

Chattooga River Public Comments
July 12, 2006 - Dec. 1, 2006

July 12, 2006

Dear John:

I understand you are collecting data relative to the above, and I thought I would share my opinion as a fisherman.

While I firmly believe that our natural resources should be available to all of our citizens, I cannot believe that all resources should be available to all forms of recreation at the same time. Boaters should and do have access to their own areas where they can enjoy their sport without offending others. So should fisherman. I don't plan on fishing any marked kayak courses, no matter how tempting the waters may be. Nor should boaters interfere with my peaceful enjoyment of fishing what is surely marginal waters for them.

I have fished several waters shared by fisherman and boaters. Some are disasters, some are OK. The disasters include the Upper Chattahoochee near Helen, the Davidson and Nantahala in NC, and Bradley Fork in GSMNP. The OK areas include the Chattahoochee below Buford dam, the Bighorn and Bighole rivers in Montana, and the Madison below Quake lake. The difference is the size of the river. The OK streams are much larger and thus present less opportunity for interruption and conflict. The disasters are smaller streams, and quite similar to the area included in the present boating ban.

Therefore I urge you to continue the present boating ban.

Should you wish to contact me further regarding this matter, please feel free to do so.

Regards,

Steve Collins
Roswell, GA

July 12, 2006

Please allow kayak and canoes in the upper Chattooga. I can assure you that the fishermen will not be disturbed. The paddlers will only be in the area during times of higher water and during those times the fishermen will not be there anyway.

Thank you
Brian Hayes

Posted on Tuesday, July 18, 2006 at 15:09 Hours (Server time).

From: Alan G Reynolds

Email: arjringa@alltel.net

Telephone Number: 706-892-1259

Street Address:

397 Woodbrier

SauteeNachoochee,GA 30571

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

First, thankyou for this opportunity to comment. I am 62 yrs old,justmoved to GA mountains to enjoy their beauty. I have fished and canoed my entire life. I have passion for both. There is a place for " both". The upper river is "NOT" the place for canoe/kayack. I have witnessed and participated in river canoeing. Ther is no way that this activity will not disrupt the integrity, serenity and absolute beauty of this area. Just go to the first put in and watch. Please do not allow this area to be opened to this activity! Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment

Posted on Tuesday, July 18, 2006 at 19:32 Hours (Server time).

From: David T. Ellis
Email: dellis@houston.rr.com

Telephone Number: 713-365-0384

Street Address:
11935 Winwood Ln.
Houston, TX 77024

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Mr. Cleeves & other interested parties:

There are several dangerous sections along the Chatooga River Section 1 between the Mill Creek intersection and the outfall of the Narrows. Some of these can be dealt with safely through scouting and walk-arounds; but at least one cannot. Without substantial river access modifications and related environmental impacts, there will be no boating done safely, regardless of expertise. I realize you may be legally constrained as to "safety considerations" in developing your decision, but if included as a supporting element in your analysis it should be permitted and upheld. Safety is truly something we all expect to be considered by regulatory agencies when making proper rulings. Again, the modifications required for safe travel through this uppermost section of the river at most river levels would have a significant adverse impact on the surrounding environment, regardless of skill level or equipment used.

There are also numerous "strainers" (fallen trees) that would have to be removed for any reasonable boat/float use which would further impact the environment. Most of these areas are too narrow to walk-around without making substantial modifications to the surrounding terrain.

The section from just downstream of the Narrows Gorge to just upstream of falls at the Bull Pen Rd bridge, is managable for boaters or floaters and would require minimal access modifications.

Perhaps the solution is to partition this section of the river with clearly marked areas off-limits to boaters, and clearly marked/good access areas (entry and exit)for boaters.

Good luck with your efforts, and please make safety an integral part of your decision!

Posted on Thursday, July 20, 2006 at 11:41 Hours (Server time).

From: Tony Bebber
Email: tbebbber@earthlink.net

Telephone Number:

Street Address:
200 Finsbury Road
Columbia, SC 29212

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Dear Sir/Madam:

I support the ban on boating above Hwy. 28 because there are so few trout streams in South Carolina. Kayakers have many more options in the state and surrounding states. Furthermore, hikers, backpackers, and wildlife watchers along the Wild and Scenic Corridor lose much of the "experience" when boaters (especially groups) go floating by.

The Chattooga River (at least above Hwy. 28) is such a peaceful place. It's an opportunity to get away from the hustle and bustle of urban life and does not need to be degraded by boating (as Nantahala and other similar rivers have been). It wouldn't bother me if you closed the bridge at Burrells Ford to reduce traffic to the site and make people walk a mile or so to the river (and I'm not getting any younger). I just think this area needs to be protected from overuse.

I think boating above Hwy 28 will require much more staff time from Forest Service staff to enforce rules and "rescue" injured and lost boaters. Additional facilities will be needed and additional maintenance. It will eventually require new costly access roads to get to the problem areas, and still more operational costs. This is not a good idea when the Forest Service is already under-funded.

Please keep the Chattooga above Hwy 28 "foot traffic only" and no boating!!

Thank you for considering my comments.

Tony Bebber

Posted on Sunday, July 23, 2006 at 10:51 Hours (Server time).

From: Charles R DuBose

Email: dubo7012@bellsouth.net

Telephone Number: 864-647-5034

Street Address:

211 Retreat St

Westminster, SC

29693

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

When I was a kid in the 50s I floated the river all the time, now there is so much trash below 28 bridge I stay away. Please allow NOT floaters above 28 bridge.

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 9:39 Hours (Server time).

From: Eric Olle

Email: eric.olle@gmail.com

Telephone Number: 513-322-1527

Street Address:

2475 Madison Rd

Cincinnati, OH 45208

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Dear Mr. Cleaves:

Thanks you for your time and effort in working with the the parties involved in managment decision (#04-13-00-0026).

I am an active kayaker and I would like to reiterate my position of year-round unlimited non-commercial self guided non-motorized use . Secondly, I noticed that there is no validation of data. It would be easy for one user group to skew the data by entering in deliberately false statements (as easily seen in the message board).

As a scientist I understand the difficulties in conducting such a survey. However, in order for this survey to be valid. Each user group would have to be limited in a controlled scientific manner or the same access granted to all groups. Limiting one group only controls for one variable and is not a properly designed scientific study of total visitor capacity access.

As stated above, (i) allow full unrestricted boater access, (ii) properly design a study that can be internally validated and (iii) apply the same standards to all user groups during the study to prevent skewing of the data or Type I statistical error.

Thank you for your time.

Dr. Eric Olle

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 12:34 Hours (Server time).

From: M Scruggs
Email: mascruggs188@yahoo.com

Telephone Number: 8649782384

Street Address:

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I believe everyone should have access to all sections of the river. It is a clear violation of the law to restrict one section of the river for use by anglers only. Kayakers are not allow exclusive use of the sections below the bridge. Also this is the only river in the US that these restrictions are applied to. That seems very out of place and should be changed.

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 14:31 Hours (Server time).

From: Doug Shields
Email: doug.shields@gmail.com

Telephone Number: 864-427-4123

Street Address:
330 River Hills Road
Union, SC 29379

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I wish to express my opinion that the Chattooga above the Highway 28 bridge should be open for boaters. There is not a big pool of boaters of the type qualified to make this run. I am an intermediate level kayaker, so some or all of this portion of the river may be beyond my skill level. Overall, I have fund boaters to be very interested in the environment and very protective of our natural reources. There are always a few exceptions, but I would confident in stating that the amount of trash from fishermen far exceeds the amount of trash from boaters. Other than the access trails to the river, we tend not to trample the riverbanks. I have observed that almost all boaters I have paddled with are courteous to fishermen and give them wide berth on the river. Please open the river for all and do not reserve access for a small but vocal group.

Thank you for your consideration.

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 14:59 Hours (Server time).

From: Milt Aitken
Email: milt@net2atlanta.com

Telephone Number: 678-560-8076

Street Address:
715 North River Forest Ct
Marietta, GA 30068

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Gentlemen,
Far longer versions of my comments are already on record. But, as a refresher. I am a whitewater boater and hiker to whom the Chattooga has been an important part of my life for around 26 years now. It is difficult to convey how unfair I think it is to prevent floating above Highway 28, while still allowing wading, swimming, hiking, etc. Boating is by far the best way to see places like the alleyway at Chattooga Cliffs and the Rock Gorge when they're full of water and alive. Furthermore, I believe that the ban was put in place maliciously by a USFS employee with a special interest. Also, we have floated compromises with the chief opposition, but they have been unwilling to find a middle ground. So, I believe and request that this unjust, illfounded ban be lifted.

Thanks

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 17:31 Hours (Server time).

From: Sam Salman
Email: salmansp@brevard.edu

Telephone Number: (enter your phone)

Street Address:
(enter your mailing address)

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

What would be the problem with a controlled level of access. Fishing is horrible when the upper sections are high enough to paddle. As paddling is horrible when the water is lower: good fishing level. Allow boating at a certain level for all. Restrict boating below a minimum flow. I do not see how you can have a fair analysis without allowing all groups to take part.

Posted on Monday, July 24, 2006 at 23:52 Hours (Server time).

From: Joe Owensby
Email: oweji@bellsouth.net

Telephone Number: 864 415 4418

Street Address:
335 Seven Oaks Lane
Spartanburg, SC 29301

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I agree with American Whitewater on the Chattooga section use. To restrict my access to kayak this river is not in terms with the real public use of this natural resource. Private boaters do very little if any damage to the environment along the river (much less than fishermen who make paths along the riverside, leave trash, fishing lines, lures, hooks, bait containers etc.) We private kayakers constantly clean up rivers (including the Chattooga) during each paddling trip as well as during organized clean ups. We should have the right to use this section of the river. Thank You, Joe Owensby

Posted on Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at 12:54 Hours (Server time).

From: Roger Huff
Email: rogershuff@earthlink.net

Telephone Number: (678)581-1700

Street Address:
2070 Cherokee Ridge Trail,

Kennesaw, GA 30144

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Good Afternoon!

I am curious as to why the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) model does not reference impacts to the wilderness or wildlife, and seems to focus on the interaction among user groups?

Thanks.

Posted on Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at 12:55 Hours (Server time).

From: Jason Russo
Email: jdrusso@juno.com

Telephone Number: 502-485-0857

Street Address:
1326 Barret Ave #3, Louisville, Ky 40204

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

While I have not paddled the Chattooga, I have heard it to be one of the greatest treasures of the south-east US, and am disheartened that access to this river is limited to canoeists and kayakers to boat. The reasons I have heard for this seem unfair to us as a group, and appear to stem mostly from the fishing community's desire to use this resource exclusively for themselves. While I can understand the desire to protect this river from overuse, they need to understand that the large majority of serious paddlers also share these same concerns to maintain the integrity of our rivers. We have the same desire to care for the rivers we use, and feel that these people need to share what is a public resource with others who also desire to keep this area unexploited. As a paddler, I would much rather paddle quite, clean, pristine, remote streams and rivers to dirty, overused local waterways, and I believe most paddlers feel the same way, which is why I submit my support to American Whitewater's push to open the upper waterways of the Chattooga.

Posted on Tuesday, July 25, 2006 at 13:42 Hours (Server time).

From: Barry Grimes
Email: bagrim1@uky.edu

Telephone Number: 859-623-9067

Street Address:
124 Hilltop Dr., Richmond, KY 40475

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

There is no reason to continue the ban on the Upper Chattooga other than to unfairly maintain this publicly owned, Wild and Scenic River as a private preserve for trout fishermen. Whitewater kayaking and boating must be allowed to occur and studies have shown that it will have no impact on the fish, the stream or the environment. In fact, whitewater boating will have even less impact than the fishermen who wade in the stream, disturb the fragile river bed, often litter and typically remove the fish they catch. Whitewater kayaking is a sport that has consistently shown to be composed of individuals who respect the rivers and streams they paddle and leave no trace of their passing. Whitewater paddlers must be allowed access to paddle the Upper Chattooga. The facts are clear, boating has been unfairly excluded and 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.

Posted on Wednesday, July 26, 2006 at 12:15 Hours (Server time).

From: Marshall D. Wilson
Email: ironring@bellsouth.net

Telephone Number: 404-325-5631

Street Address:
2957 Clairmont Road
Ste. 120
Atlanta, Ga 30329

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

This study needs to be about more than adding boating to the upper stretches of the Chattooga. As a hiker and backpacker, it is obvious the area is suffering from abuse now due to improper hiking and camping practices, litter, uncontrolled pets, untended fires and more. Solitude is already jeopardized too by scout troupes, church groups, private groups camping with boom boxes and radios, etc. Therefore it seems inappropriate to base a management study on user groups when clearly the current users are a problem. In addition, I know that hikers and backpackers also boat, kayakers that fish, fishermen that build fires and leave bait containers and beer cans on the river bank and in their campsites.

In this context it is clear that any legitimate study must be more broad than a study of the impacts of a single use.

As I have hiked the Chattooga over the years, I have seen fishermen, hikers and kayakers that are good stewards of the land. The real challenge is to control the abusive uses that are damaging and destroying the Forest resource. For that reason the study needs to look at regulations for hiking, camping fishing, etc. in wholistic way. It also needs to address improved trail and campsite maintenance, campsite development and camping restrictions, a possible campsite reservation system and other strategies. It does not seem fair to single out uses independently when the whole management and maintenance plan and funding strategy needs to be addressed.

Boaters on the Nantahala pay a use fee and wear wrist bands. Why not do the same for boaters, hikers and fishermen on the Chattooga to provide the funds needed to better manage and maintain the forest?

Posted on Wednesday, August 2, 2006 at 20:00 Hours (Server time).

From: Les Campbell
Email: lcampbell7194@charter.net

Telephone Number: 864 224 7194

Street Address:
(3020 Brackenberry Dr
Anderson, SC 29621)

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I have been a kayaker for many years and still have two boats.

There are many streams in the Ga, NC, SC region available. There is no need to open up the upper part of this subject river.
Leave it hikers and fisherman

Posted on Thursday, August 3, 2006 at 17:41 Hours (Server time).

From: Kathryn Alison
Email: (enter your email)

Telephone Number: 864-653-4120

Street Address:
109 Shaftsbury Rd
Clemson, SC
29631

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

The current wild and scenic designation should stand for the Upper Chattooga. Enough of the river is currently open to boaters. The Upper Chattooga should remain open only for hikers and fisherman with less impact to the environment than paddlers would cause.

August 3, 2006

Allowing boats above Route 28 is another example of Corporate Greed. Throwing the fishermen off the river with nothing in exchange. VOTE NO!!

Stewart Christner, Seneca, SC

Posted on Friday, August 11, 2006 at 11:32 Hours (Server time).

From: Mike Williams

Email: mewill47@earthlink.net

Telephone Number: 770-786-2307

Street Address:

20 Mountain Creek Trail

Social Circle, GA30025

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

Here is the \$64,000 question: "Why do boaters need access to one of the few "wild trout" waters in the SE"? They have so much more water for their enjoyment. I just do not understand this mind set that all water needs to be open for boating. I hope the USFS realizes that there should be protection of certain waters for this reason.

Thank you,

Mike

Posted on Saturday, August 12, 2006 at 11:05 Hours (Server time).

From: (Gay Kattelenter your name)
Email: gmkattel@msn.comenter your email)

Telephone Number: 828-526-2746enter your phone)

Street Address:
580 Edwards Creek Rd.
Highlands, NC 28741(enter your mailing address)

Message Subject: Visitor Capacity Analysis, Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

(enter your comments)I regularly hike many trails along the Upper Chatooga River. I have seen it very full of water and also when it is very low. If the upper portion of the river were to be opened to boaters it will only be a matter of time before someone is killed. Also , I believe, that litter will be avoidably released into now, what is a pristine area. I'd hate to be the one who says "I told you so".

Posted on Tuesday, September 5, 2006 at 17:40 Hours (Server time).

From: Steve Best
Email: sbest@csuniv.edu

Telephone Number: 843-863-8075

Street Address:
9200 university Blvd
Charleston, SC 29406

Message Subject: Upper Chattooga River

Message Contents:

I strongly oppose the use of the upper Chattooga for rafting. Let's keep the stretch above Hwy 28 bridge as a pristine environment accessible only by foot traffic.