

**Chattooga River Public Comments Oct. 12 - 20, 2005**

**Posted on Wednesday, October 12, 2005 at 15:26 Hours (Server time).**

From: Doug Barnes  
Email: Doug.barnes@tpl.org

Telephone Number: (enter your phone)

Street Address:  
215 Pine Bark Trail

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I would prefer that no boating be allowed on the upper portion of the Chattooga above the bridge. I think some sections of the river should remain wild for pedestrian and fisherman use only. There is plenty of access for boaters below the bride. Introducing more boat traffic into the upper area would only degrade this precious resource and prohibit use by those who seek solitude and beauty of an unspoiled river.

**Posted on Thursday, October 13, 2005 at 23:36 Hours (Server time).**

From: Lee Robinson  
Email: leeanddebby@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: 7064368770

Street Address:  
PO Box 1008, Hartwell, GA, 30643

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Hello, I strongly believe the river should remain closed above the point mentioned. It is one of the few really wild places left in the area with unparalleled beauty. I think ATV riders should face stiff fines. If it is opened to tubing and other activities it will become a dumping ground for beer cans and other waste. Let's leave it be. Tread lightly. Please keep it closed.

**Posted on Friday, October 14, 2005 at 14:48 Hours (Server time).**

From: Shayne Day  
Email: Boaterofhair@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: 678/333-8084

Street Address:  
52 Sunflower Ct.

Ellijay, Ga 30540

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am interested in the developments on the usage of the Chattooga River above the Hwy 28 bridge.

For starters I am an outdoor enthusiast with interest in many sports; kayaking, mountain biking, rock climbing, and trout fishing to name a few. My primary interest in this issue is the boating ban above Hwy 28. The Chattooga river is a free flowing river with headwaters in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina as you may know. The branches of the river coming from the Three Forks area are open to boating, and I enjoy kayaking on Overflow Creek and have interest in kayaking Big and Holcomb Creek.

I feel that by limiting usage on the Chattooga River to fishing only is unjust. The beauty of the river should not be limited only to hikers and trout fisherman. For one, the impact on the natural enviroment is more damaging with foot traffic than in kayaks, where kayaks impacting rocks generally causes plastic to be removed from the boat, not errosion due to disturbing the soil. Another reason is there are places in the gorge area that are very inaccessible to foot traffic, leaving a very pristine enviroment. Kayakers moving downstream would do little to no harm on this region due to the fact that unless required for safe passage, we remain in our boats and enjoy the scenery from water level.

I can think of numerous places where the enviroment is littered with trash. These palces are easily accessible to people by car or short hiking trails into remote areas. Holly Creek in the Cohutta Wilderness Area is one example. I've seen used diapers, beer bottles, empty cans of corn, fishing line, busted inflatable rafts designed for pool useage, fast food bags, ect. in these places. Very disturbing to be in a remote location and see litter of this sort. Kayakers in general are for preserving the enviroment, what we carry in, we carry out. There would be no accumulation of litter due to careless kayakers. This is generally left by people who think of the river as a self clensing garbage dump.

I urge you to allow boating above the Hwy. 28 bridge on the Chattooga river. It is a gem in the crown of this Wild and Scenic river, and kayakers should be allowed to enjoy the natural beauty of a pristine enviroment.

Thank you

Shayne Day

**Posted on Saturday, October 15, 2005 at 4:58 Hours (Server time).**

From: Tom F. Landreth

Email: landreth@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 706-746-2295

Street Address:  
53 Wild Orchid Ln  
Rabun Gap, GA 30568

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Since we were not allowed to comment at the Walhalla meeting:

1. Quite naturally, opening the river above Hwy 28 to boating will have a huge impact on use of the area..especially at the access points.
2. Zoning is nothing new to the USFS. The ZONE above Hwy 28 bridge is no different than restricting the use of ATV's...or horses!
3. What has changed since the ban was instituted in 1976? More fishermen, more hikers, more campers, more birdwatchers! Adding boaters to the stew is running a risk of ruining it.
4. What a unique opportunity for the solitude of the backcountry..the Chattooga! And the USFS is prepared to scrap it!  
Hopefully,at the next meeting someone will be able to comment and express their views, other than American Whitewater attorneys.

**Posted on Sunday, October 16, 2005 at 20:02 Hours (Server time).**

From: Gary Sundin  
Email: gwsunding@prodigy.net

Telephone Number: (706) 340-7628

Street Address:  
240 Gilleland Dr  
Athens, GA 30606

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am an avid flyfisherman and I hike, camp, and fish often on the stretch in question. I believe paddlers in the section above hwy 28 can potentially negatively impact the quality of the wilderness fishing experience there. However, although I prefer not to have any boat traffic there, I am sympathetic to the desires of paddlers wishing to experience this area. Although paddlers state that they will not attempt the section when flows are below a certain value, I would feel better if a legal minimum flow requirement was set. If paddlers are actually limited to using the area within certain flow limits, I believe that paddlers and fishermen can happily coexist there.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 0:37 Hours (Server time).**

From: Brent Steadman

Email: brent.steadman@gmail.com

Telephone Number: (704)523-4914

Street Address:  
3624 Annlin Ave  
Charlotte, NC 28209

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I have read the decision for the Washington Office and I would like an explanation as to how you interpret the decision: "While the appeal decision does not direct that the decision be changed." The decision clearly states that the WO reverses your position in regards to non commercialized boating on the upper chattooga. How can the word "reverses" mean anything besides change.

**Date: October 17, 2005**

From: Doug Adams  
E-mail address: [edadams1@alltel.net](mailto:edadams1@alltel.net)  
Phone: 706 746 2158

Mailing Address: PO Box 65, Rabun Gap, GA 30568

**Subject: Visitor Use Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River**

Comments for your consideration:

I thought the handouts at the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting provide some good information. In particular, I thought the *History of the Access Closure Above Highway 28* was concise and accurate. While we still have the opportunity, I urge you to document the oral history from former Forest Service personnel that were on the scene during the turbulent years before the angler-boater zoning and the years immediately after:

Max Gates was Andrew Pickens District Ranger from 1961 to 1972

Jim Barrett was Andrew Pickens District Ranger from 1972 to 1976

Perry Shatley was on the Andrew Pickens District from 1975 until recent retirement

Jim Abercrombie was a long time employee of the Andrew Pickens District

Mike Crane now has contact info for all 4 of these people.

A place to collect 'creeking' data on use and growth rate year-to-year would have been Overflow Creek, if there had been a self-registration requirement at the 'big culvert'. It would be good to have that self-registration data for the next planning cycle in 10 or 15 years.

The Nantahala DH section in NC might be a good 'proxy analysis' sight for social impacts. However, this is definitely NOT a backcountry situation. Solitude is not an issue here with a highway running alongside the river. The stream size is comparable. The anglers are established in the DH section and boaters are established below the DH section, just as they are on the Chattooga. Anglers who venture into the boating section are often purposely harassed by the boaters (including beaver slaps with paddles as they pass close by). It may be good data to 'user survey' the DH section when water flow is high enough for boating. Another interesting fact, the boating section is the only public trout stream in NC legally open for night fishing. This gives anglers the opportunity to fish there during the twilight periods after sundown and before sunup when the river is boating-free (Note: zoning by time of day).

The Green River near Hendersonville NC might be a good 'proxy analysis' sight for biological and/or physical impacts. Before 'creeking' came on the scene a few years ago, the traditional backcountry visitors such as anglers, hunters, hikers, backpackers, bird watchers, waterfall viewers, and nature lovers used this area. Now, for the most part, they have been displaced and the vast majority of users are boaters or people observing boaters (Note: there are no 'non-experienced' boaters here).

For info, click on: <http://boatingbeta.com/runs/greennarrows.htm>

Also read "Access Background" on: <http://www.americanwhitewater.org/rivers/id/1080/>

Keep in mind the biological and/or physical impacts boating and the people observing boating have had on the Bull Sluice area in the last 35 years.

On 4/30/05 AW posted the following on their website: **Chattooga Headwaters Decision Will Lift Ban!** Soon after that the boaters 'poaching-a-run' increased in the Upper Chattooga and is already causing social impacts.

Please read the comments on the North Georgia Trout Online message board:

<http://www.georgia-outdoors.com/forum/showthread.php?t=51346> Please read about recent angler-boater encounters on the Upper Chattooga: <http://www.georgia-outdoors.com/forum/archive/index.php?t-51822.html> and <http://www.georgia-outdoors.com/forum/archive/index.php?t-51820.html> Also see on page 3 of this document: "Alex's Report - Boating on Small Streams in Rabun County, July 20, 2005"

The Forest Service in SC and NC made media news releases about the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Forest Service SOs in SC and NC were well represented at the meeting. However, there was no media news release in GA and nothing in the Clayton or Atlanta newspapers to inform the general public. I believe the citizens of GA should have been made aware of the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. I believe there should have been CONF representatives from the SO at the October 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### Identify Concerns, Issues and Management Objectives

- 1. Concern: There is a lack of representation in the public meetings of the 'unorganized' visitors to the Upper Chattooga.** In addition to anglers and boaters there are also sightseers, picnickers, casual walkers, day hikers, wildlife viewers &/or photographers, waterfall viewers, fall leaf lookers, birders, wildflower viewers, night insect viewers (no kidding), swimmers, developed area campers, primitive (dispersed) campers, backpackers, hunters, etc. The process is flawed without their direct involvement in the public meetings that 'Defining Desired Conditions' for the Visitor Capacity Analysis.
- 2. Concern: Collecting data through user surveys from January through August 2006 will not capture all user groups.** September through December has hunters, hiking leaf lookers, sightseeing leaf lookers, some seasonal birders, some seasonal wildflower viewers, etc. Also, visitation is relatively high on Thanksgiving weekend and especially high during the Christmas holiday period (weather permitting).
- 3. Concern: It appears that 2 organizations (AW and TU) will dominate the public meetings of the Visitor Capacity Analysis process.** Most backcountry anglers and most whitewater boaters are NOT members of TU & AW. TU members made up only 7% of the backcountry anglers according to the 1987 GA DNR Roving Angler Survey. Likewise, only a small percentage of whitewater boaters are members of AW.
- 4. Concern: I don't believe bringing in a professional lobbyist (the Washington lawyer who has never been a recreation visitor to this area) complies with the intent of "Involve affected and interested parties in the design and execution of the capacity analysis."**
- 5. Concern: The 'put & take' anglers that fish close to the Burrell's Ford stocking points have a lot at stake, but they are not likely to get involved in the public meetings of the Visitor Capacity Analysis process.** The 'put & take' anglers in the Burrell's Ford Bridge area will be impacted by boaters in more ways than anglers in any other section of the Upper Chattooga. Most of these anglers come here to catch and keep stocked trout. If the boating ban is removed, the bridge site will also be a boating 'put-in' location from morning to early afternoon, a 'paddle-through' location in mid-day, and a 'take-out' location from afternoon to early evening. Not only will there be more congestion in the water interfering with the fishing, but also added congestion in the road/parking areas with shuttle vehicles, etc.

*Streams and whitewater—Water attracts a wide variety of visitors, including swimmers, viewers of fish, anglers, and users of muscle- and motor-powered watercraft. The possibilities of conflict are obvious. For the most part, all the uses just listed are incompatible with one another.* (Quoted from The Southern Forest Resource Assessment; Southern Research Station, USDA Forest Service, dated Oct.

2002; report 4.5 titled Potential Conflicts Between Different Forms of Recreation).

But we know what to do when these conflicts do break out! All we have to do is remove the trout stocking and the 'put & take' anglers will go somewhere else. Problem solved! (Note: Isn't this exactly what happened in the lower Chattooga River some 30 years ago at Earl's Ford and Sandy Ford?)

6. **Issue: Any user trials will not include the 'non-experienced' boaters that float at very low water levels.** Should boaters gain unrestricted access (as they are requesting), both 'experienced' and 'non-experienced' boaters would put-in at Burrell's Ford. The views of 'easy water' from the bridges at Burrell's Ford and Highway 28 are deceiving for the 'non-experienced' boater. I have encountered novice floaters 'poaching-a-trip' in inner tubes between Pigpen and Highway 28. I encountered a guy wearing only shorts, a cowboy hat, and cowboy boots dragging his aluminum canoe (with a beer cooler inside) over the rock ledges of The Steps. I've seen several aluminum canoes busted or wrapped around rocks in the Rocky Gorge. I rescued two doctors below the Sims Fields in a K-Mart plastic raft, after dark, wearing only wet shorts, tee shirts and flip-flops. I've encountered a wooden johnboat with 3 occupants below Big Bend Falls. (Note: User trials will not represent the true social impacts without these 'Bubba Boaters'. The good news is that Bubba Boaters usually don't do it a second time.)
7. **Issue: Any user trials will not truly represent the effect that typical boaters and their sounds will have on other visitors.** When I encounter 'experienced' boaters 'poaching a run', I almost always hear them talking or hollering before I see them, even when I'm up on the trail. This invades other backcountry visitor's solitude experience and mine. Without asking if it is OK and with bold self-assurance, they paddle right pass me through the fishing 'sweet spot' (usually the deeper run) where I may be 'working' a particular fish. However, the 'trial' boaters will naturally be on their very best behavior. They will be courteous and polite when passing anglers, not brash and rude, no loud talking, no hollering, no 'beaver slaps' with their paddles, no obscene gestures, etc. (Note: The user trials will not be representative of the true social impacts.)
8. **Issue: I believe the Visitor Capacity Analysis should include the 'creeking' growth rate and estimated forecast of the potential number of annual boating trips in 10 years and 20 years.** 'Creeking' a relatively new whitewater sport. It was made possible by the application of new materials to creative new boat designs. It is part of the explosion in popularity of 'extreme' sports. In October of 1999, American Whitewater said 'experienced' boaters should be allowed to run the Upper Chattooga when the Highway 76 gauge reads above 2.6 feet, then 3 years later they said 2.0 feet. Future equipment improvement may make it possible for 'experienced' boaters to float the Upper Chattooga at much lower stage levels than 2.0 feet. In 1999, American Whitewater estimated the upper river is " - *unlikely to receive more than a couple hundred visitors per year*", in 2003 the Forest Service estimates over 10 times that number for Alternative E (2,120 boater days/average year, Page H-27). The number of people kayaking in the South increased 85.8% between 1995 and 2000, according to USDA Forest Service The Southern Forest Resource Assessment. What will be the whitewater boating use level in 10 or 15 years? Just look at the present concerns with boating overuse and conflicts in the lower Chattooga River.
9. **Management Objectives: The Visitor Capacity Analysis should strive to preserve and protect the solitude and uniqueness of the only section of the Chattooga that has not been damaged by conflict and management for too many user groups.** This experience is shared without conflict among traditional backcountry visitors such as anglers, hunters, hikers, backpackers, bird watchers, waterfall viewers, and nature lovers. The Upper Chattooga backcountry is a special

and unique place for trout anglers, of whom many travel hundreds, even thousands of miles to experience it (just check the license tags in the parking areas). The excellent backcountry trail system allows anglers and other backcountry visitors to space themselves for personal solitude. If boating is allowed between Burrell's Ford and Highway 28, the backcountry angler will be the greatest loser. There is nowhere else anglers can go in the East that has the size and volume to permit quality fly-fishing in a spectacular backcountry setting that is boating-free.

**10. Management Objectives: Do what is best for the Upper Chattooga River.**

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**Alex's Report - Boating on Small Streams in Rabun County, July 20, 2005**

(Alex has recently retired and owns a place in Rabun County. He now spends more time on streams here and has the opportunity for these types of encounters.)

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Ruth & Alex](#)

**To:** [Eedee & Doug Adams](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2005 9:03 PM

**Subject:** Re: TIGHT LINES August 2005 Newsletter

Doug,

Some more on the kayak problems. I was hiking with my fly rod up Moccasin Creek last Tuesday 7/12/05 late in the afternoon when I saw a crazy person coming down water falls on Moccasin Creek in a yellow kayak. I walked on up to Hemlock falls to fish and then started down when it started raining when I met a couple hiking up towards the falls who had seen him also. They also could not believe anyone in their right mind would do what he was doing on a small stream like Moccasin Creek and said that fortunately he had decided to get out.

The next afternoon 7/13/05, I started up USFS 86 (Overflow Cr. Rd) toward Holcomb Creek. When I got to the bridge over the W. Fork there were four or five cars parked there with kayak carriers including one with a kayak in it. I went on up to Holcomb and fished a little above the bridge and then went on up about half a mile to a primitive camp area right below a little waterfall with a big pool that always holds trout. When I was ready to go there was a weird sullen guy drinking a beer in the camping area so I went on up to my truck on the road to discover his truck with a kayak on it. By the time I got dressed to leave he had come up to his truck and I asked him what the kayakers were doing at the W. Fork bridge and he said they were kayaking between the big culvert on Overflow Creek all the way to the W. Fork bridge. I told him I thought it was illegal to boat above the 28 bridge and he said that was only on the East Fork of the Chattooga (I believe the E. Fork is wholly in South Carolina). Further he said that in two years people could kayak the Chattooga above the 28 bridge. I didn't bother discussing that further because he was very defensive and repeated the old crap about kayakers only kayaking during high water when fishermen did not fish. Of course he knew damn well I was fishing because he had seen me in the big pool. My guess is he was waiting for me to leave before he put his kayak in the big pool on Holcomb Cr. I also asked him about the guy kayaking on Moccasin Creek and he said that also was legal and he said he knew the guy who had done it and of course thought that was really appropriate and cool. His whole attitude was one of someone who felt superior to others and that kayaking was the only thing that mattered. I didn't get his name (I don't believe I asked!) and all I know is he was probably in his 30's and had a North Carolina tag. Surprisingly, one of the trucks parked at the W. Fork bridge had an Arkansas tag.

To have to dodge kayaks while fishing on the W. Fork or the Chattooga is bad enough, but having to dodge them on little streams like Moccasin Creek and Holcomb Creek is just plain insane. I can't imagine the USFS and DNR sanctioning this type of behavior. Also, the kind of attitude these guys have is not conducive to sharing the water or having any kind of a quality outdoors experience.

Feel free to utilize this correspondence for any documentation opportunities.

Alex Watson

----- Original Message -----

**From:** [Eedee & Doug Adams](#)

**To:** [Ruth & Alex](#)

**Sent:** Wednesday, July 20, 2005 9:23 PM

**Subject:** Boating on small streams

Alex,

Unfortunately, he was correct. Every USFS stream in the Eastern US is open to boating EXCEPT the main stream of the Chattooga and all the watershed tributaries upstream of the Highway 28 bridge. The entire West Fork watershed is open to boating at all times.

Thanks for the report. Doug

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 5:35 Hours (Server time).**

From: "Rocketroy" Lowe { Roy E. }

Email: rocketroy@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 1-706-754-0701

Street Address:

217 HONEYSUCKLE LA. CLARKESVILLE, GA. 30523 Please  
retain the unique beauty and solitude, that now distinguishes the  
Chattooga above S.C. 28 bridge, by denying the boaters request to open  
this section! A 75 year young trout fisherman!, Rocketroy Lowe

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 7:08 Hours (Server time).**

From: Joseph Gatins

Email: jgatins@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 706.782.9944

Street Address:

2489 Glade Road  
Clayton, Georgia 30525

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

2489 Glade Road  
Clayton, Georgia 30525

Fon: 706/782-9944 Fax: 706/782-1359  
e-mail: jgatins@alltel.net

October 17, 2005

TO: USDA Forest Service  
RE: Additional comments regarding Upper Chattooga River

1. The study parameters proposed by the USDA Forest Service are not long enough, in that they will not allow analysis of visitors in the Fall and Winter - which is when the area gets a lot of visitors, particularly during leaf season. The scope of the study should be extended.
2. The scope of the study should be extended to take a closer look at the law enforcement problems currently occurring in all three states (North and South Carolina and Georgia) from illegal ATV and ORV use in the Wild and Scenic River corridor and how the potential for increased vehicular access for boaters and rescue vehicles will affect this problem. This is a particular problem along the so-called "County Line Road" dividing Jackson and Macon counties, which goes down to the corridor and the Chattooga River Trail. Also a problem on the Georgia and North Carolina side of the Ellicott Rock Wilderness area, going down the Ellicott Rock Wilderness trail to the rock. Also on the Georgia side below Burrell's Ford, between Big Mountain, Burrell's Ford Road and the corridor.
3. Zones? What zones or new zones is the Forest Service referring to in its study proposals? The Chattooga above Route 28, under law and the current Forest Service land and resource management plans, is already "zoned" into three different categories - Wild, Scenic and Recreation. I do not believe these arbitrarily can be changed by a study.
4. In analyzing the potential for user group conflicts, the USDA Forest Service might also factor in the push for access by mountain bikers.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 8:31 Hours (Server time).**

From: Lea richmond MD  
Email: lrjr@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 7067826898

Street Address:  
130 Roichmond Lane, Lakemont, Georgia,30552

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

The portion of the river above hgwy 28 bridge should be restricted to ambulatory access only. Enjoyment of this area is not prevented because

of the present regulations. Ample trails are present. Much of the time the level of water would require a floater to drag and push through riffles disturbing the aquatic life there. When the river is up there are areas dangerous to navigate for the inexperienced. This would lead to more search and rescue. I had a home on the Chattahoochee River before and after "shooting the Hooch" came into being. This became a circus, loud, disruptive, and trash generating. I would hope that a portion of this marvelous river could be spared this and be reserved for peace and solitude. It isn't as though the floaters and boaters don't have ample access already. Let them walk with us in the upper river. If one is able to boat it they can also wade and walk it. The present regs do not prevent their access, only how they do it.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 9:29 Hours (Server time).**

From: George Custer  
Email: gwcuster@mac.com

Telephone Number: 706-896-7245

Street Address:  
2965 Tate City Rd  
Clayton GA 30525

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am a resident of Rabun county, a whitewater paddler, fly fisherman, and life-long outdoorsman. Part of the reason I moved here to Rabun County is the Chatooga River and its wild and scenic status. The status wild and scenic is akin to a wilderness status, therefore it should be set aside for modern man to experience it in its pristine beauty the upper chatooga should be a place for fishermen and backpackers to have this type of experience, there is quite a large portion of the river that is used by the whitewater community and it shows the scars and human impact of such. Please keep the upper areas in their pristine form and maintain the integrity of this watershed. Also consider the remoteness and inaccessibility of this area rescue operations create a whole other set of circumstances that should be considered.

"Stewardship is not a popularity contest" - George Custer

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 9:59 Hours (Server time).**

From: John C. Kies  
Email: johnkies@bellsouth.net

Telephone Number: 828-698-5207

Street Address:  
110 Echo Lane  
Laurel Park

North Carolina  
28739

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Chattooga Plan. As an angler and backpacker, I have greatly enjoyed the Chattooga corridor above the Highway 28 bridge. It presents a unique opportunity for a semi-wilderness experience that is within an easy drive of millions of people. The original restriction on boating was made to reduce user conflicts in the corridor. Since that time, the potential number of users has grown at an exponential rate. Even with just anglers, hikers and campers, it is easy to see the impact to the trails, vegetation and camping areas. If boating is reinstated, the number of corridor users will climb dramatically and the impacts will deepen.

My personal recommendation is that the current and proven restrictions be maintained to protect the corridor or this very special resource. I think it naive to believe that boating will have no additional impact. Boaters will have to drive and park on both ends of the corridor generating additional traffic and parking congestion. Currently, on weekends, the parking lots overflow onto the roads and this will only worsen.

If the boating community were totally restricted from the river I could better appreciate their position. However, as recreational activities such as horse back riding, ATVs and angling have restrictions and limits, there is clear precedent for the boating restrictions on the upper Chattooga.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Regards, John C. Kies

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 10:14 Hours (Server time).**

From: Malcolm Leaphart  
Email: malcolml@mailbox.sc.edu

Telephone Number: 803 781-4752

Street Address:  
115 Conrad Circle  
Columbia, SC 29212

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

The current management scheme for the Chattooga River has stood the test of time. Managing the upper section (above Highway 28) for the wilderness experience, not increasing non-walking recreational usage, is appropriate.

Segregating boaters who are already allowed access to the 30 miles of river below Highway 28 should be continued in light of the initial and continuing conflicts from that heavy usage, including commercial operations. The current USFS policy is no different from many other wise management decisions made over the years for 'multiple use' that has segregated for example, horse and motorcycle access from walking access trails. But, most of all the wilderness aspect of the Chattooga above highway 28 must be protected and opening the river there to boating of any kind at any flow level would degrade, not enhance or protect the solitude of this nationally significant wild and scenic river corridor.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 10:47 Hours (Server time).**

From: Dr. Erwin Ford  
Email: ehford2@msn.com

Telephone Number: 229-924-2406

Street Address:  
address)  
229 Fairway Circle  
Americus, GA 31709

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am entirely against permitting kayaking and canoeing about the Russell Bridge, Hwy 28. Once boating is permitted, the untouched nature of the area will never return, and a sense of remaining wilderness will be lost.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 10:55 Hours (Server time).**

From: George Mitchell  
Email: his1874sharps@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 706.745.2618

Street Address:  
6565 Brookhaven Drive  
Blairsville, GA 30512

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I was sick in bed so was unable to attend the meeting at Walhalla, SC, last week but I did want to say that to permit multiple use of the Chattooga River above Highway 28 would destroy the spirit of the definition of "wild and scenic river." Increased foot traffic, trash, noise, erosion of riverside paths / banks / increased sediment -- all are an unavoidable adjunct to broadening the spirit of the meaning of "wild and scenic." It seems unnecessary and inappropriate to have every inch of a "wild and scenic" river become a thoroughfare.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 13:06 Hours (Server time).**

From: .James Pattillo  
Email: jpattill@a;tel.net

Telephone Number: 7068645351

Street Address:  
416 Crabapple Lane

Message Subject: Dahlonega, Ga 30533

Message Contents:

I am Against allowing boating above hwy 28.

There too few places where access is only by foot travel. Allowing boaters would cause problems with litter, noise, solitude, and other interference with the present wilderness experience that was the original purpose of designating this area foot travel only.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 13:05 Hours (Server time).**

From: Mike Kelly  
Email: kellym@anderson1.k12.sc.us

Telephone Number: 864-847-7100

Street Address:  
521 Minor Street  
Williamston, SC 29697

Message Subject: Limited access to the upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I think that the section of the river should continue to be limited to fishing only. No rafting or boating of any kind should be allowed on this section of the river. One reason I feel this way is that there is

already enough river for those activities and another is that this section is not suited that well for this type of activity anyway. This is good fishing water and the opportunity to do so in the solitude of this section is much enjoyed by many fisherman. Especially fly fishermen during the catch and release time. The access is limited to the river which helps keep it clean and trout friendly. I have camped fished and hiked this section of the river for many years and have always found it to be especially clean and just a great place to get away from the crowds that tend to gather at other places on the river. I'm afraid that opening it to floaters will ruin this solitude.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 13:16 Hours (Server time).**

From: Bob Ruby  
Email: bob.ruby@juno.com

Telephone Number: 404-252-8888

Street Address:  
680 N. Island Dr.  
Atlanta, GA 30327-4618

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

As an hiker and angler who enjoys the solitude of the Chatooga W&S River, I wish to log my opposition to the proposed change which would allow boating on the upper section. I am particularly concerned that with the growth of usage over future years the overuse and conflicts from the lower river will be visited on the Upper Chattooga River area.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 15:20 Hours (Server time).**

From: Peter Hens  
Email: pandkhens@earthlink.net

Telephone Number: 864 944 1466

Street Address:  
1009 West Pinnacle Drive; Salem, SC 29676

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

The same criteria for election of "no drifting above Rt 28" on the Chattooga that were in place in 1985, and revisited numerous times since then, are still there and are still relevant. Claiming that the decision to maintain the ban was wrong in the beginning and at each subsequent review is a straw grabbing exercise by an (white water

rafting) industry lobby and makes a mockery of the election process. Gathering meaningful data to support a decision such as this will always be long and always difficult because of the very nature of the river. Our designated wild and scenic Chattooga river is supposed to be enjoyed by the greatest number of special interests. Because of the nature of the section above Rt 28, and it's invaluable trout fishery, solitude and tranquility go hand in hand to the enjoyment of all. Except the rafters, that is. Rafting and fly fishing are incompatible. Is the lower section of the Chattooga not enough for the white water rafters to enjoy? I'd !

say let the ban stand and tell the American Whitewater group to donate their cash to some worthwhile river saving initiative, instead of lawyers.

**Posted on Monday, October 17, 2005 at 21:00 Hours (Server time).**

From: Alex Watson  
Email: corbin12@bellsouth.net

Telephone Number: (404) 872-1021

Street Address:  
764 Wildwood Rd  
Atlanta, GA  
30324

Message Subject: Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am greatly opposed to allowing kayakers above the 28 bridge on the Chatooga River. The behavior of kayakers on other streams I fish (such as the W. Fork of the Chattooga and the Nantahala) is rude and disruptive to trout fishers. They go up and down runs we fish ruining the fishing in plain view of fishers with no regard for them. On one stream I fish (Moccasin Cr.)I saw a kayaker come crashing down this little stream this year and would have killed anyone wading and fishing. They just don't care who they hurt or whose experience they ruin just as long as they get their thrills.

**Posted on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 8:55 Hours (Server time).**

From: Mack Martin  
Email: mack@mackmartin.com

Telephone Number: 770-889-5638

Street Address:  
6105 Paddock Lane

Cumming, GA 30040

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

This should be a simple resolution for the Forest Service. There are two groups of sportsmen at issue. Both want to use the river and both would like to have their sport unaffected by any other activity. Fishing does not affect the boating activity because the boaters simply float right through the fishing activity and the presence of the fishermen do not influence the boating in any way. On the other hand, the boating activity ruins the fishing for trout fishing and sometimes catches the line or fly as the boaters often float up unannounced. In the past the solution was to give the fisherman a section of the river where boating was not allowed and that satisfied the fisherman, as it solved the conflict. Now the boaters want all of the river and that is unfair and unnecessary.

The Forest Service should simply continue to avoid the conflict by leaving the rules as is and keep the two groups apart, so as to allow for fishing and boating to have NO impact on each other. That is the only solution.

**Posted on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 9:26 Hours (Server time).**

From: Russell England  
Email: rhesfish@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: 770-534-2143

Street Address:  
2177 Skyline Drive  
Gainesville, GA 30501

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

There is no need for the Forest Service to do anything different to keep me informed. I am getting information already from a variety of sources.

I enjoy both boating and fishing, and I think it would be best to retain the boating restriction on the upper Chattooga River. There are just not many places to trout fish, especially in streams of this size, in either GA or SC. There are plenty of places to boat and canoe. It just seems logical to retain some sensible zoning for recreational purposes to reduce/prevent user conflicts. It just is not that great a place for boating other than kayaking, and there are plenty of other places to do that.

Thank you

**Posted on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 11:50 Hours (Server time).**

From: John Morse  
Email: jmorse@clemsun.edu

Telephone Number: 864-646-3580

Street Address:  
114 Shannon Drive  
Pendleton, SC 29670

Message Subject: Revised Land and Resource Management Plan

Message Contents:

I strongly urge you NOT to open the Chattooga River above SC/GA 28 (Russell Bridge) to boating. As a university teacher and researcher concerned with biodiversity discovery and protection in the Chattooga River for the past 36 years, I know the importance for leaving some refugia for the biota. That portion of the Chattooga is the part of the River that has experienced the least human disturbance and consequently has the greatest freshwater biodiversity. The fish and other biota for at least this portion of the River need protection from excessive human disturbance that often accompanies boating activity.

**Posted on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 12:39 Hours (Server time).**

From: Donald E. Davis  
Email: ddavis@gtga.gov

Telephone Number: 770.339.6827

Street Address:  
301 Church St.  
Dacula, GA 30019

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I am opposed to the prospect of sharing the upper Chattooga River with non-commercial canoeists and kayakers. Part of the magic of hiking and fishing the Chattooga is the potential for solitude, peace and quiet, in addition to a somewhat magic fishery. I know that American Whitewater says its people won't be out in low flows (< 2.4-2.5ft), but not all boaters are dues-paying, law abiding members of AW. I know fishermen who attempt to wade under 2.4-2.5ft conditions are idiots - why should I extend higher expectations to boaters?

Especially in the upper reaches, fishermen will be attempting to fish the same water that a bevy of kayakers will have to use, to the detriment of any prospect the fisherman might have had involving actually catching fish.

The two pastimes are not compatible on the upper reaches of the Chattooga River. I thought this question had been settled long ago, and I resent American Whitewater's challenge.

**Posted on Tuesday, October 18, 2005 at 13:12 Hours (Server time).**

From: William Clay  
Email: bclay@nuvox.net

Telephone Number: 864 638 7885

Street Address:  
10320 Highlands Highway, Mt. Rest, SC 29664

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

My comments here are only preliminary and at this point are merely procedural.

I will submit substantive comments on the issue soon, but only after the USFS sanctions a public hearing:

First order of business for this process should rightfully be a public hearing, so that all interested parties can hear at once what all other interested parties have to say. The sooner the better.

If there is any provision made for groups or individuals who may wish to do a presentation at any of the USFS proposed meetings, please put me on that list. I have a DVD video slide show about the section of the river in question that I would like to share with all parties with an interest in this issue and this river.

Also: Would the USFS please provide adequate bandwidth for a site about this issue that can carry (and keep) all parties' comments in a comprehensive, readily available and searchable file storage format? (A USFS maintained Chattooga river community blog, specific to this issue, in other words. One that obviates any need for a FOIA.) That would be democracy in action.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Keep the headwaters truly wild and free!

Follow both the spirit and letter of the W&S Rivers Act, by keeping ALL float traffic below Highway 28 bridge!

Everything above 28 should remain open to all users, regardless of race, creed or color, as long as they are willing to come and go as the first Americans did...on foot.

This is not about users or user capacity...it's about THE RIVER. It's about maintaining or enhancing the values that caused this river to be designated "wild and scenic" in the first place. It's about keeping it truly wild, keeping it wilderness, by whatever name.

If you let in the flood of easy access visitors above 28, an essential element that separates this river from so many other rivers in the SE that are on the paddling circuit will be lost forever.

Once the headwater's wildness is gone, it's gone for good.