

Chattooga Wild and Scenic River Proposal for Managing Recreation Use on the upper Chattooga



U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service
Southern Region

The Chattooga River originates in the mountains of western North Carolina and forms a portion of the border between Georgia and South Carolina. A 15,432-acre corridor along the upper reaches of the Chattooga was designated as Wild and Scenic by Congress in 1974. The river is bordered by the 8,724-acre Ellicott Rock Wilderness and is flanked by three national forests—the Nantahala in North Carolina, Chattahoochee in Georgia and Sumter in South Carolina.

In April 2005, the Washington Office of the USDA Forest Service issued a decision on an appeal by American Whitewater of the Sumter National Forest's Land and Resource Management Plan (forest plan). The forest plan, issued in January 2004, continued a 1976 decision to prohibit boating in the upper reaches of the Chattooga (approximately 21 miles of the total 57 miles). The 1976 decision to exclude boating above Highway 28 was based on safety concerns, lack of sufficient flows and to prevent conflicts/provide angling opportunities without boating encounters. In its appeal, American Whitewater noted that boating was unfairly excluded and stated that the forest plan should be changed to allow "year-round access for self-guided groups of non-commercial, non-motorized canoeists and kayakers" to float the river.

The Washington Office decision on the appeal directed the Southern Regional Office and the Sumter National Forest to conduct an appropriate visitor use capacity analysis and to involve affected and interested parties.

After two years of considerable analysis and extensive public involvement, the Forest Service officials reviewed eight alternatives considered in detail and selected a preferred alternative (Alternative 4) which allows some limited boating.

Alternative 4 is designed specifically to protect and enhance outstanding trout fishing and minimize conflict between boaters and existing users by allowing boating from County Line Road Trail in North Carolina to Burrells Ford Bridge from December 1 – March 1 at mean daily flow levels of 450 cfs or higher. This alternative also addresses biological and physical resource concerns by restricting camping to designated sites, closing a number of user-created trails, limiting parking and prohibiting the removal of large woody debris to accommodate boating.

Chattooga River runs 57 miles from North Carolina into Georgia/South Carolina.

Congress designated the river as Wild and Scenic River in 1974.

The Chattooga River corridor includes 15,432 acres.

Boating has been prohibited on the upper Chattooga since 1976.

For additional information, call: Michelle Burnett (803) 561-4091.

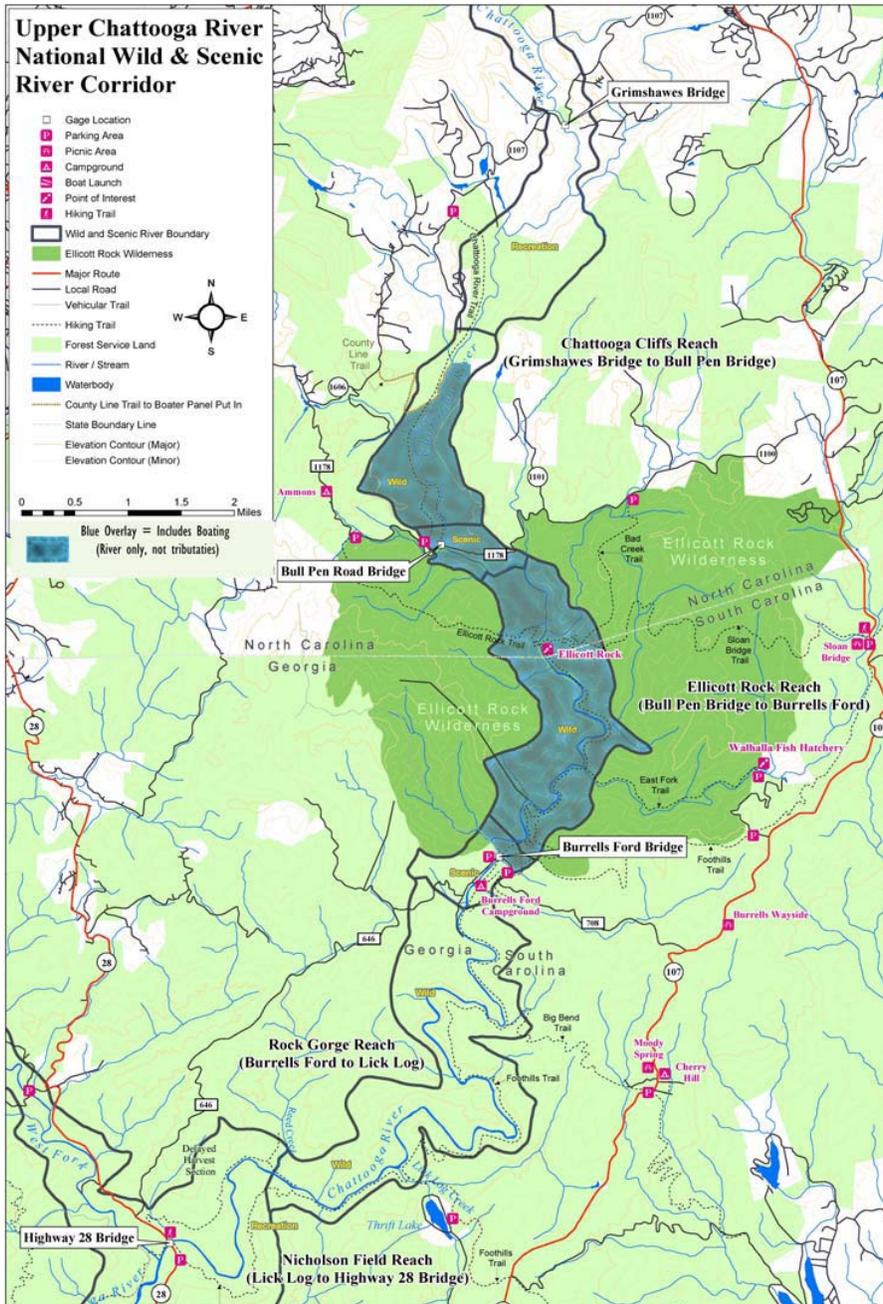
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July 2008

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Alternative 4—Preferred Alternative

ZONE: County Line Road Trail to Burrells Ford Bridge; [+/-7 miles boating allowed within 21 miles above Hwy. 28]

FLOW: Mean daily flow of 450 cfs and above

SEASON: Dec. 1- March 1

BOATABLE DAYS: Average six per year; range zero to 11

GROUPS PER DAY: Four from County Line Trail Road to Bull Pen Bridge; four from Bull Pen Bridge to Burrells Ford Bridge. Each group allowed one trip per day.

BOATERS GROUP SIZE: Maximum six; minimum two

TYPE OF CRAFT: Single/tandem hard boats and inflatable kayaks

Comment Period: July 2 – August 1

E-mail Comments to: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

Mail Comments to:
US Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
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