paddling, swimming holes to thrill-seekers or open wilderness –already requiring impact mitigation from overuse- to easier access. In the case of the Chattooga North Fork were all three concerns apply, and boaters already have access to the majority of the river, the policy set thirty years ago, twenty years ago and again in 2004 was the equitable, logical, legal and balanced policy. An EA that objectively documents all concerns and potential impacts will result in the conclusion that the current zoning policy is what is best for the Chattooga's Outstanding Remarkable Values and Ellicott's primitive character. The Agency has the clear authority to stop the expansion of kayaking onto the North Fork under the WSR governing statute 16:28 § 1281(d). This last step of an EA should cement the continued protection of the Upper Chattooga into perpetuity.



Kat Rector  
<bigsurfwaves@yahoo.com>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: chattooga comment

09/13/2007 03:37 PM

Dear Mr Cleves,

As an accomplished stream angler, an expert whitewater kayaker, and raft guide, I feel I have a good perspective of the Chattooga Headwaters issue. To clarify my credibility, I have fished streams both on foot and from a kayak for 25 years, and have been safely running up to class 5 whitewater for over 10 years. I have enjoyed these activities for many years, all over the United States and Canada. I have never witnessed a significant conflict between user groups in the wilderness.

Recently, I paddled the Selway River in Idaho at very low water. The Selway is the most elusive Wild and Scenic River permit in the Northwest, due to the fact that only 2 launches per day are allowed during the summer season. It is a 55 mile whitewater trip, as well as an excellent trout fishery. The level was much more conducive to fishing than exciting whitewater, and I saw many anglers in 3 days. None of them were bothered that I was there, and in turn, my fishing was not significantly disturbed by a large rafting trip that passed by. Whitewater paddlers should never be intentionally intrusive to the stream angler's position or experience. Likewise, anglers should not be immediately angry at the sight of downstream paddlers. Sharing the river is easier said than done, but better management is the key. The Chattooga Headwaters should never have been managed to favor only anglers (and hikers?) in the first place. Additionally, it should never have been stocked with non-native species that reduce the survival of natives. I support both fishing and boating regulations/bans on waterways to protect native species and habitats, but any plan that continues to ban boating in order to preserve an artificial fishery is not a good plan. I support #6 due to the fact that this stream section has significant fishing pressure and is near a large city. All people deserve to recreate...not just fishermen. If the current fishing and stocking plans stay in effect to enhance angling, then I support adding private whitewater boating without limits. Obviously, any plan that would allow paddling on the Headwaters will be a step in the right direction. But if boaters are limited, then all groups should be limited.

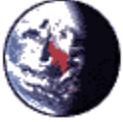
In closing, here are a few thoughts... Many of the concerns I have read from the boating ban supporters are nothing short of ludicrous. Once fair and proper management of the river is put in place, the real issues of user conflict will work their own way out.

For example, at prime whitewater levels, fishing is usually not the best. At vital times for fishing (dawn and dusk), whitewater enthusiasts are seldom on the water. There will be fewer encounters than is speculated by ban supporters. The attitude of the participants will determine whether the encounter "ruins the experience" or not. That is the bottom line.

Sincerely,  
Kat Levitt  
Chattanooga, TN

---

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<http://mobile.yahoo.com/go?refer=1GNXIC>



Ryan McLain  
<mclainryan@yahoo.co  
m>

09/13/2007 03:50 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: The Truth

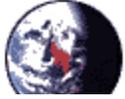
It's hard to know where to start when it comes to such a ridiculous set of alternatives as has been set forth in the USFS Scoping Document. Yet, I will start by stating that the particular section of river in question has only been at a boatable flow 2 days out of the 256 days thus far this year.

Banning kayakers and the act of kayaking from this particular section of the Chattooga is discrimination. I have lived in the southeast long enough to realize that there are still some that wish the south had won the war and that MLK had never been born, but how can the USFS impose segregation again. I thought that that issue had died a long time ago. This ban might as well state NO BLACKS ALLOWED to use this section of river. This is nothing more than good old boy politics. I am a good old boy and know how it works. Those boys that live up there just want to keep it to themselves. No one can't say no boating. That is illegal and unconstitutional.

Ryan McLain

---

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"Don Kinser"  
<Dkinser@ediltd.com>  
09/13/2007 04:03 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Nanci Kinser comments on Scoping Package

Nanci  
A.  
Kinse  
r

1040  
Chattooga  
Ridge Road  
Mountain  
Rest, SC  
29664  
864.647.2014  
Home  
678.213.3546  
Daytime  
770.595.6789  
Cell

S  
e  
p  
t  
e  
m  
b

er 13, 2007

VIA EMAIL: [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

Mr. John Cleeves  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Re: Official Comments on August 24, 2007 "NEPA Scoping Package"  
File Code 1920-2  
Upper Chattooga River Management  
Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I want to make three important points regarding the six alternatives presented in your August 14 Scoping Package (i) your own capacity study demonstrates clearly that boating is an appropriate use of the Chattooga headwaters; (ii) Because of this all proposed management alternatives must restore boating use to the headwaters, and (iii) any alternatives that limit recreation in the Chattooga headwaters must limit use based on the actual capacity of the resource—from real data—and must apply such limits equitably to all users (i.e., limit total use, not one type of user).

The alternatives currently proposed by the USFS require substantial amendment

because they (i) are not supported by or tied to actual capacity data; (ii) are not consistent with the USFS's appeal decision governing this process; (iii) are not consistent with applicable law; and (iv) will not protect the Chattooga River.

For example, to ensure solitude for all users (few encounters among visitors), the USFS proposes to limit or prohibit *only* boating use while allowing all other uses to continue without limitation or restriction of any kind. This type of discriminatory management is expressly prohibited by the governing appeal decision and applicable law. The proposed alternatives should be amended to limit use, if needed, equitably among all appropriate backcountry and front-country uses. In addition; the proposed alternatives should be amended as follows:

- Proposed use limits must be tied to a specific standard, most likely a visitation or encounter standard. Only one USFS alternative is based on a standard (Alternative #3).
- Limits must be applied equitably and fairly– not targeted to *any* specific user groups without significant evidence. All USFS alternatives single out boating for harsh limits and bans – for which there is no evidence whatsoever in any of the data you have gathered.
- Limits should only be imposed when standards are met or exceeded – and not before. Five of the six USFS alternatives limit and/or ban boating immediately without basis.
- Alternatives must include a range of standards for *all users*. USFS alternatives address a range of arbitrary limits on boaters – but only one alternative would limit other users. For example, a standard of 12, 8, and 4 group encounters per day should be analyzed, as well as provisions that exclude the outlier days when high use can be expected or occurs randomly.
- Alternatives must be based on a capacity for all users and/or individual uses. USFS alternatives are not based on the social or physical capacity of the river corridor.
- Alternatives must include indirect limits prior to direct limits as is required by USFS policy. Five of the six alternatives implement direct limits (i.e., bans) prior to trying indirect limits first in direct violation of USFS policy.
- Alternatives, including any capacity triggers, should distinguish between high use frontcountry areas and low use backcountry areas. USFS alternatives make no distinction between how many encounters with other users are acceptable in a campground or at a trailhead as opposed to on a trail or river deep in the woods.

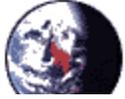
I would like to make a few other points. I do not believe that lifting the illegal ban would somehow ruin the upper reaches of the Chattooga. The boaters I know are very serious river stewards and have no desire to do any damage to the river. Also, I do not feel that there is a conflict. The boaters would want to be on the river when it has rained heavily. The fishing would not be best at this level and so there is no conflict. I also do not believe that the boaters would require any additional forest service involvement to begin enjoying this resource.

The boating ban on the upper Chattooga River, now in place for over 30 years, is unfair. I also believe it is illegal and just plain wrong as stated by the chief of the forest service. I hope you, the forest service, will have the courage to put aside this under the table, back door, good old boy deal and do the right thing. Open the headwaters to boating. Do something our children can be proud of you for. This status quo needs to change. Just lift this illegal ban and allow boating on the headwaters.

Sincerely,



Nanci A. Kinser Nanci's scoping comment letter - 2.pdf



"Don Kinser"  
<Dkinser@ediltd.com>  
09/13/2007 04:03 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Scoping Package Comments

Donald  
E.  
Kinser

1040  
Chattooga  
Ridge Road  
Mountain  
Rest, SC  
29664  
864.647.2014  
Home  
678.213.3546  
Daytime  
770.595.6789  
Cell

S  
e  
p  
t  
e  
m  
b

er 13, 2007

VIA EMAIL: [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

Mr. John Cleeves  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Re: Official Comments on August 24, 2007 "NEPA Scoping Package"  
File Code 1920-2

Upper Chattooga River Management

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Upon further reflection I have several more comments to offer in addition to those comments I filed yesterday.

**Your Decision Must Not be a (Local) Popularity Contest!**

You can not make a decision to continue the illegal boating ban based purely on local public sentiment (or outcry) over this issue. Yet that is what you seem intent to do guided primarily by the vitriolic and unfounded rhetoric from a few passionate locals despite all USFS national policy to the contrary.

How can you expect the paddling community to fight for a resource they have never seen or been allowed to experience? Your study process and your alternatives ignore

this important fact and even seem designed to exploit it. This is not a local issue and this is not a private resource. This is a National Wild & Scenic River!

You have received literally thousands of pro-boating comments from across this great country over the past several years. Many of these pro boating comments are thoughtful, specific and well written (and this is more than be said for most of the “status quo” crowd).

This is despite the fact that 99.99999999% of the boating world has never had the opportunity to experience the upper Chattooga because of the 31+ year illegal ban. All the hard science and real data supports hand powered, private floating use as a legitimate use on the upper river.

### **Where's My Chance for Solitude?**

You must explicitly acknowledge that all private, non commercial users, except paddlers have unlimited and unfettered access to the entire length of the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River. Not one single angler, hiker, birder, hunter, nature lover, or solitude seeker has been displaced from the Chattooga River below highway 28 by any USFS policy or restriction, any assertion to the contrary is simply untrue and disingenuous. Choosing not to visit a certain place is not displacement – it is simply a personal choice.

Yet I, as a private, self guided whitewater paddler, have been displaced exclusively to the lower river since 1976 where I must contend with some 40,000 commercial users a year! ***Where's my opportunity as a paddler for the cherished back country experience and solitude provided by the upper Chattooga River?*** Certainly it is not on the lower river where commercial use is emphasized over private, self guided use. No where on the river do you manage the resource with any regard what so ever to the solitude and wilderness experience of the private, self guided, paddler.

Only one of the six proposed alternatives provides me the opportunity for solitude with out unfair and onerous restrictions and free from commercial raft traffic. This is unacceptable. My solitude as a wilderness compliant user is just as important as anyone else's and all the alternatives should fully reflect this important fact.

### **Boating is a Legitimate Historical Use!**

Boaters were enjoying the upper river prior to W&S designation. It is illegal under the National Wild & Scenic Rivers Act to exclude an historic use in the absence of any science or data suggesting impacts to the resource.

The USFS must revise the alternatives and needs to get back to basics:

- You must acknowledge the results of the boating study which clearly demonstrates that boating remains an important and outstanding form of recreation

on the Headwaters that must be protected and enhanced under the law.

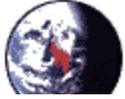
- You must propose a range of alternatives for protecting and enhancing whitewater boating on the Headwaters; and
- To the extent the USFS wants to consider other management issues you must separate out these important management issues for consideration based on alternatives relevant to those issues and not confound and obfuscate the question relative to boating.

The boating ban on the upper Chattooga River, now in place for over 30 years, is unfair. I also believe it is illegal and just plain wrong. It is well past time that the FS does the right thing and reaches a new decision that reverses the illegal and inequitable ban on floating the upper Chattooga River.

Sincerely,



Donald E. Kinser Don's scoping comment letter - 2.pdf



Megan Baer  
<imbaer@yahoo.com>  
09/13/2007 04:04 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: opposed to Chatooga watercraft proposal

Hi! This was just sent back to me due to an error in the address field. I hope it is not too late!

Note: forwarded message attached.

---

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----- Message from Postmaster on Thu, 13 Sep 2007 15:56:08 -0400 -----

**To:** imbaer@yahoo.com

**Subject:** Delivery Notification <comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us>

This is a delivery status notification, automatically generated by MTA svatlsmt001.r8.fs.fed.us on Thu, 13 Sep 2007 15:56:08 -0400  
Regarding recipient(s) : comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us  
Delivery status : Failed. Message could not be delivered to domain <fs.fed.us>  
.Failed while initiating the protocol.  
<[('comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us', 550,  
'comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us... No such user')]>  
MTA Response :550  
The original message headers are included as attachment.  
Reporting-MTA: dns; svatlsmt001.r8.fs.fed.us

Final-Recipient: rfc822;comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us  
Diagnostic-Code: smtp; 550 comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us...  
No such user  
Remote-MTA: dns; sv30.r8.fs.fed.us  
Action: failed  
Status: 5.0.0

----- Message from Megan Baer <imbaer@yahoo.com> on Thu, 13 Sep 2007 12:55:44 -0700 (PDT) -----

**To:** comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us

**Subject:** opposed to Chatooga watercraft proposal

\*\*\* Body Not Included \*\*\*



**Michael Macleod**  
<mcmacleod@yahoo.com>

09/13/2007 04:04 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwater Comments

Please find attached my comments. Thank you for your consideration.

Michael Macleod

---

Moody friends. Drama queens. Your life? Nope! - their life, your story.



[Play Sims Stories at Yahoo! Games.](#) Chattooga Comments.doc

Mr. John Cleeves  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Re: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan

Our protected national wilderness areas must be held equally accessible to all citizens (and legal visitors to our country) who are engaged in any non-destructive recreational use. Carrying a kayak or a canoe to the riverside, then floating down the river, is demonstrably less destructive than bicycling, horseback riding, hiking, or any fishing that involves extensive walking on the banks or river bottom.

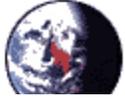
In the original 1971 study for the inclusion of the Chattooga into the Wild and Scenic River System, [http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/documents/1971\\_Wild\\_Scenic\\_Study\\_Report1.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/documents/1971_Wild_Scenic_Study_Report1.pdf), "Floating" is mentioned as a compatible use numerous times. Going so far as stating in Appendix F, " By the nature of the activity (Floating), little damage, in comparison to other compatible activities, will be anticipated on the fragile river banks."....and "The quantity and floating quality of the water will usually determine where these activities are feasible."

Faced with six flawed options, I support #6 because it is at least partially consistent with national USFS policy and the spirit of both the Wilderness Act and the W&S Rivers Act. Banning just one compliant user group without scientific justification is against the spirit of multiple use ethic. A flawed, historical decision to ban boating is not justification for continuing the ban.

I look forward to your FAIR consideration of access to the Chattooga Headwaters.

Thank you,

Michael MacLeod  
Atlanta, GA



"Jo Johnson"  
<jojohanson@rrfw.org>  
09/13/2007 04:07 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Comments on the Upper Chattooga River

John Cleaves,  
USFS Project Manager  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Hello Mr. Cleaves,  
Our scoping comments, due today, on the upper Chattooga River RMP are attached to this email.

Please contact me if you have any problems with the attachment.

Thank you,

Jo Johnson

Jo Johnson  
River Runners For Wilderness  
303-443-1806  
fax 303-443-1129  
[www.rrfw.org](http://www.rrfw.org)



Upper Chattooga comments 9-07.pdf

# RIVER RUNNERS FOR WILDERNESS

A PROJECT OF LIVING RIVERS

September 13, 2007

Mr. John Cleeves  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the upper Chattooga River, which came to our attention just today.

River Runners for Wilderness is a volunteer-powered, grassroots national organization with over 2,000 members working to preserve and protect our country's wilderness treasures and fair, wilderness-compliant recreational opportunities in those places.

You certainly know that Congressional wilderness designation is the highest legal protection a wild area can have. Our wilderness areas, along with others not yet designated are among the richest natural treasures we have.

You must also know that human-powered boating on rivers is an accepted use under the Wilderness Act and for Wild and Scenic designation as well. The Wilderness Act doesn't favor any one recreational use, such as fishing, over any other. If there is no scientifically-validated resource protection rationale to ban one use over another, it is inappropriate for the Forest Service to do so. To favor one type of visit over another smacks of management for personal recreational preferences.

After full biological and sociological evaluation (conducted as scientifically as possible), we urge you to put in place any user limits deemed necessary to protect the resource, and apply those restrictions to all wilderness-appropriate visitors as evenly as possible. River runners, on many stretches throughout the country, have long practiced a strict "Leave No Trace" ethic, including packing out solid human waste for some 3 decades. We know that as a group, river runners will adhere to any resource protection requirements deemed necessary.

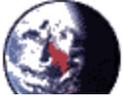
We urge restoring recreational paddling, allowing river runners the same wilderness-enjoyment opportunities as hikers, anglers, and other wilderness-compliant users on the upper Chattooga.

Yours for rivers,



Jo Johnson  
Co-director

**PO BOX 17301, BOULDER, CO 80308-0301  
303.443.1806 FAX: 303.443.1129 WWW.RRFW.ORG**



emdwildcat@bellsouth.net

09/13/2007 04:09 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga

I strongly support alternatives #1, #2 and #3 of the six alternatives proposed by the Forest Service. I believe the third alternative provides the most coherent protection for this ecologically fragile area. It should be noted that watercraft already have access to every other remote stretch of whitewater in the vicinity (i. e. Overflow and Holcomb creeks, the Whitewater river). A key feature of the upper Chattooga is the difficult access by foot. Access via watercraft will render the area much more assessable and inevitably lead to additional users and increased environmental impact. The Forest Service has a responsibility to protect the ecological and biological values of this part of the Chattooga River. I strongly support the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement to validate the sensitivity of this area.

Emily Melear-Daniels  
1430 Wildcat Ridge  
Watkinsville Ga 30677



"Michael Holmes"  
<mholmes@johnsondev  
elopment.net>

09/13/2007 04:14 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chatooga compromise

Mr. Cleeves,

I appreciate your willingness to accept comments from the public, as this is the only means by which a successful resolution may be reached.

In lieu of responding to each question, allow me to say that the Chatooga River represents an important aspect of my heritage. I have spent countless days kayaking, swimming, and hiking on the lower stretches of this riparian wonderland. It would be an egregious and undersighted decision to continue denying access to the upper Chatooga River simply because a relative few have held her hostage on the basis of dubious claims and an arbitrary court ruling.

I support preservation of this area, but I also believe in some form of public use. Access will undoubtedly cause some wear-and-tear, but it will also bring people in contact with her, thus creating new stewards to continue her legacy of preservation.

Best of luck with your efforts, sir.

Michael Holmes  
340 E Main Street, #500  
Spartanburg, SC 29302

[http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Article\\_view\\_articleid\\_29827\\_display\\_full](http://www.americanwhitewater.org/content/Article_view_articleid_29827_display_full)



"Kevin Pickens"  
<insanetwain@hotmail.c  
om>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga headwaters

09/13/2007 04:16 PM

Unless there is a scientifically valid study that shows boating has more impact on the ecology of the river and forest than other allowed activities, and that this impact is unacceptable under the wilderness protection laws, please allow boating above Highway 28 on the Chattooga river. I am a frequent boater on the lower sections of the Chattooga, and have paddled rivers throughout the southeast, and have no reason to believe such a study can exist. While I would prefer unrestricted boating and access privileges, if made to choose between your suggested six alternatives, Alternative # 6 contains the fewest restrictions and is therefore the only one I would support.

Thank you,  
Kevin Pickens  
Woostock, GA



**Jeff Belflower**  
<bunyan\_15@yahoo.com>  
m>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga River

09/13/2007 04:19 PM

To Whom it May Concern,

As both a kayaker and a fisherman, I see no conflict of interest on the Upper Chattooga. Because kayakers will be most interested in this section when fishermen are least interested (periods of high water flow) I think mutual use of the river would work fine. Government land should be for everyone to use as long as a specific party does not harm the land or prevent others from enjoying the land. Allowing kayaking on this section would do neither.

Thanks,  
Jeff Belflower

---

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<http://answers.yahoo.com/dir/?link=list&sid=396545433>



"Cannon, David"  
<david.cannon@morris.com>

09/13/2007 04:20 PM

To: <sumter@fs.fed.us>,  
<comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>,  
<jcleeves@fs.fed.us>

cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Zoning Comments

Mr. Cleeves,

**Please note that I am strongly in favor of Alternative One. Any other alternative doesn't seem right to me for many reasons – particularly alternatives four through six. Here are just some of my reasons:**

**Biological:** Any alternative that allows for boating risks large scale removal of woody debris by boaters. This is not a threat now, thus keeping the river more natural and providing habitat for the wild browns and rainbows (and the stocked ones, too) who call this river home.

**Physical:** Any alternative that allows for boating would result in a larger volume of litter, the need for more parking which leads to more grading and graveling, thus leading to more runoff into the river, more erosion from boats being dragged down banks, and more camping areas cleared by users.

**Esthetic Values:** This would clearly be the biggest victim if boating were allowed on this small section of the Chattooga. What makes this place so special is not the fishing or the scenery, which are both great, but the solitude and wildness that can be enjoyed by ALL users traveling on foot today. In our nation and in the Southeast particularly, an area like this is becoming more and more endangered. As the population continues to swell, ZONING IS A MUST in order to provide different experiences for different users desiring a wild and serene experience.

**Social:** If we can't learn from our past, there's no point in recording history. Having said that, we already know how this area will end up if boaters are allowed to float the upper reaches of the North Fork. Boating and fishing are incompatible with each other on smaller streams like the upper Chattooga. The difference is, while an angler only effects the area directly around him, a boater effects every person and animal that he/she floats by, which would be everyone on the stretch of river that he/she chooses to float.

**Economic:** I believe that the local economy would be negatively affected by the decision to allow boating at any level. I can speak personally to this, as a group of eight including me and seven friends visit Clayton several times a year, stay in a local hotel for two nights, eat out numerous times, buy gas in the area, shop at Wal-Mart, Reeves Hardware (for flies, reels, rods, line, leaders, etc.) and various stores downtown each time we visit.

If boating were permitted, none of us would have any reason to make the significantly longer drive to fish this water when we could have a similar experience much closer to home (in the Chattahoochee Nat'l Forest, for example, which is about an hour and a half closer for all of us, meaning that our money that would be spent in Rabun County would then be spent in White County), or just make the drive up to the Nantahala DH.

**Values/Issues of local or national significance:** The North Fork of the Chattooga is a one-of-a-kind. There is NO REPLACEMENT for this place on any level. It is a fantastic place to get away for a day or more and enjoy just being. It is close enough to a road crossing it to allow for shorter hikes (allowing more time for fishing!), yet far enough away from roads/civilization to give the appearance of "wilderness". This portion of the Chattooga which was named one of the 100 Best Trout Streams in America by Trout Unlimited would no longer deserve that recognition because, as it is, it is coveted more for its experience than its quality of fishing. Simply put, it's a place to get away from it all.

This could potentially also be used to set a precedent for other sensitive places such as Yellowstone National Park. That is a slippery slope that needs to be left alone.

Kindest Regards,

**David Cannon**

Account Executive

Morris Sporting Group

706.828.3979

706.724.3873 fax

770.656.7230 cell





"Hanley, Peter"  
<Peter.Hanley@Fmr.com>  
m>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Opposition to ban on Chattooga boating

09/13/2007 04:23 PM

Hi,

I deeply respect the value of unimpeded access to this river and would like to make known my opposition to the proposed ban on boating on the Chattooga River.

Please find my answers to the core questions asked by the USFS:

Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites?

Self-registration permitting systems have proven to be invaluable in New Hampshire in vetting access to trail heads and campsites. It proves a relatively low cost solution to monitoring and potentially limiting the number of users of the river if it is found to be needed.

Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?

A permitting system would allow for monitoring of the number of river users. If it is found that unfavorable conditions arise due to over-crowding, then this can be dealt with then. It does not appear to be a major problem.

Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?

The opening of such superb boating wilderness provides a rich recreation resource for all to enjoy. The Chattooga river provides a huge resource for the whole community, both local and not so local - another example of the great freedoms which America provides its citizens.

Should the Forest Service RESTORE boating access on the upper Chattooga?

There appears to be no valid reason why boating should not be allowed on the Upper Chattooga River to the same extent that hiking, angling, swimming and other wilderness compliant activities are allowed.

Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?

This appears to be the same question as Number 2 above.

Thank You

Peter

> Peter Hanley  
> Software Engineer  
Fidelity eBusiness XCo Development  
V2C 245 Summer St, Boston, MA 02210  
> Phone Internal: 8-392-1189  
> Phone External: 617-392-1189  
Mail: peter.hanley@fmr.com





**"Lewis Penland"**  
<penlandgolf@earthlink.net>

09/13/2007 04:38 PM

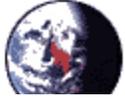
To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Foot traffic only on the Chatougue River

I am a seventh generation native of the area. In the early 70's I was and avid paddler and trout fisherman. I do not see how the two can co- exist. I strongly urge you to keep the upper section of the river for foot traffic and fishing only.

Thank you,

C, Lewis Penland

Macon County Planning Board Chairman



"Jascomb, Jerry"  
<jjascomb@kcc.com>  
09/13/2007 04:49 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga River - Recreation Management

Dear Mr. Cleeves –

I would like to comment on the proposals offered for managing recreation on the Upper Chattooga. I am a fly-fishing, trail-hiking/backpacking and whitewater kayaking enthusiast and lover of wilderness from Atlanta. I have been active in all these pursuits for over 20 years throughout the Southeast, and on the Chattooga. As a multi-sport participant, I feel uniquely qualified to speak to the "controversy" surrounding restoring boating/floating (which has indeed been a historical use on the Upper Chattooga) and the proposals set forth by USFS. I am also active in several environmental organizations with a keen interest in protecting the uniquely beautiful wilderness qualities that the Chattooga possesses, as well as wild areas throughout the country. It grieves me to see user groups at conflict over petty territorial disputes when the real threat to the Chattooga from Upper to Lower areas has remained constant: development, sewage, highways and invasive species such as the hemlock wooly adelgid. What a shame to be bickering among ourselves over restoration of non-motorized boating access to the upper reaches.

Kayaking is by its nature non-destructive, non-motorized, requires no new access points or trails, quiet, extremely low-impact, and requires no investment or demand for funds such as those used to stock the trout I myself like to catch. No new infrastructure would be needed for kayaking activity. By contrast, anglers (of which I am one, which is why I know) create riverside trails and remove a resource (fish), while hikers create campfires and trail erosion – I'm a hiker too. The point is, kayakers are certainly no more impactful to these areas than anglers and hikers, and often less. But I don't begrudge hikers or anglers access – because I am one of them too. Fairness is the point; all three groups should have equal access as low-impact users, rightfully excluding users such as ATV riders, who severely damage the land they ride on. All three activities are low-impact and legitimate for a National Wild and Scenic river, and indeed all are recognized through the country as legitimate – except on the Upper Chattooga. A non-motorized boating ban is not legitimate above highway 28, which is supported by the NW&S Rivers legislation.

In practice, kayakers and anglers would have minimal overlap: due to flow levels. Realistically, quality kayaking opportunities would only exist on high rainfall, high flow days when the vast majority of anglers would be waiting for lower, calmer, clearer water. These would also primarily be winter days outside of the normal trout season as well. USFS flow data supports this. The data also shows that there are very few days in the calendar year when flows support kayaking, when the vast majority of calendar days would be ideal for angling and ridiculously low flows for kayaking in the upper reaches. For this reason I would predict few, if any at all – days when anglers might see kayakers. This is indeed the case right next door – on Overflow Creek. I have been kayaking on Overflow since 1992, and have made well over 100 runs during that time. I have NEVER encountered an angler while in my kayak on Overflow. On 2 or 3 occasions they were present below the takeout bridge, after we got out of the river. Again, this is due to high water levels and turbidity being very poor for fishing, and ideal fishing conditions being below an acceptable water level for kayaking.

In short, I favor restoring non-motorized boating ("floating" was the recognized activity in the original USFS plan) to the Upper Chattooga. I feel that none of the alternatives fairly addresses this legitimate user activity. If I had to choose from the six, then # 6 would begin to meet a minimally acceptable option. I would be in favor of level restrictions, such as the 2.3 ft level on the Hwy 76 bridge, but find limiting the total users to 12 is not realistic considering the number of boaters who possess Class 5 skills, of which there are many. In practice – probably 12 or less would run the river on weekdays, but it is possible that more would want to boat on weekend days.

My hope is that you please use professional fairness and rationality when reading and evaluating these comments, and acting on a new management plan. I have read some ridiculous misrepresentations and

complete fabrications concerning kayakers that belong in the comic realm. Restoring kayaking to the upper reaches will not degrade the experience for anglers as some fear. Kayaking and angling are compatible uses throughout the southeastern national forests and beyond. Again, Overflow has been a successful 20-year case study to support this fact.

Best Regards,

Jerry Jascomb  
255 Shady Grove Lane  
Alpharetta, GA 30004

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promptly by  
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then delete  
the e-mail  
and destroy  
any printed  
copy. Thank  
you.

---



**curtis hixon**  
<curtishixon@windstrea  
m.net>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: upper chattooga river

09/13/2007 04:51 PM

I believe alternatives 1-3 are the best to maintain the wilderness experience in the area above Hwy 28. There are few rivers of this size left in the Southeast- if any - that are free of boating/kayaks/canoes.



"Quinn McKew"  
<qmckew@americanrivers.org>

09/13/2007 04:59 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Scoping comments



September 13, 2007

Mr. John Cleeves,  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us.

Dear Mr. Cleeves;

Please accept these comments by American Rivers on the preliminary scoping alternatives for the Chattooga River. American Rivers was founded in 1978 to expand and protect the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Today, we are the nation's largest dedicated river conservation organization. American River is particularly interested in the management actions being undertaken on the Chattooga in light of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 2008 and the potential for precedent-setting management decisions that may affect other Wild and Scenic Rivers.

I have a keen appreciation for the challenging management situation facing the Forest Service on the Chattooga. Our members are river lovers, encompassing those who love to paddle, fish, and even just walk along the banks of a free-flowing river. It is always difficult to try to manage a river to provide all things to all people. The popularity of the Chattooga, undoubtedly one of our nation's greatest rivers, requires a delicate balancing of recreational access and natural resource protection to ensure the integrity of the river for future generations. I do believe that managed recreational boating would be appropriate in certain circumstances on the upper reaches of the Chattooga. This river is a treasure not just for the state, but for the nation, and should be managed to allow for non-degradatory human activity that enhances enjoyment of a natural river.

#### **Monitoring to Protect and Enhance**

First and foremost, all management decisions should be guided by the "protect and enhance" standard set forth in the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act to protect the river's free-flow and "outstandingly remarkable values" and the river section's classification under the Act. To ensure that the Forest Service has adequate data to measure that it is indeed protecting and enhancing

the resource, I strongly encourage the Forest Service to adopt a management plan that will increase the amount of information available to on-the-ground river managers to guide their management actions. For example, all alternatives in the future draft should include self-registration for all recreational activities where it is feasible to monitor recreational use along the river corridor. Additionally, monitoring of encounter numbers should become an on-going component of river management, especially in the wilderness and wild reaches of the river.

### **Boating and Fishing**

I find it curious that the alternatives presented do not address uses other than boating and camping; at a minimum, the alternatives should explicitly include fishing and the interaction between fishing and boating. Given the physical constraints of the upper portion of the Chattooga, boating should be limited as to the number per group (6) and the number of groups accessing the river per day. Additionally, given safety concerns, boating limitations dictated by flow rates should be seriously considered.

I am concerned that some of the alternatives (#4 and #5) present complex management regimes that will be difficult if not impossible to implement and enforce on the ground without additional personnel resources devoted to managing the upper portion of the Chattooga. All alternatives should discuss proposed implementation to give the public a good sense as to what they could actually expect in terms of enforcement and experience on the ground.

### **Woody Debris**

In order to evaluate the alternative's compliance with the spirit and the law of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the Forest Service should provide more details on what exactly "limited woody debris removal" means and how it is substantively different from current management practices. As noted in the current management policies, woody debris is an integral component of a healthy riparian ecosystem. Any woody debris removal in the upper Chattooga should not be done simply for the purpose of facilitating recreational boating at the detriment to the fishery and larger ecosystem. Removal of debris in the wild portions of the river should only occur in situations of serious safety hazard in order to preserve the "vestige of primitive America" character that defines a wild river segment.

### **Camping**

The alternatives appropriately seek to redefine and limit camping opportunities to better protect the resource and provide a healthier camping experience for visitors.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments. I look forward to working with the Forest Service to protect this great river for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely,  
Quinn McKew  
Director, River Heritage

Quinn McKew  
Director, River Heritage

1101 14th Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005  
202-347-7550

[www.AmericanRivers.org](http://www.AmericanRivers.org)

American Rivers protects and restores healthy natural rivers for the benefit of people, fish, and wildlife.



Chattooga Scoping Comments.doc



Mr. John Cleeves,  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us.

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Sincerely,  
Quinn McKew  
Director, River Heritage



"Kevin Colburn"  
<wildblue42@hotmail.com>

09/13/2007 05:01 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Comments

Dear SNF,

While my name is on the official AW comments, I thought that given a lifetime dedicated to the exploration, enjoyment, protection, and restoration of whitewater rivers I should send in some personal comments. Please note that these views are mine and mine alone - and are in no way associated with my role in AW.

I love rivers. The best days of my life have been spent on whitewater rivers. The connection with the natural world that I feel while on the water is too powerful and wonderful and special to define. I have spent vast amounts of my time camping, hiking, caving, fishing, hunting, and biking and I can never access the same relationship to places during those activities that I can while I am paddling. Paddling is special for me. It is a language that I speak with rivers. It is an art form performed for all of existence. You have denied me the opportunity to get to know the Chattooga River in this way which I find deeply wrong. Perhaps you do not understand this, and never will. Perhaps you are blinded by stereotypes that paints boaters as egocentric heavymetal redbull drinking adrenaline junkies. I am none of these things, and neither are my many friends that I paddle rivers with.

I have dedicated my life to protecting and enjoying rivers. I have two degrees focused on restoration ecology, environmental studies degrees to be exact. I am an environmentalist. I know the names of the plants, animals, and even some of the rocks and soils around me. I have studied wood in rivers, fish habitat, flow complexity, riparian ecosystems, water quality, and other elements of river ecology in detail. I assure you that I act personally and professionally with the river in mind, before my own enjoyment of it. I seek wild rivers, the more remote the better. I like paddling long days, and camping out of my boat. This to me is the ultimate way to experience the backcountry.

As John Cleeves stated today in an interview, there are no biophysical impacts associated with paddling to justify any limits. Thanks for finally accepting this ridiculously obvious fact - after spending millions to figure it out. I paddling on Wilderness rivers across the nation and revel in the fact that my footprint is invisible.

John also stated that the reason for future management will be social. That is good, because we have no social data on the chattooga river, and evidence from EVERY OTHER RIVER IN THE ENTIRE REGION that shows that boating and other backcountry uses exist in such harmony that they typically do not even need to be managed AT ALL. Boating on headwater streams in the Southeast is a virtually invisible activity. We paddle when no one else is there by and large, and have no significant negative impacts.

I can not fathom the abstraction of reality that you would have to believe in to claim that the Chattooga is different than ALL OTHER RIVERS in its ability to accomodate shared uses. The ONLY way it is different is your management, which can and must be changed to remedy this negative and costly difference.

You should allow paddling to occur, and start managing the river.

The conflict that the USFS create 31 years ago will not ever go away until equity is restored and the Chattooga's management is made consistent with all other rivers. Please adopt American Whitewater's recommended alternative and do everything possible to protect and the Chattooga River while allowing responsible and appropriate enjoyment of the river. I quit fishing because I can not support stocking of exotic fish like rainbows and browns. Now that I live in MT where they only stock natives, I am considering learning to fly fish. I would prefer that you only stock southern brook trout. I ask that you end helicopter stocking immediately, because that practice would ruin my experience if I were to witness it while visiting the corridor. I think you need to track all uses. There is clearly some impacts occurring that are unacceptable. Tracking use, and enforcing regulations would help with these problems.

To sum up, allow boating, put this conflict to rest, put out an EA based on real data instead of this same ole values driven verbage, and lets all move on with things that really matter. The situation you have created has wasted millions of dollars, and countless hours of my time and the time of other dedicated river folks. If we had collectively worked on something real instead of this fabrication we could have cleaned up Stekoa Creek ten times over and done lots of other good pro-river work together. Unfortunately it is now up to you: does this thing labor on for years and decades, wasting millions more river dollars, or do we do the right thing today and reap the benefits for generations to come?

Should you only be concerned with raw votes, I vote for your inadequate Alternative 6.

Kev Colburn  
1035 Van Buren St.  
Missoula, MT 59802  
(H) 406-543-1802  
(C) 828-712-4825



"Jeremy Sanders"  
<sgoboten@hotmail.com>

09/13/2007 05:04 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: West Fork Chattooga Comments

I am writing to submit my comments on the proposed alternatives for boating use on the West Fork of the Chattooga River. I am a boater, a raft guide, and a trout fisherman. I grew up hiking and fishing in the headwaters area of the Chattooga River and still enjoy these activities now with my family. However, I am opposed to opening up this portion of the river to boating not because I feel like boating has an adverse effect on water quality, but because this area is already suffering from abuse and overuse from other user groups. Likewise, I think that adding additional users will lower the potential for any user to experience solitude. In that respect, we (by that I mean boaters) already have access to every other whitewater creek and river in this area. Continuing the boating restriction on this portion of the Chattooga will not harm the sport of whitewater boating as much as opening up this reach has the potential to harm the resource. I do not feel that all user groups should have access to every portion of the Chattooga River basin in the name of fairness. Everyone has access-just some activities are permitted and others are restricted. I think that the best way to protect the solitude experience and the ORV's is to continue this restriction and leave the upper reaches of the Chattooga River designated for foot traffic only. Therefore, alternatives 4,5, and 6 are unacceptable.

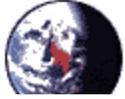
I most prefer alternative 2 or 3 because I think it will have the greatest positive impact on the quality of the wilderness experience and environment, but I would also be in favor of continuing the current management as is outlined in alternative 1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. Jeremy Sanders  
178 Honey Rd.  
Long Creek, SC 29658

---

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"Jenny Sanders"  
<jsanders@ltwa.org>

09/13/2007 05:01 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: West Fork Comments

I am writing to submit my comments on the proposed alternatives for boating use on the West Fork of the Chattooga River. I am a boater, a raft guide, and a professional conservationist. I grew up hiking and swimming in the headwaters area of the Chattooga River and still enjoy these activities now with my family. However, I am opposed to opening up this portion of the river to boating not because I feel like boating has an adverse effect on water quality, but because this area is already suffering from abuse and overuse from other user groups. Likewise, I think that adding additional users will lower the potential for any user to experience solitude. In that respect, we (by that I mean boaters) already have access to every other whitewater creek and river in this area. Continuing the boating restriction on this portion of the Chattooga will not harm the sport of whitewater boating as much as opening up this reach has the potential to harm the resource. I do not feel that all user groups should have access to every portion of the Chattooga River basin in the name of fairness. Everyone has access-just some activities are permitted and others are restricted. I think that the best way to protect the solitude experience and the ORV's is to continue this restriction and leave the upper reaches of the Chattooga River designated for foot traffic only. Therefore, alternatives 4,5, and 6 are unacceptable. I most prefer alternative 2 or 3 because I think it will have the greatest positive impact on the quality of the wilderness experience and environment, but I would also be in favor of continuing the current management as is outlined in alternative 1. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jenny Sanders  
178 Honey Rd.  
Long Creek, SC 29658



"Wade Vagias"  
<wvagas@CLEMSON.  
EDU>

09/13/2007 05:08 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Comments

To Whom It May Concern:

As an individual trained in social science research as well as natural resource policy, I feel the need to draw attention to a couple of key points that the proposed NEPA alternatives for management of the Upper Chattooga did not fully address or recognize.

- The Chief of the United States Forest Service said the regional forester's decision was against the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and the Wilderness Act. Without proper study, the first 3 alternatives are not viable options (I recognized that Alternative #1 is standard for NEPA studies). Ms. Manning, Reviewing Officer for the Chief, clearly states that the Sumter NF RLRMP is 'deficient in substantiating the need to continue the ban on boating to protect recreation as an ORV or to protect the wilderness resource.' To accurately measure the potential ecological and sociological impact(s) of introducing another recreational user group into an environment a full-length study is warranted. A decision to implement Alternatives 1, 2, or 3 is illegal and against both the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act AND Wilderness Act. Please let me emphasize that the two-day exploratory kayak runs were **not sufficient** to build normative use or tolerance curves (see page 102 of the integrated report). To explore such tolerance levels or carrying capacity levels would require **ALLOWING** the user group in question (whitewater boaters) to have unfettered access to the resource in question. The Chattooga is a unique and clearly a highly valued resource within the southeastern US. Using 'case study' rivers for attempted comparisons does not do justice to the unique intangible values the Chattooga possesses.
- The years Whittaker and Shelby used to cite lower river boating use were some of the highest in recent memory and should not be used to make comparisons or predictions for upper river use. As an individual who has worked as a guide on the lower river and paddled all sections of the upper river (including Overflow and the sections currently under study), it needs to be recognized that they are completely different in terms of their difficulty, access, gradient, and likely users.
- Your decision cannot be made based purely on public sentiment (or outcry) over this issue. Public comment can, and in good ecosystem management, should, be a major consideration for a policy decisions. However, in this case 99.999% of the boating community has never seen, let alone had the opportunity to paddle, the upper Chattooga River. How can they be expected to fight for a resource they have never seen?
- The Washington Office basically directed you to provide "an adequate basis for continuing the ban" or open the resource for all users. Again, I would draw to your attention to the fact that allowing access by boaters to the Upper Chattooga would be consistent with the direction provided within Section 10(a) of the SWRA or Sections 2(a) and 4(b) of the WA and make you compliant with the federal acts under which you operate.

I recognize this is a hotbed issue and that the lines are clearly drawn. I have read the submitted comments and attended the USFS meetings. While those in favor of continuing the ban certainly make a persuasive argument, the point remains that the ban is illegal, unjustified and completely and utterly unsubstantiated by any type of sound sociological or ecological research.

I dream of the day when the land managers of SNF finally admit that the past policy of excluding a user group has been wrong. How much longer will we have to wait?

Regards,

## *Wade Vagias*

Doctoral Student  
Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Mangement  
263 Lehotsky Hall  
Clemson University  
Clemson, SC 29634  
724.355.0985 (cell)  
864.656.6124 (office)  
[wvagas@clermson.edu](mailto:wvagas@clermson.edu)



"Brian Pickett"  
<wwwkayaking@gmail.com>  
m>

09/13/2007 05:21 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Comments

Mr. John Cleeves  
US Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Rd  
Columbia, SC 29212

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The Decision for Appeal #04-13-00-0026, American Whitewater of the Sumter National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan Revision by Gloria Manning states that, "there are multiple references in the record to resource impacts and decreasing solitude, these concerns apply to all users and do not provide the basis for excluding boaters without any limits on other users."

I strongly agree with this comment and believe that boating should be restored to the Upper Chattooga. After reading the six preliminary alternatives, ***I most strongly support Alternative #6***. With that being said, I do not believe that any of the alternatives do an adequate job of balancing the ability of all groups to have equal access to the Upper Chattooga and protecting this valuable resource.

In response to the four questions you posed:

**1. Should there be new limits limiting trailheads, trails, or campsites?**

Yes, I believe that new trails should only be constructed unless a reroute is necessary to correct existing problems on designated trails or to provide a trail for kayakers to portage certain rapids in order to minimize ecological damage.

Camping should only be allowed in designated campsites. There should be no new user created campsites. The creation of fire rings should be limited to the designated campsite areas and created by the USFS. No other fire rings should be allowed.

**2. Should there be new limits limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups, and/or access?**

Every wilderness area has a user capacity. If the forest service and user groups can prove/agree that the capacity for the Upper Chattooga has been reached, then all user groups should have limited access to the Upper Chattooga.

**3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?**

Yes, new boating opportunities should be allowed on the Upper Chattooga. The boating should

be limited to non-commercial single- or double-capacity hard boats and inflatable kayaks. A helmet and USCG Type III or Type V PFD should be required to boat the Upper Chattooga. Boating should only be allowed when the flows are above the minimum boating levels determined by Confluence Consulting. On a side note, Mother Nature has provided us with a good way to separate boaters from other user groups. According to Confluence Consulting, 247 days a year, the water levels would be more optimal for fishing and 114 days a year, the water levels would be more optimal for boating.

**4. Should there be new limits limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups, and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?**

This goes back to question #2. The forest service and user groups must prove or agree that the river corridor has reached its capacity. Referring back to the appeal decision, the want for solitude and a wilderness experience applies to all user groups and provides no basis for excluding one user group. If limits on group sizes are to be made, all user groups should have limitations on their sizes.

Thank you for considering my thoughts.

Sincerely,  
Natalie & Brian Pickett  
608 Ridgefields Rd  
Kingsport, TN 37660  
[wwkayaking@gmail.com](mailto:wwkayaking@gmail.com)



crystal rippy  
<crystal220221@yahoo.  
com>

09/13/2007 05:28 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga headwaters

Please consider opening the Chattooga headwaters to boaters. Boaters should be allowed to use the Upper Chattooga River to the same extent that hikers, anglers, swimmers and other wilderness compliant users are allowed. I agree that there should be new standards limiting trailheads, trails, and campsites; and that ALL USERS should be limited equally if necessary for the sustainability of the resource. However, one specific class of users should not be banned while others are allowed to use the resource. The boaters that I know are responsible individuals that respect the environment and the rights of others to enjoy that environment. Please allow them access to the Upper Chattooga.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,  
Crystal Rippy

---

Moody friends. Drama queens. Your life? Nope! - their life, your story.  
[Play Sims Stories at Yahoo! Games.](#)



"Wessman, Mark B "  
<mwessman@tulane.edu  
u>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc: "Jackson, Julie H " <jjackso1@tulane.edu>  
Subject: Chattooga River

09/13/2007 05:52 PM

Dear Sirs:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the alternatives for managing the recreational use of the upper Chattooga River. The bottom line is that I favor Alternative #1, the maintenance of the current management direction. What I wish to emphasize, however, is that I think it is vital that the waters above the Highway 28 Bridge remain closed to all forms of boating and floating—whether it be kayaks, canoes, tubes, rafts, or anything else. I have nothing against any of those things, and have occasionally enjoyed them all. However, there are plenty of alternative sites for boating and floating, both on other parts of the Chattooga and on other rivers, streams and lakes in the area. The area from Grimshawes to the Old Iron Bridge is one of the few places left where you can find family-friendly, safe swimming holes and hiking uninterrupted by commercial rafting and tubing. My family and I would be very upset if Slide Rock, in particular, became a place where you couldn't swim without worrying about tubes and rafts running into you. The commercial rafting and tubing outfits are better organized than we are, and certainly can afford more lobbyists. But I hope you folks in the forest service will look out for those of us who like to do other things and preserve some areas for us to do them. We've been coming to the area consistently for over 25 years and now have a home in Sapphire. We love the place, as do our friends and neighbors. I think it's important that this stretch of the river remain as it is. Thank you.

Mark B. Wessman  
274 Pine Forest Road  
Sapphire, NC 28774



"Buffalo McMurray"  
<buffalo@secondgearw  
nc.com>

09/13/2007 05:55 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Upper Chattooga Management Alternatives

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Thank You for taking the time to read this letter. I am writing you in response to the six alternatives outlined in the Scoping Document detailing possible future management plans for the Upper Chattooga River corridor.

To tell you a little about myself, I live in Asheville, NC. I am an Avid Outdoorsman and I travel extensively throughout the South-East and the entire world to enjoy recreation in the Out-of – Doors. I enjoy a wide variety of backcountry activities including, Hiking and Backpacking, Fly-Fishing, Swimming, and Paddling. In the modern world, the demand for land to be developed to meet the ever-increasing needs of a growing population threaten places where Americans can go to enjoy the natural wonders of our world. Luckily, we have programs in place that protect land and preserve it for the enjoyment of all. The Wild and Scenic Rivers of our country are a great gift and I am happy that the government sees the value in protecting such places to provide a place for people to relax and enjoy these special rivers.

In the case of the Upper Chattooga, there has been an unfair ban on paddling. This ban must be lifted to ensure fair management of this wild and scenic corridor. Of all user groups that would visit the Upper Chattooga, Paddlers have the least impact due to the specific nature of the sport. Of course paddlers would use the trails to get to the river, but that is where their impacts end. On the flipside, all other users use the trails exclusively (let's hope they stick to the trails.) They actually have a more significant impact on the corridor than any paddler.

At this point it seems like it is quite obvious that the ecological impacts that paddlers would add are next to non-existent, in fact, I believe by and large that paddlers would improve the area by cleaning up litter left by other users, I myself always leave a river with several new pieces of trash in my boat that I found in the corridor and this is a common practice of all my paddling friends. As a Fly – Fisherman, I have never noticed any adverse effects from paddlers, they pass by silently and do not disturb the fish any more than a floating log would. But this last point seems to make little difference as Fly-Fisherman and Paddlers rarely use the same Stream at the same time.

The Different flows preferred by Anglers and Paddlers would naturally separate them from each other. Paddlers are adamant about checking water levels so they know what they are getting into, Anglers do not seem to be as tuned in to water levels as paddlers. Any angler out on a high flow day is showing an ignorance to the conditions and may very well be putting himself into a

potentially dangerous situation. He may find himself lucky to have a group of paddlers on the river. The upper Chattooga (class IV-V whitewater) is no place to be after heavy rains unless you are an expert whitewater paddler, Consequently paddlers (relatively few) will only be found in this stretch during high flow events. Any friction between paddlers and other groups is merely speculation, I think that once the ban is lifted we will get to see the true nature of user interaction.

Of the Six Alternatives outlined in the Scoping Document, Only #6 even comes close to being a fair plan. At this point I would urge you to choose #6, but only if a better alternative can not be found. I would like to offer some suggestions about creating an alternative.

1. All stretches of river above highway 28 completely open to paddling. Any restrictions to floating should only state requirements in water-craft. This is to ensure that paddlers are using safe equipment. (whitewater boat vs. wal mart raft) Several precedents exist locally, namely the Ocoee river.
2. Group Size: limit to twelve (this still seems like a big group and If I were part of this trip I would split us into two groups of six)
3. Limited Woody debris Removal: Paddlers sometimes remove woody debris to make a rapid safer. I think that removal of woody debris should be prohibited. If a paddler must portage a rapid due to great risk posed by woody debris, then so be it. The only case I see for removal is if the portage trail would impact the riparian zone. If a paddler can portage on Bedrock then he continues to leave no trace, damaging streamside vegetation is not acceptable to me
4. Trails: No new trails, closure of existing trails where damage cannot be mitigated.
5. Camping: no new fire rings, removal of existing fire rings that are poorly placed. Camping only in designated areas
6. Parking: No increase in parking capacity, no improvement of access points, We want Wild and Scenic to stay Wild and Scenic.
7. Self Registration for all users/visitors.

Further more I would like to see lands adjacent to the present corridor acquired and managed as wilderness. The Stream should be managed for Fishing as a Catch-and Release, single hook artificial lure Stream. No stocking new stocking should occur. If there is to be stocking, it should be limited to species native to the Chattooga.

We see that there is no real basis to uphold the ban on paddling. We see that there are no adverse ecological impacts presented by a new user group. Rather it is a social conflict between current users in favor of maintaining the Status Quo, and a group who is very honestly trying to bring fair and equitable management to a Nationally dedicated Wild and Scenic River. Thank You for taking the time to read my letter, I know it can't be easy trying to come to a conclusion on this Issue and I applaud your hard work. Good luck working this all out.

Sincerely,  
Gabriel Latini  
37 Majestic Ave.

Asheville, NC 28806  
gabriellatini@gmail.com

No virus found in this outgoing message.

Checked by AVG Free Edition.

Version: 7.5.487 / Virus Database: 269.13.16/1005 - Release Date: 9/13/2007 11:45 AM



Gus P peggy cook  
<ppcook@embarqmail.com>

09/13/2007 06:10 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Regarding the Chattooga River

Dear USFS Personnel,

My name is Peggy Cook, and I a 52 year old mother of two and an avid whitewater paddler. I live in central Ohio and travelled to the Chattooga area a few years ago with my family of 4, all boaters, to paddle the scenic Chattooga river. We had a wonderful trip, and would like to return to the river, but are concerned upon hearing the news that access to, and usage of the river are now in danger of being cut off. As members of the paddling community, our family views ourselves as stewards to protect and preserve the quality and beauty of the rivers we paddle and enjoy. We do all in our power to respect the river and surrounding lands, and practice a "leave no trace " policy. Those in my circle of friends, as well as those in the larger paddling community that I have met in my 25 years in the sport, share a similar attitude. We all strive to minimize our impact on the wild and scenic lands and rivers that we frequent. Please give strong consideration and allow a return of boating to the Upper Chattooga.

Sincerely,

Peggy Cook



brian@slatesurvey.com

09/13/2007 06:15 PM

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

cc:

Subject: Upper Chattooga River Coments

Dear Sir,

I am a concerned forest user. I have hiked, camped and fished the upper Chattooga River for the past 20 years. I have fished the upper Chattooga 8 out of the past 10 weeks. It has been a little warm for Fly fishing; however, I have enjoyed the peace and remoteness, to practice my hobby. I have hiked several times within the past two years. I frequently take my children to this special place because it is remote, the way a "wilderness" should be, isolated and lacking the signs of our civilization.

I have seen many insects, birds, deer, raccoons, snakes, fish, and bear. I have seen the flowers bloom and the trees down, due to the wind. I have happily climbed over the obstruction to proceed up river. I know this river very well.

The upper Chattooga River is important to Rabun County, Georgia, The United States and the world. This river is one of but a few rivers with the capability of a self sustaining trout population. It is our duty to allow this area every advantage to exist with as little human change as possible. This area, with its natural qualities, allows the trout and other wildlife the opportunity to exist and thrive.

The negative impact of whitewater rafting would likely be severe on the fish population. The disturbance of structures in the river could remove nutrients, and natural protection for many species surviving in this area.

I enjoy whitewater rafting and am fully aware that whitewater rafters love the natural beauty of this area and strive to protect the environment, as I. South of the 28 Bridge is currently the designated area for rafting. I think this should remain, thus, creating a reserve within a reserve.

I urge you to adopt a plan that closely resembles the current plan. As little change as possible is by far the correct decision. Thank you for all your efforts to protect the natural areas.

Sincerely,

G. Brian Slate, PLS



"Russell Tyre"  
<DawgTyred@tampabay.rr.com>

09/13/2007 06:19 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga North Fork - Comment on Alternatives

I would like to preface my comments by saying that I have been a frequent visitor to the Chattooga River since the mid-1950's, approximately 52 years. Long before "Deliverance" and long before there were improved roads North of Highway 28. I have visited the river backcountry on many occasions, often for days without seeing anyone. My purposes for being there included; fly-fishing, hiking and observing wildlife, but my primary reason to visit this beautiful place was to seek solitude in the wilderness experience

That being said, let me move to the meat of the matter.

FACT: Increased population in the region will have dramatic impacts on biological, physical, social and esthetic values.

I favor **Alternative #3** for the following reasons:

1. It seems obvious to me that with increased usage, biological and physical components of the Chattooga corridor will necessarily require more intensive management to protect and preserve the resource. Flora and fauna need to be protected and natural ecological processes allowed to continue. Erosion is an on-going concern. Litter, wood use, sanitation to name a few more.
2. Increased law enforcement will preserve many of the social values under consideration, i.e. , violations of the law, user conflicts, noise abatement and wildlife education.
3. Esthetic values. We absolutely must preserve the wildness, the remoteness and the right to solitude in this area for present and future generations. There is only one **Chattooga**.

Thank you,

Russ Tyre  
St. Petersburg, Florida



<leahy1@bellsouth.net>

09/13/2007 06:28 PM

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

cc:

Subject: Allow boating on the Chattooga above route 28

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I support the resumption of legal boating on the upper Chattooga. I have been paddling the legal sections of the Chattooga since 1994 and have yet to have a negative encounter with fishermen or hikers. The people advocating the continuation of the boating ban have no realistically based evidence to support their position. Use of a human powered craft such as a kayak or canoe is consistent with the wild and scenic river designation and certainly no more intrusive than hiking or fishing. Of the options presented, none are great but #6 is the least objectionable. I have no desire to prevent others from engaging in their chosen legal activities in this special area. In return, I would like the opportunity to kayak this outstanding section of river.

Sincerely,

Edward K. Leahy

Edward K. Leahy M.D.  
3991 Hammonds Ferry  
Evans, Ga 30809



"Arthur Garick"  
<agarick@gmail.com>  
09/13/2007 06:48 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc: "Anne Olson" <anneolson@sc.rr.com>, "Charlene Coleman" <cheetahrk@yahoo.com>, "Dave Mullis" <djm@sc.rr.com>, "Dennis Catoe" <riverrunnersc@aol.com>, "Dianne Mullis" <dsm@scsenate.org>, "Kate Whitaker" <kwhitaker@agfirst.com>, "Lee Olson" <leeolson@sc.rr.com>, "Linda Gray" <lgray@sc.rr.com>, "Mike Boone" <mike@boonedocks.net>, "Rembert Milligan" <remmilligan@bellsouth.net>, "Rock Garick" <agarick@gmail.com>  
Subject: Comments on Chattooga River Alternatives for Management of river above Highway 28.

Mr. John Cleeves

U.S. Forest Service

4931 Broad River Road

Columbia, SC 29212

RE: Comments on Chattooga River Alternatives for Management of river above Highway 28.

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

The alternatives currently proposed by the USFS require substantial amendment because they are not supported by or tied to actual capacity data, are not consistent with the USFS's appeal decision governing this process, are not consistent with applicable law, and will not protect the Chattooga River. The USFS's own capacity study demonstrated that boating is an appropriate use of the Upper Chattooga River, yet 5 of your 6 proposed alternatives ban boating on some or all of the upper river, above the Highway 28 bridge. The Upper Chattooga's capacity to support "whitewater" boating is not zero, and all action alternatives must allow at least some boating on the entire river. Any alternatives that limit recreation must do so based on the capacity of the river corridor as determined by real data – and must do so equitably.

In addition, the Proposed Alternatives should be amended as follows:

- Proposed use limits must be tied to a specific standard regarding user capacity. (Only USFS Alternative #2 even mentions a standard).
- Limits must be applied equitably and fairly– not targeted to *any* specific user groups without significant evidence. All USFS alternatives single out boating for harsh limits and bans – for which there is no evidence.
- Limits should only be imposed when standards are met or exceeded – and not before. Five of the six USFS Alternatives limit and/or ban boating immediately without basis.
- Alternatives must include a range of standards for *all users*. USFS Alternatives address a range of arbitrary limits on boaters – but only one alternative would limit other users. For example, a standard of 10, 6, and 2 group encounters per day should be analyzed, as well as provisions that exclude the other days when high use can be expected or occurs randomly.
- Alternatives must be based on a capacity for all users and/or individual uses. The proposed USFS Alternatives are not based on the social or physical capacity of the river

corridor.

- Alternatives must prescribe indirect limits prior to direct limits as is required by USFS Policy. Five of the six alternatives implement direct limits (i.e., bans) prior to trying indirect limits first in direct violation of USFS Policy.
- Alternatives, including any capacity triggers, should distinguish between high use "front country" areas and low use "back country" areas. USFS Alternatives make no distinction between how many encounters with other users are acceptable in a campground or at a trailhead as opposed to on a trail or river deep in the woods.
- Alternatives should look at varying levels of user created trail closures, user created trail hardening, creation of new trails, campsite closures or relocation's, fish stocking, parking, total recreational use, angling use, hiking use, camping use, boating use, and swimming use.

Thank you for considering these ideas.

Sincerely,

Arthur "Rock" Garick, President

Palmetto Paddlers, Inc.

Columbia, SC



"Coe, Daniel  
(Contractor)"  
<daniel\_coe@fanniema  
e.com>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Free The Chattooga

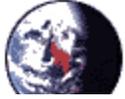
09/13/2007 06:56 PM

I support Alternative #6. As an avid kayaker and guide of 11 years, I urge and support the opening of Access on the chattooga for whitewater paddlers. Thank you.

26250

Daniel Coe  
rt. 2 box 106  
Belington, WV

[lilahjill@yahoo.com](mailto:lilahjill@yahoo.com)



"donatkinson"  
<donatkinson@bex.net>  
09/13/2007 08:05 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: FW: Chattooga North Fork - Only 4 Days Remain to Comment

Dear friends of the wild America,

I have commented many times, to many sources on this subject. I will comment one more time since Doug Adams, one of the protectors of this area has said it may help.

I, and my whole family, located across America, have shared in wilderness experiences, including the Upper Chattooga, for many years. The many years would include my children's whole lives. We can't imagine anyone trying to take this wonderful place and make it less! I see the comments below, as can you. We don't have too many chances to save a semi-wilderness from plunder. I will not go on, as I have before. You should know. Life and pristine wilderness are so very precious and the same. Please save the Chattooga North Fork from decimation or, at the very least from making it a Disneyworld attraction.

I, and my family vote for Alternative #1 as the only reasonable alternative outlined. May you have the wisdom to do the same.

Sincerely,

*Don Atkinson*  
(419) 882-3533 (Home & Fax)  
(419) 450-3199 (Cell)  
donatkinson@bex.net (email)

---

**From:** Doug and Eedee Adams [mailto:edadams1@alltel.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, September 09, 2007 9:59 PM  
**To:** All Lovers of Clean Cold Streams  
**Subject:** Chattooga North Fork - Only 4 Days Remain to Comment

**Now is your final opportunity to help protect and preserve this unique foot travel only river segment. Take just a few minutes to send your E-mail**  
Please feel free to "FORWARD" this message.

**In order for your comments to be adequately considered, send them in by Thursday, Sept 13, 2007** via e-mail to [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us) or by US Postal Service to: Project Coordinator John Cleaves, USDA Forest Service, 4931 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29212. Be sure to include your name and address with your comments

**Talking points to consider in your E-mail:**

The Forest Service is requesting your comments on potential environmental effects of the alternatives, including the effects on aesthetic values (solitude, remoteness, wildness, protecting endangered experiences, psychological, etc) and social values (encounters, user conflicts, interference with activities such as angling, bird watching, wildlife viewing, the rights of others to solitude, etc). The North Fork's

recreational Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV) includes aesthetic and social values in a foot travel only backcountry setting.

**Woody debris** • Limited woody debris removal is allowed in Alternatives 4, 5 & 6.

This is a Standard that can result in biophysical degradation in Wilderness and wild segments of the North Fork and its tributaries. Ecologically important: Large woody debris (LWD) has incredible ecological importance in river systems. A variety of aquatic species depend on natural accumulations of trees, branches, and root wads known as LWD. For decades a few insensitive but otherwise skilled boaters have made a practice of removing the LWD that hinders their passage in headwater streams, such as the Chattooga's West Fork / Overflow Creek headwaters.

**Alternatives 4, 5 & 6 add boating recreation:**

**Compliance with the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act:** There is no credible evidence that adding boating recreation to the North Fork will protect and enhance its backcountry ORVs of solitude and remoteness for present and future generations as required by the Act.

**Compliance with the Wilderness Act:** There is no credible evidence that adding boating recreation to the Ellicott Rock Wilderness will not diminish the outstanding opportunities for solitude or assist in securing an enduring resource of wilderness for present and future generations as required by the Act.

**Compliance with the Decision for Appeal:** Diverse whitewater boating opportunities exist on 63% of the length of the Chattooga and all other streams on all surrounding National Forests. However, the North Fork is the only segment of a backcountry Forest Service stream in the southeast zoned for foot travel only, a unique resource deserving of protection for present and future generations. There is absolutely nothing in the Wilderness Act and/or the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act that says all activities must be permitted in all segments of the river.

**Stewardship:** Zoning ensures that different types of users are physically separated. Zoning of conflicting activities is good stewardship. Stewardship encompasses far more than picking up litter; it includes the protection of the aesthetic values of natural resources such as remoteness and wildness, the proper regard for the rights of others to solitude, and the responsibility of preserving these values intact for future generations. Alternative #1, #2, and #3 do exactly that.

Some elements of Alternatives 2 or 3 would be beneficial, but alternatives 4, 5 and 6 will have adverse impacts on the North Fork's recreational Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORV) includes aesthetic and social values. Alternative #1 or a blended strategy incorporating portions of Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 appears to provide the best long term protection for the North Fork.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Chattooga River update: The Forest Service requests your comments**

The following are brief descriptions of the 6 management alternatives"

**Alternative #1: Maintain Current Management;** foot travel only. No boating above the Highway 28 Bridge.

**Alternative #2: Primary objective is to manage encounters among existing users;** foot travel only. No parking lots inside the Corridor boundary & a permitting system will be implemented for all existing users. No boating above the Highway 28 Bridge.

**Alternative #3: Primary objective is to manage biophysical impacts on natural resources;** foot travel only. Emphasis is on trail and campsite mitigation. No boating above the Highway 28 Bridge.

**Alternative #4: Primary objectives are to manage biophysical impacts on natural resources and encounters between users.** Emphasis is on trail and campsite mitigation. Limited woody debris removal allowed. Year-round any level boating on USFS lands upstream of Bull Pen Bridge and Limited boating in the Wilderness to ¼ mile above Burrell's Ford Bridge (4 winter months & 2.4 ft level and higher).

**Alternative #5: Primary objectives are to manage biophysical impacts on natural resources**

**and encounters between users.** Emphasis is on trail and campsite mitigation. Limited woody debris removal allowed. Boating allowed between Grimshawes Bridge and Lick Log Creek (year-round at 2.3 ft and higher).

**Alternative #6: Primary objectives are to manage biophysical impacts on natural resources and encounters between users.** Emphasis is on trail and campsite mitigation. Limited woody debris removal allowed. Unlimited boating is allowed on entire river and tributaries upstream of Highway 28 Bridge (year-round, any time, any water level, any number of floaters per day).

For more details of these alternatives and a side-by-side comparison table, go to:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/documents/Chattoogascopingpackagefinal08142007.pdf>

For more background, go to: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/>

Even if you have commented previously, please take time to share your views specifically on these six alternatives.

Boating on the lower Chattooga has displaced other visitors wishing to avoid conflicts and interference while seeking solitude and quietness. Some people sought sanctuary on the North Fork. Have you experienced user conflict or interference from whitewater boating on a mountain trout stream? Is it worse now than it was 20 years ago? What's it going to be like in another 20 years? Do we need more stream sections zoned like the North Fork of the Upper Chattooga, for "foot travel only"? Help protect for present and future generations the only section of the Chattooga not damaged by allowing access for too many user groups. Comment on the preliminary management alternatives, urging the Forest Service to protect and enhance the unique ORVs, which caused the North Fork to be designated a National Wild and Scenic River.

Thanks and Happy Trails, Doug Adams



"eric orr"  
<godsbluehills@gmail.com>

09/13/2007 08:09 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Boating in the Chattooga Headwaters

I am writing to submit my comments on the proposed alternatives for boating use on the West Fork of the Chattooga River. I am a whitewater kayaker and an avid outdoorsman. Some of my fondest memories come from paddling Section IV of the Chattooga, but I must express my opposition to the proposed opening of the Chattooga headwaters for boating. This area is one of the few pristine places left in our region, and I feel that increased use will jeopardize its ecological and recreational integrity. Even though I paddle, I believe that the push to open the headwaters places whitewater boaters in a special interest category. If this proposal is enacted it could set a very dangerous precedent, paving the way for other special interests to abuse our public resources and further degrade the wild and natural experience offered by such natural treasures. Please give the Chattooga in and surrounding National Forest lands the greatest priority when making this very important decision. Thank you for your consideration.

Eric Orr  
po box 1732  
Clayton, GA 30525



Dixie-Marree Prickett  
<dixiemarree@pyranhaus.com>

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Headwaters

09/13/2007 08:12 PM

Dear Mr. Cleeves and the USFS:

I am writing today to express my concern and opinion as a whitewater paddler, hiker, and outdoor enthusiast over the current Chattooga Headwaters Debate.

I cherish and respect my right to paddle through wilderness areas and on wild and scenic rivers. I grew up in SC and have been enjoying the Chattooga watershed with my family over the past 30 years. My home is now in Asheville NC and I still explore and enjoy the Chattooga River on a regular basis. I really feel paddlers should also have the right to enjoy this stretch of river. I am not a fisherman but I am a taxpayer and a citizen that feels it is unfair to restrict this waterway to the paddlers.

Please consider opening the headwaters to paddling. We promise to be good stewards of the river and the land and protect for future generations to enjoy and we will share the river with the fishermen, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts. It takes each and everyone of us to protect and care for such treasured wilderness areas.

Thank you for your time and your help with this matter.

Sincerely,

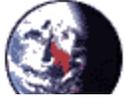
Dixie~Marree Prickett

Patagonia

C:805-816-1663

dixiemarree@mac.com

dixiemarree@patagonia.com



"Kevin Ryan"  
<slurpar@gmail.com>  
09/13/2007 08:26 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Ban

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
[comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us)

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I support boaters' right to float the Chattooga river. I believe that there is no basis for the ban on floating the Upper Chattooga River. There should be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and campsites. The USFS should monitor all users through a self-registration permit system. The USFS should take proper measures to determine how the river corridor should be limited. If it is found that there are too many users in the river corridor, then all users should be limited, not just boaters. Boating on the Chattooga river should be restored just as hikers, fisherman, and other wilderness users are allowed to recreate.

Thank you for considering these ideas.

Sincerely,

Kevin Ryan  
24 Wrenwood Ct.  
Greer SC, 29651



Cypicturelady@aol.com

09/13/2007 08:51 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc: JMCA@dnet.net  
Subject: Chattooga River Alternatives

September 13, 2007

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

I am writing in support of Alternative 3 for the Chattooga River management plan.

This alternative is restrictive enough to provide more protection to the area than current management does. As it is, there are a lot of user created trails, many of which are causing erosion damage, so these need to be better controlled. There are also problems associated with campsites, which need to be better controlled. However, restricting campsites to 4/river mile, as in Alternative 2, would mean that a lot of them would need to be closed, which seems too restrictive. I would however, support closing the campsites near the river where erosion is an issue.

Parking is an absolute necessity for the many people who visit the Iron Bridge and Slide Rock, so I do not agree with the Alt. 2 requirement to not allow any parking lots inside the corridor boundary.

As for boating on the upper Chattooga, I believe that it should remain prohibited. I use the area for photography, bird watching, and hiking. This part of the Chattooga is a place where I know that I will be able to find a place to park and to enjoy the area in peace and quiet. The trail from the cemetery is beautiful and provides an exquisite wilderness experience. I visit the Iron Bridge about six times a year. I'd like these areas to remain free from boating to preserve the qualities that I look for. The thought of up to 100 boaters using the river on a good day is just too much of a disturbance for the rest of us who use the area and are looking for solitude.

I am also concerned about the environmental impacts of boating in the area. Current recreational use already impacts wildlife, particularly nesting birds. Whitewater boating will impact a whole new variety of birds--those living and feeding along the shores.

In addition, there is serious concern regarding portaging and the creation of new access trails along the river. With the death of most of the hemlock population in the area, there will be increased amounts of large woody debris. This will likely be of some benefit to fish, but it will provide a danger and obstacle to boaters who will have no choice but to remove it or portage around it, neither of which seems like a good solution. Sedimentation in the river from roads and trails is already an issue. Impacts from user-created trails may create unacceptable impacts that will need mitigation down the road.

In addition I am concerned about the increase in human waste and litter.

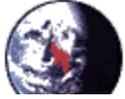
Safety is an important issue, as this segment of the river is dangerous, and the Forest Service has no plan to control who boats on it. Therefore accidents will certainly happen, and an inexperienced boater is much more likely to have such an accident. The remoteness and wilderness aspects of the region will hamper search and rescue efforts and create an unnecessary expense for taxpayers.

In conclusion, there are social, safety and environmental impacts to boating in the Upper Chattooga that are serious concerns to not only me but to many people with whom I have spoken about it. The area is already used by a lot of people for other recreational purposes. I would like to see it remain free of boaters. In fact, it might not be a bad idea to consider recovery periods of no use on certain sections of the river to minimize the cumulative impacts that people have already created to this outstanding resource.

Thank you for your time,  
Cynthia Strain  
PO Box 1238  
Highlands, NC 28741  
cypicturelady@aol.com

\*\*\*\*\*

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**"Travis Bolinger"**  
<tboli@adelphia.net>

09/13/2007 08:57 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga Comments

To whom it concerns,

I feel the Upper Chattooga River should be open to paddling.

Travis



<dhey@m@cablespeed.com>

09/13/2007 09:04 PM  
Please respond to  
dhey@m

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: No non-motorized use in a primitive area?

As best I can tell, the Chattooga River is a nationally designated Wild and Scenic River which also includes about 5 miles of nationally designated wilderness. I've read your 11 page scoping letter and it does not appear to discuss which reaches of the river are designated wilderness, recreation, or scenic. This of course, makes commenting more difficult. I also don't see in your documentation the purpose of the ban on paddling above highway 28. This is an interesting anomaly for a non-motorized area and probably quite unique in the National Forest System. Excluding one type of non-motorized user for the benefit of other non-motorized users? Why isn't the analysis and the corresponding alternatives looking at the overall impacts of all activities and trying to meet a DFC based on the cumulative effects? In looking over your alternatives there appears to be a bias toward limiting boating as compared to limits on other users. It would seem that a No Action alternative (status quo) would show the affects of not permitting boaters and the other alternatives would balance uses in various mixtures and quantities to show the impacts of increasing all uses? Looking over your issues, there is no indication that boating in and of itself is an issue to your goals of managing a wilderness river. Why is this activity being singled out?

Issues related to how to achieve this desired condition include:

1. Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites? **Increased use by all user groups increases impacts. A range of alternatives showing the increased use and impact for all user groups is appropriate. This issue is not unique to boating.**
2. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access? **Again, there is nothing unique to boating.**
3. Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River? **This is only an issue because boating had been banned. The key here is to understand why it had been banned. That's the issue that needs to be revisited. Maintaining the status quo for the sake of the status quo would be an alternative to analyse, but certainly shouldn't be the dominant theme. I don't see where this is discussed in any detail.**
4. Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed? **Group size, encounters between users and other wilderness issues should be analyzed across the board for your range of alternatives and uses. As stated in your issue statement, this is only an issue 'if new boating opportunities are allowed'. This appears quite biased. Setting standards for use should be evaluated for all users across a range of use.**

**I'm not familiar with this entire issue, though I have some experience with NEPA. The emphasis in your planning regarding boating/no boating seems out of line with the goals of Wild and Scenic River Management and meeting the needs of society for the attributes these areas provide. It would seem that your analysis and alternatives should look at a broad range of uses where each use has a range of none through a lot. This bias against one**

**user group seems inappropriate.**



"Lucy Bartlett"  
<hlbartlett@windstream.  
net>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga North Fork

09/13/2007 09:26 PM

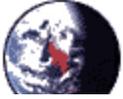
I am totally opposed to alternatives 4,5, and 6 on the usage of the North Fork of the Chattooga. 63% of the Chattooga is open to diverse whitewater boating opportunities. To save the other 37% for those who wish to hike and fish in solitude is essential. The two activities do not work well together.

Shortly after the movie "Deliverance" was released, deaths on the Chattooga increased significantly. With the current regulations, many lives have been saved. We do not need to go back to unregulated whitewater boating activities on the entire Chattooga.

Good forestry management calls for leaving dead trees and limbs where they fall. To allow woody debris to be removed damages the entire ecosystem.

Alternative 1 or some blending of the first three alternatives would be best for the river.

Lucy E. Bartlett



"David J Spoelstra"  
<spoelst1@msu.edu>

09/13/2007 09:37 PM

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

To all involved,

My name is David Spoelstra, and I am the son of a tried and true Michigan angler. That angler would be my father, Mr. Richard Spoelstra.

I spent my entire childhood and early boyhood as the right hand man of a person I love and respect more than any other. He was a 7th grade science teacher and the leader of the Rockford Middle School conservation club. He taught hundreds of kids to love and respect their environment without a penny given to support him. In his spare time he farmed. He converted the front yard of our childhood home into a 2 acre garden. Every vegetable I consumed as a child was cultivated by his loving hand. On the river, he was no different. He taught me 10 and 2 with a fly rod, and always took the time to enjoy my presence with him on the river.

When I went to college, I saw him less and less. As my life took on its own meandering path, as does the river, I never forgot the lessons I learned as a boy growing in to a man. And even in my past experience, fishing next to him in the swollen Rogue River, I saw his tolerance for those that shared his love and interest for the river. He could be found on weeknights, standing next to the Rogue with glass jar in hand, teaching kids the importance of protecting our natural resources and fishing out water samples to be tested for pollution. Should a kayaker paddle by, he became a conversationalist, reveling in the fact that they too were enjoying our nature's bounty. He never worried about the trout and thier habits.

It was not until my last year of college that I truly understood the importance of these life lessons. I was still a boy at heart, and I still loved the river. Instead of a fishing pole, I had taken on a paddle and a kayak. I saw the same importance of each and every river that I set out on, and I never once thought of what I was doing as a hinderance to the abundance that swirled around me. I wrote articles to our University press, urging the protection of our natural resources. All that time, I was still a kayaker. This is what I am today.

I moved to South Carolina with my wife in 2004. Not only were my kayaks strapped tight to the roof of the car, but my fishing poles packed and protected in the u-haul. I have since become a man of both virtues. I choose to fish when the kayaking is not formidable. I choose to kayak when the fishing is not possible.

I understand the reasoning behind the opinions of numerous anglers weighing in on the issue. I know that their intentions are not malicious. I KNOW the feeling of standing waist deep in water, reeling in what might be the best catch of a lifetime. I have been there. I grew up with this philosophy and I respect it in the utmost.

These days, I have shifted my river activities to whitewater kayaking. To this day, I have never observed a whitewater kayaker litter. I have never observed a whitewater kayaker removing wood from a river that upholds a fragile ecosystem. I have never observed a negative interaction between kayakers and anglers. I have never witnessed environmental degradation caused by kayakers. I have never felt I interrupted someones fishing

experience, and I HAVE NEVER OBSERVED A RIVER THAT EXCLUDES ONE NON-THREATENING USER GROUP. That is, until I moved to South Carolina.

I do not support any of the alternatives that you have proposed for the Chattooga. I do not think any of them create a fair and equal balance. I do not even try to comprehend the intolerance that local anglers have for whitewater kayaking and see their arguments as vague, incomprehensible attempts to keep a sanctity that has been unjustly held for the past 30 years. I do not understand, or even remotely consider the argument that kayaking, at a boatable level, would EVER impact the fishing of this stretch of water.

As my father's son, I do not agree with the attempts to segregate one user group from enjoying the abundance of mother nature. As my father's son, I do not agree with the opinion that one user group, reaping the benefits of STOCKING a stream, takes precedence over another. I do not agree with the opinion that kayakers will somehow degrade this stretch of water more than any other user group allowed near this river. And utmost, I do not agree that anything will change for user groups if whitewater kayaking is allowed on this river.

If I had to pick an option from the small amount of options available, then I surely support number 6. This is the only objective stance, of the few available, that could support my love for the river.

Rivers are the life blood of society. We forget that because we are no longer held by their bounds. Kayakers, well, they may be the only user group out there who WILL NEVER FORGET THAT. To righteously declare that their presence is not wanted is to say that you no longer support river activism. If you do not want our support in protecting the river, simply vote for the option that you see fit. If you want a group of stunt river activists, well, you may want to consider option 6. Even if the option is greatly lacking in the substance whitewater kayakers hoped to see, it is at least a start of a partnership that could do great work on the Chattooga.

As the son of a conservationist and angler, please listen to the facts, not the uneducated dissent.



"Mailman"  
<pmailman@bellsouth.net>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject:

09/13/2007 09:58 PM

To whom it may concern,

My name is Paul Mailman. I am a avid back packer and fly fisherman. I would like to express my concern regarding potential changes to the management practices up river from the hwy 28 bridge on the Chattooga.

There are so few areas in Georgia where one can combine both backpacking and fly fishing. The trail between Burrells ford and Hwy 28 is my favorite trip for combining my love for back packing and fly fishing.

I believe that maintaining the current management practice above the 28 bridge is the only sound decision that should be considered.

As additional information, I am also a avid canoest and have spend many years on the chattooga below the 28 bridge and have never had a desire to run the section of river above the 28 bridge. The upper section is simply not appropriate for a real white water experience during normal flows. Why the white water community is pressing so hard is beyond me.

Kindest regards,

Paul Mailman

404-307-8116



"BClay"  
<clay\_butch@bellsouth.net>

09/13/2007 09:58 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc: "John C Cleeves" <jcleeves@fs.fed.us>  
Subject: Butch Clay Comments, Upper Chattooga Scoping Notice of August 14, 2007

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Please accept the attached comments as my responses to the Chattooga Headwaters Scoping of August 14, 2007.

Thanks  
B Clay

No virus found in this outgoing message.

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Version: 7.5.485 / Virus Database: 269.13.16 - Release Date: 9/12/2007 12:00 AM



clay\_firstchattoogascoping\_91307.pdf

U.S. Forest Service  
Sumter National Forest Supervisor's Office  
Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC  
Attn: Mr. John Cleeves

**Re: Upper Chattooga Scoping Notice of August 14, 2007**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 5 goals for "Desired Conditions" as outlined in your call for citizen input in the Upper Chattooga Scoping package of August 14, 2007.

DFC Goals per your Scoping Notice:

- 1) The need to protect and enhance the outstandingly remarkable values of the Chattooga River (i.e., its geology, biology, scenery, recreation and archaeological history)
- 2) The need to maintain a sense of solitude away from modern life
- 3) The need to offer a remote wilderness experience
- 4) The need to preserve the corridor's spectacular scenery and setting
- 5) The need to protect its wild, natural resources

Your DFC Goals appear to reflect a thoughtful approach to the ecology and ORVs of the Chattooga headwaters. However, the goals are vague and would therefore be subject to considerable variation in how they might be interpreted and/or implemented by USFS land managers. Given the grossly disproportionate devotion of research dollars to social scientists and social impacts so far evident in the USFS/Sumter analysis of the Chattooga boating issue to date, I am concerned that the USFS still has not adopted a science-based, conservation planning approach that is commensurate with the need (and USFS responsibility as agency steward) to research and better understand the ecological implications of this impending decision upon the headwaters reach.

There still seems to be insufficient recognition by the USFS of the headwaters reach as a uniquely important ecological area that might be sensitive to human impacts and needful of special management relative to surrounding areas. I therefore believe that there should have been at least one more explicit goal, as follows:

The need to enhance and protect the Chattooga Headwaters reach above Highway 28 (Russell Bridge) via appropriate conservation measures and monitoring in recognition of the importance and increasing rarity of its wild, natural habitats and their ecological functions in an ecosystems-based

management approach which appreciates the contribution of the headwaters reach, either by itself or as a component of a network of natural areas, to the ecosystem function, biodiversity and resilience of the Blue Ridge Escarpment and the Southern Appalachians.

Toward that end I request that you include as one of my comments for this scoping request the paper that I already submitted, "Wilderness, wildlife and procedural concerns of the USFS Visitor Capacity, LAC and NEPA analysis of the Chattooga River headwaters."

Reponses to your questions:

- 1) Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites?

Yes, as long as the new standards retain but neither make inordinately more difficult nor diminish the natural limiting factor of "foot-travel only" access to the headwaters natural areas.

- 2) Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access?

Yes, if needful. Any new standards should retain as a primary limiting factor the current status quo of "foot travel only " access.

- 3) Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River?

None above Highway 28, unless there is a **EIS** done to fully understand and assess the wilderness character and ecological form and function of the headwaters reach that would be affected by new boating opportunities.

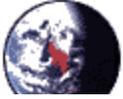
- 4) Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access if new boating opportunities are allowed?

Certainly. But unless and until a proper study (EIS) has determined the full implications of any new boating opportunities for the ecology and wilderness character of the entire headwaters reach, none should be allowed.

With regard to the outlined alternatives, I support the comments on the alternatives, issues and conclusions offered by Kilpatrick Stockton, Attorneys at Law, on behalf of Georgia Forest Watch (Joe Gatins), dated September 11, 2007.

Butch Clay  
10320 Highlands Highway,  
Mountain Rest, SC





katherine brady  
<klebrady@yahoo.com>

09/13/2007 11:06 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Boaters on the Upper Chattooga

Dear Sir,

I am writing to respectfully request that you reconsider the ban prohibiting boating access to the upper sections of the Chattooga River. As a relatively new member of the whitewater boating community, I have been impressed by the spirit and attitude in general of whitewater boaters, the great majority of whom are extremely "green", environmentally aware, and have a deep respect and appreciation for nature, wildness, and wilderness. We practice Leave No Trace, try to leave an area cleaner than it was when we came to it, and tend to respect all responsible river users. In short, we are good stewards of the environment, intent upon preserving natural areas as they should be so that future users--including ourselves over and over again!--will have the opportunity to enjoy the same great experience that we have had the privilege of enjoying.

Certainly there are reasonable alternatives to the current complete limitation on boating above Section II, solutions that are neither "all" or "nothing". The needs of the land, the river, and its native inhabitants both flora and fauna, must of course be the focus of any plan, but once those needs are assured, surely a responsible strategy can be designed and implemented that would allow responsible people to enjoy this valuable property. I feel safe in saying that the vast majority of boaters, if given the opportunity to enjoy such a wonderful stretch of river, would never behave in such a manner that they might risk losing that opportunity; they would accept and respect appropriate user guidelines as they know these are in place to protect the resource.

I consider myself an environmentalist, and as such, I am not generally an advocate of "wise use", as in my experience much of what is often billed as "wise use" could indeed more accurately be represented by use of the phrase "special interests abuse". However, I do not believe this to be such a situation. I suppose we boaters might be considered a "special interest", in a sense, but in this case our interest is truly in the beauty and the wildness of the river we would like to be able to paddle. If the needs of the land and the river cannot be met and still allow for river users to enjoy this stretch of river, then I would not advocate any use. But to ban paddler access and yet allow other users access is, I believe, to not only create an injustice but also to set a dangerous precedent. I do not know a single paddler who does not love and respect the river and deeply appreciate all it has to offer.

As a light intermediate whitewater boater, it will likely be some years before I can safely consider running a stretch of river such as the upper Chattooga, but I would dearly like to know that when I am ready, I will be fortunate enough to be afforded the opportunity of traveling with a small group of like-minded responsible friends to paddle in this marvelous and spectacular place.

I thank you for allowing me to comment on this issue. I have read through the proposed alternatives and I am not an advocate of completely unrestricted use; I accept that compromise is often the way for all the parties--the most important party being the land and the river and the creatures who live there--to gain the most benefit. I am aware that my comments may not come from a particularly politically or a particularly scientifically astute point of view; I admit that I do not know much about the wrangling that has apparently been going on over this issue, nor much about any specific potential fragilities of the natural habitat that may exist. But I do know

that I felt compelled to comment, and even though my thoughts may "not be" some things, I can tell you that there is one thing that they are--from the heart. I care about the river. So does the rest of the boating community.

Respectfully,

Katherine L. E. Brady

---

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"Whitney Eure"  
<whitnoid86@hotmail.co  
m>

09/13/2007 11:24 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Restoration of whitewater boating on the Chattooga headwaters

Dear sirs,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment on the proposed lifting of the ban on boats on the upper sections of the Chattooga. I am a member of American Whitewater and have enjoyed the Chattooga river's sections 3 and 4 since 1996. I am in favor of lifting the boating ban.

There has been a great deal of misunderstanding and fear regarding this issue. The user groups concerned (boaters, fisherman, hikers) can absolutely share this river system. It will only be possibly to run the Chattooga headwaters in a kayak after or during sustained heavy rains. There simply isn't enough water to allow passage of a boat otherwise, Milt Aiken and other participants in the study trips will attest to this. During these conditions, essentially near flood (3 feet and higher on the US 76 USGS gauge) there very little possibility of fishing.

The most consistent rains also tend to occur in the winter, when hiker usage is low. It is very unlikely that user group encounters will occur with any frequency.

Additionally, there is no data that indicates that kayaking is detrimental to riparian ecosystems.

I write in strong support of lifting the ban.

Thank you, Whitney M. Eure DVM (828)545-0368  
94 Tacoma Circle  
Asheville, N.C. 28801

---

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Jennifer Koermer  
<jennifer\_koermer@yahoo.com>

09/13/2007 11:53 PM

To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us  
cc:  
Subject: Comments on the Chattooga Headwater Management Plan

Subject: Chattooga Headwaters Management Plan Comment

Mr. John Cleeves  
Francis Marion & Sumter National Forests  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212-3530

Dear Sir,

I would like to comment on the recently released management plans for the headwaters of the Chattooga River. I am in favor of plan #6; however, it still does not offer equal rights to all wilderness area users.

You have asked for comments on the following areas.

Should there be new standards limiting trailheads, trails and/or campsites? I can not really comment on this, except to say if the current standards are having an increasingly negative impact on the Chattooga River corridor, then limiting the use should be considered. When limiting the use, all Users should be considered equally and fairly. The overall impact of white water boaters is generally less than an overnight camping trip.

Should there be new standards limiting group sizes, encounters between user groups and/or access? If so, all Users of the park should be considered equally and fairly. If the group size for an overnight trip or hiking trip is limited to 12 individuals, the size of a white water trip should meet the same requirements. White water boaters generally move fairly fast, if any encounters do occur, they are generally over in a fairly fast manner.

Should there be new boating opportunities on the Chattooga River? Absolutely. I have heard stories about the Chattooga River and would love to have the opportunity to experience it's beauty. The river and park is a natural resource that is owned by the citizens of the United States. Boaters should have the same equal rights to the river as hikers, fisherman, and backpackers. Boaters probably have less of an impact on the environment then fisherman and backpackers. In general in the US, rivers that are navigable are public property. Prohibiting boating on a public river in a national park denies the founding principal of equal access guaranteed by our National Park System.

As a White Water kayaker, I am not asking for preferential treatment. If new standards are being implemented to limit the impact of land use, these standards should be applied across the board. If the group size for hiking or camping is limited to a total of 12 people, why should a boating group be any different? Why is the impact of a WW kayaker more than that of a camper, hiker, or fisherman?

In my humble opinion, the impact a WW kayaker has on the environment is actually a great deal less than that of many of the other users of wilderness areas. I have heard comments that kayakers can fit a lot of extra stuff in our Kayaks that we can then leave on the river. In general, I carry more when I am hiking than when I am kayaking. I think this is true of most kayakers.

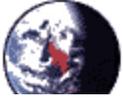
A backpack is huge and can carry your camera, with spare batteries, lunches, snacks, all with multiple wrappers. The impact of an overnight camper with food, fuel, cooking, cleaning is even larger. Fisherman are actually removing natural animals that live in the environment. On a 5 mile section of river through this wilderness area, many WW kayakers would bring a small snack that can easily fit into a small pocket in their life jacket. A kayak floating in the water of a river bed would have considerably less of an impact on the environment than many of the other users of the park.

Please open this National resource to all US citizens fairly and equally.

Best Regards,

Jennifer Koermer  
89 Farragut Place  
North Plainfield, NJ 07062  
908-753-9473

Member of ACA, AW, & AMC.



<wbegeland@bellsouth.net>

09/13/2007 11:56 PM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chatoog Comments

I support the #1 alternative proposed.

I would like to confine my comments to the fisherman/boater debate from a trout fishermen's perspective.

For 150 years the single most important rule of stream etiquette for trout fishermen has been "Do not intrude on the immediate area that a fisherman is fishing". To violate this etiquette causes much aggravation to trout fishermen no matter who the transgressor is. Drift boats, pontoons, kayaks, float tubes and even other wade fishermen; it does not matter. Invading that personal space leads to a feeling of at the least a violation of personal space and in extreme circumstances led to outright physical confrontation and regrettably at times violence.

Because of this strongly held sense of personal space, trout fishermen often expend tremendous amounts of energy simply to move to secluded isolated locations. Historically the Chatooga River above the 28 bridge was one of those locations where the river's danger made it inaccessible to craft such as drift boats, pontoons and float tubes. Fishermen could retreat to this area and fish with the comfortable knowledge that nobody other than wade fishermen could venture to those remote parts of the river.

With the advent of near indestructible polymers, adventurous individuals began using craft such as kayaks and canoes to access previously inaccessible and overly dangerous sections of whitewater rivers throughout the world. Unfortunately, this sometimes put them in conflict with that first rule of the trout fishermen's stream etiquette, violating the personal space of the trout fisherman. In most circumstances, considerate individuals could avoid that violation because streams were wide enough or too turbulent for fishermen. However, the upper reaches of the Chatooga did not meet these requirements. Polymer hulled kayaks and canoes could access these previously unreachable stream areas yet not avoid violating the trout fishing lanes as they came upon wade fishermen. They were forced to either portage around or proceed through those fishing lanes. Depending on the personality of the fishermen, this might lead to passive irritation and unexpressed disappointment or anger. If the fisherman and/or kayakers were more of an aggressive nature the fishermen might openly express their feelings of violation of this the most demanded and expected of stream etiquette rules.

Because the Chatooga River in this area allowed no leeway for avoiding these types of intrusion, stubborn fishermen on the Chatooga demanded and petitioned that they have an area where they could continue to go without having to concern themselves with the aggravation these types of encounters and confrontations can create.

Typically, my nature is to find a compromise in these circumstances. However, due to the nature of the Chatooga in this area and the fact that there are very few other streams where fishermen can still go to escape to a solitude such as this, I prefer that the ban on boating traffic in this area remain.

Thank You,  
Bill Egeland  
Canton, GA



"Andrew Douglas"  
<andrew.douglas2@verizon.net>

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject:

09/14/2007 12:20 AM  
Please respond to  
andrew.douglas2

Mr. John Cleeves  
U.S. Forest Service  
4931 Broad River Road  
Columbia, SC 29212  
[comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)

RE: Chattooga Scoping Document

Dear Mr.. Cleeves,

I am writing to comment upon the Chattooga Scoping document. As a whole the options that have been outlined seem to fail to offer White Water Boaters a reasonably fair access to this national resource. White Water Boaters actually have very little environmental impact on the rivers that they use. To fail to allow them access equal to that of hikers, campers, or fishermen is just wrong. White Water Boaters do not require trails, campsites or multiple access points. White Water Boaters do not remove living organisms from the environment. White Water Boaters do not litter or damage the environment any more than the few bad eggs in every user group. On rivers such as the Chattooga White Water Boaters would not tend to travel in large groups, nor would they tend to camp. The over all effect of a boater would be similar or even less than a day hiker in the same environment.

In addition, the proposed alternatives should be amended as follows:

- Proposed use limits must be tied to a specific standard regarding user capacity. Only one USFS alternative even mentions a standard (Alternative #2).
- Limits must be applied equitably and fairly– not targeted to *any* specific user groups without significant evidence. All USFS alternatives single out boating for harsh limits and bans – for which there is no evidence.
- Limits should only be imposed when standards are met or exceeded – and not before. Five of the six USFS alternatives limit and/or ban boating immediately without basis.
- Alternatives must include a range of standards for *all users*. USFS alternatives address a range of arbitrary limits on boaters – but only one alternative would limits other users. For example, a standard of 10, 6, and 2 group encounters per day should be analyzed, as well as provisions that exclude the outlier days when high use can be expected or occurs randomly.
- Alternatives must be based on a capacity for all users and/or individual uses. The proposed USFS alternatives are not based on the social or physical capacity of the river corridor.
- Alternatives must prescribe indirect limits prior to direct limits as is required by USFS

policy. Five of the six alternatives implement direct limits (i.e., bans) prior to trying indirect limits first in direct violation of USFS policy.

- Alternatives, including any capacity triggers, should distinguish between high use frontcountry areas and low use backcountry areas. USFS alternatives make no distinction between how many encounters with other users are acceptable in a campground or at a trailhead as opposed to on a trail or river deep in the woods.
- Alternatives should look at varying levels of user created trail closures, user created trail hardening, creation of new trails, campsite closures or relocations, fish stocking, parking, total recreational use, angling use, hiking use, camping use, boating use, and swimming use.

Thank you for considering these ideas.

Sincerely,

Andrew Douglas  
89 Farragut Pl  
North Plainfield NJ  
07062

[Andrew.Douglas2@verizon.net](mailto:Andrew.Douglas2@verizon.net)



"Klaras, Doug"  
<DKlaras@imagepoint.com>

09/14/2007 08:05 AM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Comments On The Chatooga Headwaters

Dear Sirs-

You are probably getting plenty of this, from both sides, so thank you for still taking the time to read up on this issue.

I have been a whitewater paddler for 18 years. Having a 9 to 5 career, the opportunities for me to paddle remote rivers on weekends is pretty rare. I would love to one day be able to see that the upper Chatooga was at a runnable level, and be able to drive down from my home in Knoxville and paddle this obviously gorgeous river.

Almost every one of the paddlers that I have made acquaintance with are extremely environmentally conscious. We leave places cleaner than we found them. My favorite places to paddle in the area that I live in almost always have fishermen on them, and we always get along. From what I have read on this issue, it appears that most of the days where this section of river is boatable, are not going to be days where the fishing is any good. If that is true, I do not understand why the fishing public is so desperately against boaters being on the Chatooga headwaters.

Please try to provide a solution which allows whitewater paddlers, some access.

Truly Yours,

Doug Klaras  
Rite Aid Project Manager  
800-444-7446, ext. 327  
DKlaras@ImagePoint.com



"KAREN HAWK"  
<[hwkncrw@earthlink.net](mailto:hwkncrw@earthlink.net)>

To: [comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us)  
cc:  
Subject: FW: Chattooga W&S River Management Comments

09/14/2007 09:11 AM  
Please respond to  
hwkncrw

As you can see, I sent this yesterday and just got the notification that the email address was incorrect.

KAREN HAWK  
[hwkncrw@earthlink.net](mailto:hwkncrw@earthlink.net)  
EarthLink Revolves Around You.

----- Original Message -----

**From:** KAREN HAWK  
**To:** [comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us](mailto:comments-southern-francismarionsumter@fs.fed.us)  
**Sent:** 9/13/2007 7:32:37 AM  
**Subject:** Chattooga W&S River Management Comments

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

The alternative I prefer is #3 that speaks to management of impacts on the river itself while maintaining foot traffic only above the Hwy 28 bridge. #1 or #2 are also viable alternatives that maintain the North Fork for foot travel only and would be acceptable.

Thank you for your interest,

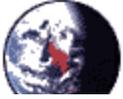
Karen Hawk

255 Kalmia Lane  
Salem, SC 29676

and

320 Crowe Drive  
Highlands, NC 28741

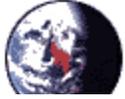
KAREN HAWK  
[hwkncrw@earthlink.net](mailto:hwkncrw@earthlink.net)  
EarthLink Revolves Around You.



**"L Bechtel"**  
<lab12@tds.net>  
09/14/2007 10:39 AM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: alternitives to use upper chattoga

leave wellenough alone alt #1 thanks Everett Hall 696 trout unlimited chapter



"John Lumsden"  
<gmskylake@alltel.net>

09/14/2007 11:37 AM

To: <comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us>  
cc:  
Subject: Chattooga River comments

As an avid paddlers since the early 70's I have been on sections 2,3,&4 many times and hiked along the upper reaches of the river as well. Even though a river can be canoed or kayaked doesn't mean it should be. I am for your Alt #1, which would allow foot travel only and no further upkeep by man. We all need our peace and quiet. Thank you for allowing the comments and don't let the political \$\$ from AWA run the show. They are not the voice for ALL paddlers.

John Lumsden  
General Manager  
Skylake POA  
O:706.878.2928  
C:706.969.9690