

Wild and Scenic Chattooga River



Sumter National Forest



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

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The Chattooga was designated a wild and scenic river in 1974. It is one of the longest and most spectacular free-flowing mountain rivers in the Southeast. Over a distance of 50 miles, the river descends an average of 49 feet per mile from its headwaters in North Carolina to the state line between South Carolina and Georgia. The Chattooga offers some of the best whitewater boating and trout fishing in the region.

Many people lack the equipment or skill needed to run the Chattooga River safely. Three companies are commercially licensed to operate on Sections III and IV of the Chattooga by the Forest Service. These companies also provide instructional clinics in whitewater canoeing and kayaking. If you are a spectator, the parking area off Highway 76 at the Georgia/SC state line offers a short trail to Bull Sluice, one of the most famous rapids.

Surrounding area

The river is also known for its excellent trout fishing opportunities. One can also hike along the river on the Chattooga Trail. Horseback riding is allowed on the nearby Rocky Gap/Willis Knob Horse Trail. Because of the vast area covered by the Chattooga River, a number of different attractions are easily accessible. In South Carolina, the small apple orchard communities of Long Creek and Mountain Rest are nearby. In Georgia, Clayton is only 15 minutes away. A little farther away are beautiful attractions on the Chattahoochee National Forest in Georgia and the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in North Carolina.

Directions: A list of put-ins in SC, NC and GA is available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/scnfs/foatchattooga>. Some put-ins require a hike of .25 miles or more to access the river. Waterproof maps are sold at the ranger station.

Requirements: All boaters must self-register at put-in information boards. Special-use permits are required for commercial uses. Detailed rules and regulations are posted on information boards and on self-registration permits

Water Levels: Links to the Chattooga water gauges are available online at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/goto/scnfs/foatchattooga>.

Difficulty Level: Varies according to water level, activity and location on the river. Whitewater conditions require moderate to expert experience.

Safety: Whitewater is extremely hazardous. Always practice water safety. Leave your itinerary with someone you know.

For more information

Andrew Pickens Ranger District
112 Andrew Pickens Circle
Mountain Rest, SC 29664
Phone: (864) 638-9568
Fax: (864) 638-2659
Hours: Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to noon
and 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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River Safety and Regulations

River regulations are posted on the bulletin boards at all put-in areas and on the self-registration permit. The following are general use regulations:

- Each party must self-register at put-in. Self-registration permits are free and are available at each put-in.
- All floaters on sections III and IV must wear Coast Guard-approved personal flotation devices; on sections I and II, boaters must have a personal flotation device.
- All persons in decked crafts and all floaters below Woodall Shoals must wear a helmet.
- Minimum party size: a) Above Earl's Ford (two people, one craft)
b) Below Earl's Ford (two people, two crafts)
- Inner-tubes are prohibited below Earl's Ford.
- Rafts must have a minimum of two air chambers.
- Air mattresses, motorized crafts or any other crafts deemed unsuitable by the US Forest Service are prohibited.
- Motorized vehicles are prohibited on all closed roads.
- All commercial trips on the river must be under a Special Use Permit issued by the US Forest Service.
- Camping is permitted at any location within the corridor (not closed by signs) that is more than .25 miles from a road that is more than 50 feet from a trail, stream or the river.

More information about safety and regulations is available at the following locations:

Andrew Pickens Ranger District

112 Andrew Pickens Circle

Mountain Rest, SC 29664

Phone: (864) 638-9568

On the Web at <http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms>

Chattooga River Ranger District

809 Highlands Highway 441

Clayton, GA 30525

Phone: (706) 782-3320

