

**Chattooga River Public Comments**  
**Feb 12, 2007 - June 11, 2007**

**"Whelan Shoemake"**  
**02/22/2007 09:41 AM**

Sir,

My name is Whelan Shoemake, and I have been an avid paddler for the past 7 seasons. Until recently I have resided in central Florida which has made it difficult at times to reach whitewater venues. I have paddled the Lower Chatooga (sections 3 & 4) and it is a great river. I would urge you to favor opening the headwaters to paddling. From the documentation provided by the descent in January, it looks like a spectacular run.

I know a few of the issues that you may be facing, and most of them would involve the paddlers unbalancing the ecosystem there – am I right? Pollution (both noise and litter), wear and tear on the riverbanks, etc.

Personally, I am environmentally conscious. I pick up litter in the river wherever I find it (rapids permitting). Any river, any campground, any parking lot – and I police my own. If I see someone throwing a cigarette on the ground I say something. I am not scared to speak up and I promote this way of thinking with those who I meet along my travels. I can not speak for all paddlers and there lies the problem.

The biggest problem would be enforcing the ground rules that would have to be put in place, and making the penalties for violating these rules steep enough to discourage boaters that are not willing to follow them from coming to the area. I consider myself a very fair person and offer my assistance but I am sure you have more than enough.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,  
Whelan Shoemake  
RiverQuest Kayaks Group  
Casselberry, FL

**"Edward Doll" <edoll@ngicorp.com>**  
**02/26/2007 08:04 AM**

As a citizen outdoorsman of Georgia, I am strongly in favor of maintaining the current zoning on the upper river section. I'm not usually in favor of the federal government being big brother, but in this case, it is necessary to keep things fair for all river rats.

*Edward Doll*  
Canton, GA 30115

**Darrell Holcomb <truenorth18dgh@yahoo.com>**  
**02/14/2007 08:31 AM**

USFS/ Mr Cleeves,

After reading David Cannon's article in the current issue of Georgia Outdoor News on the proposal to allow boating above the Highway 28 bridge, I felt compelled to voice my thoughts on the matter.

As an avid boater/paddler(two canoes, two SOT kayaks)and an avid fisherman, I understand both groups quest for access to pursue their chosen sports. I often combine the two activities, paddling and fishing, on warmwater streams above the fall line.

The Chattooga however, is a truly unique stream, that is why it is the only designated Wild and Senic River in Ga. Let's leave the stretch above Hwy 28 CLOSED to boating. The Batenkill in Vermont has been a source of conflict between fisherman and canoeists for decades, we don't need that sort of tension on the Chattooga.

I understand that a lot of whitewater paddling has been lost to impoundments. There never was much trout water in GA on a stream large enough to wield a flyrod to begin with, let's leave that stretch to fisherman and hikers.

Glenn Holcomb  
Kathleen GA

**David Cannon <cannon@gon.com>**  
**02/14/2007 12:00 PM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I am writing to you in hopes that this email will possibly sway the decision even a fraction of a fraction. This is my hope for several reasons, but mainly because I love this river, and more particularly the section in dispute, and would love for nothing more than to see this river the same in 50 years as I see it now - free of boaters and other users traveling any way but on foot.

I am 24 years old and was just introduced to the upper Chattooga two years ago. The first time I fished it I realized its unique qualities. Unlike other streams of its size, there were no roads running next to it - a quality I would later find even escapes many of the rivers out west where solitude is at a lot less of a premium. Also, there were no power lines, no mountain bikers, no messy camps, and not even a kayak floating its corridor. I wasn't aware at the time of this river's zoning above the 28 bridge, but I very much enjoyed what it had to offer, regardless of why it was able to offer such an experience.

At the time, I was working for Governor Sonny Perdue and his Commission for a New Georgia at the Capitol in the heart of downtown Atlanta and some of the worst traffic in the country. I was very well pleased to arrive at the 28 bridge parking lot, the Burrell's Ford parking area, or a couple of other unmentionable places, hike for a mile and be completely out of sight of another human being. This was in stark contrast to my two-hour commute I made daily and was well worth the two-hour drive from Woodstock, GA to the river.

After learning of the zoning on the river, I realized why this place was so special. It is what it is because of the zoning. If not for the zoning, it turns into another Toccoa River or Chattahoochee River or numerous other rivers here in the Southeast that are good to great fishing rivers, but not places that many of us hold in our hearts the way we do the Chattooga. So, I guess the question is, would I make the now three-hour drive from my current home in Madison, GA to the Chattooga if this zoning was thrown out and boaters were allowed? No, I wouldn't. I wouldn't because I can have that experience at places a lot closer to my home.

You see, Mr. Cleaves, as I mentioned at the start of this email, I'm a young guy. Some of these older gentlemen can pay for a plane ticket out west, out of state licenses, food, lodging, a rental car, etc. several times a year if they want to experience solitude. As for me and because of my financial holdings (or lack of) at this time in my life, the upper Chattooga is my "out west". And you know, it's still a stretch on my wallet to pay for gas to get up there at this point. But, it's feasible.

I was a part of the user trials and had an experience during the first day. I was fishing alone towards the end of the allotted time and the fish really "turned on" and became active. In the last half an hour or so before the boaters floated through the runs I was fishing, I brought seven rainbow trout to net and missed about as many, either by being late on the hook set or losing the fish during the fight.

After the boaters ran through, everything shut down. I drifted the same proven flies down the same runs, then down runs I hadn't drifted them through yet. I changed the weight, I changed my tactics, yet nothing produced even a strike. It was clear that the boaters floating overhead has spooked the fish and put them down.

I was polite and said hello and asked how their float was going. But, if it were a normal experience outside of the bounds of the user trials, I can't say I'd be so polite. I'm not a confrontational person by any means, but if I drive three hours to get to my favorite place and the fishing just starts to pick up and a group of boaters run through and put the fish down, I'm not going to be happy. Is that the real issue here? I don't know, but I think it should be worth something.

I know from speaking with several good friends of mine who are wildlife biologists that zoning is a viable and sound management tool for public land use. I ask that you please do your best to keep the ban on anything but foot travel in the sacred place intact. It's the only 21 miles of trout stream that I can enjoy without the chance of having a boater run

through and disturb my envelope of solitude - something that is becoming more and more precious as the population of our region steadily increases. I know that the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act does not call for all uses of such designated lands to be allowed in all parts, because this would not be proper land management. In this case, what is best for this section of the river and those who hold stake in it is that the zoning remain. Please, Mr. Cleaves, please do your part in keeping the upper Chattooga a special place and I can promise you many others will do their part, too.

Sincerely,

**David Cannon**  
**Advertising Rep. & Contributing Writer**  
**Georgia Outdoor News**

**Charlie Hendricks" <charlieh2004@pineland.net>**  
**02/14/2007 03:23 PM**

I recently read in Ga. Outdoor News about the possibility of granting access to boaters on the Chattooga River above the Highway 28 bridge. I have enjoyed this area since the late 1960's when we drove in from Hwy. 28 to camp and fish. The Wild and Scenic destination has been a blessing to this area. I spent a week camping this area as a Senior Project in High School. My wife saw her first turkey poults in the wild when we hiked in one Memorial Day weekend to camp. It is truly a unique area for Georgia. The solitude of fishing a river that seems so remote from civilization is an experience that is good for the soul. To allow boaters access would help destroy part of the Wild and Scenic experience. I have enjoyed white water canoeing over the years but there are ample areas to enjoy this sport without opening up the river above Hwy. 28. I'm not sure how the regulations read but I assume the Wild and Scenic destination prohibits vehicular traffic. To me a boat is a type of vehicle. If boats are allowed, couldn't other types of vehicle owners cry "discrimination" and open a can of worms on the whole concept of Wild and Scenic areas? Please keep this wonderful area truly Wild and Scenic by zoning out all vehicles, boats included. Thank you for your time,  
Charlie Hendricks  
Metter GA.

**Trey Niolon" <treyn@niolonlumbersales.com>**  
**02/15/2007 09:15 AM**

I just wanted to let you know that I am in favor of keeping the Chattooga above hwy 28 "foot traffic only"

If I can help in any way please let me know.

Sincerely,

Trey Niolon

**"Clark Rodgers" <CRodgers@northhighland.com>**  
**02/15/2007 10:47 AM**

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

I am writing you concerning the recent push to open up the head waters of the Chattooga River to recreational boating. I am an avid backpacker and fly fisherman and have always cherished this

upper stretch of the Chattooga as one of the few remaining wild places where I could fly fish and commune with nature without having to contend with waves of kayaks and canoe's coming through every few minutes. The boaters have ample access to almost all rivers in Georgia, yet there are very few places left that are restricted to foot travel only. I think it only just and proper that this part of the river remain restricted to foot traffic only and that no boating be allowed upstream of the Highway 28 bridge access.

I implore you to be an advocate for keeping the boating ban in place for the upper stretch of the Chattooga. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss this further.

Thanks,

Clark Rodgers  
Kennesaw, GA

**Robert <mary1bob1@yahoo.com>  
02/27/2007 08:17 AM**

Please keep the ban on boats and spare this rare and beautiful place. There are 1000's of places here in Ga to boat and paddle and ONLY 1 Chatooga!! Let us NOT spoil our pristine resources. Thank you.....Robert Stilson and family, Blue Ridge, Ga.

**"Greg Kalmbach" <gkalmbach@earthlink.net>  
03/02/2007 04:27 PM**

Please open the entire Chattooga River to kayaking and canoeing. I am getting to old to attempt such a run, but in my youth I would have loved it. I know the paddling crowd would not desccrate the river or in any way disturb the wilderness values of the area. I have never seen paddlers leave trash along a river and many pick up any trash they see.

Thank you.

Greg Kalmbach  
111 Shirley Ave  
Sanford, FL 32771

**"Jay Johnston" <jjohnston@hllinc.com>  
03/06/2007 03:45 PM**

Per the GON article-I am in favor of zoning-thanks.

**"Jeffrey T. Brown" <jtbrown@envisioninc.org>  
03/07/2007 08:44 A**

The Chattooga River is EVERYONE'S, Not just for the RICH TROUT UNLIMITED folks.  
IT should be open to all users!!!

Jeffrey Brown  
Asheville, NC

Trout fisherman AND kayaker!

"Jerry Sewell" <Jerry.Sewell@DOR.GA.GOV>  
03/08/2007 03:12 PM

Please keep the current zoning in place on the Chattooga River. The Chattooga is one of the few remaining true wilderness opportunities in Georgia/South Carolina. I enjoy both fishing and boating but some of my most fun trips along the Chattooga were hiking along Section III and experiencing the solitude with nature. My 2 cents.  
Thanks

mike bamford" <mbamford123@comcast.net>  
03/13/2007 12:34 AM

**Here is an article the current Cashiers paper.**

**[http://www.crossroadschronicle.com/articles/2007/03/12/village\\_voices/02voice.txt](http://www.crossroadschronicle.com/articles/2007/03/12/village_voices/02voice.txt)**

**Upper Chattooga likely to suffer from boating**

**James. T. Costa, Guest Columnist**

**There has been much discussion in recent days regarding the notion of opening the upper Chattooga River to boating. As a biologist and as a longtime resident of the Southern Appalachian region, I have studied the issue for the past several months in order to take an informed position on the potential impact that boating might have on the river and surrounding national forest.**

**My conclusion? The upper Chattooga watershed area is a unique biological and cultural resource that is likely to suffer significant degradation through the human impacts associated with boating. That the watershed is a valuable biological resource is beyond question. It is a rare example of a wild, high-gradient river coursing through a sizable tract of intact eastern deciduous forest.**

**Its "wilderness" designation in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area also makes the upper Chattooga a valuable cultural resource, an equally rare example of a vast and relatively unimpacted forest that now represents an island in a landscape in various stages of impact and degradation. As a cultural resource, such wilderness areas give people the opportunity to realize profound solitude and contemplation.**

**Biologically speaking, the landscape of the upper Chattooga provides an astoundingly diverse mosaic of habitat types, from cove and upland forest to rock outcrop and spray cliff communities. The rugged and wet conditions that prevail in this area provide a haven for an assemblage of plant and animal species, including rarities such as tropical-affinity ferns. The area in general, but especially large intact tracts such as the Chattooga watershed, boasts peak or near-peak biodiversity in North America for many taxonomic groups. Most notably, the area is world-renowned for its salamander diversity, and that of its flowering plants.**

Opening this area to boat traffic and, more importantly, the related human activity in shuttling boaters, in portaging and in picnicking, will have the inevitable consequence of introducing significant biological threats to the integrity of the forest, despite the best intention of many such users. This will occur through both direct degradation, by establishing high-use trails (and the elevated incidence of litter and refuse associated with such trails), and the unintentional introduction of pest species that will secure a foothold in the forest.

Aggressive exotic pest plants like Japanese knotweed, plantain, privet and others tend to be dispersed along trails by human vehicular and foot traffic. Elevated human traffic in the upper Chattooga will almost certainly introduce such pests, ultimately creating "edge effects" via degradation that eats into the adjacent forest. At present, the upper Chattooga watershed can be seen as an ecological core area that acts as a refuge and source population. The fragmentation and edge effects stemming from intensive visitation and use will erode this core area.

A parallel degradation occurs with respect to the cultural value of the upper Chattooga watershed. This "Wild and Scenic River" area holds immense value for what it symbolizes and what it can offer low-impact visitors. The Wilderness Act of 1964 gained wide support because citizens and government leaders recognized that "wildness" and solitude were becoming scarce commodities. The spiritual and aesthetic benefits to be gained from such restricted-access areas are incalculable; opening the upper Chattooga to intensive boating use immediately undermines its value as a place of solitude and contemplation.

I have boated on other rivers in the Southern Appalachians. The outfitters I boated with were conscientious about litter and other matters, but the noise and well-worn portage trails made it clear this was no wilderness experience. Must we leave our footprint absolutely everywhere? I believe that an intent of the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic River Program is to save us from ourselves as much as to preserve the biological integrity of our environment.

We are fortunate to have an abundance of rugged and exciting river stretches in our mountain region, nearly all of which are open to boating. It is far from unreasonable to ask that this now-pristine and biologically significant area remain closed to boating traffic and the related impacts associated with boating.

At a time when the natural landscape of the Southern Appalachians is experiencing accelerated fragmentation through development and recreational pursuits, it is only sensible to safeguard the integrity of the few genuinely large and intact tracts of land remaining. The biological and cultural value of such tracts as the upper Chattooga watershed demands that we act responsibly for ourselves and future generations. Once our forests and rivers are degraded, their recovery is an exceedingly slow process.

James T. Costa is executive director of the Highlands Biological Station and the H.F. and Katherine P. Robinson Professor of Biology at Western Carolina University,

**where he has taught genetics, biogeography, environmental biology, bioethics, evolution and conservation biology.**

"david carnes" <david.carnes@billyisom.com>  
03/22/2007 02:51 PM

FREE THE CHATTOOGA ,please

Don H Sessions <donsessions@juno.com>  
04/08/2007 09:18 P

Attn: John Cleaves

I read w/ great excitement the recent article in the American Whitewater about the legal running of the otherwise closed section of the Chat toga. I've been reading this magazine since 1975 and nothing before has gotten me so excited.

Why would news about a river 2800 miles away for person who has only been in his kayak about 3 times in the last 3 years be exciting. I got my first kayak in 1974 when living in Birmingham, Alabama. The boat I purchased may have been the first in town sold from a retail establishment.

We heard bits and pieces of what the upper Chattooga had in store when and if we achieved the needed skills. To some of us, kayaking or to be more exact, being on a fine river in a kayak, became our religion. Even though most of us had never seen it , this section of the river somehow became "holy" to us.

We got the skills without a problem, but before most of us could give it a try it was closed to boating. I never knew for sure what the rationale was for excluding boating. I think the word was that the Forest Service considered it unsuitable for boating as it was extremely steep and rocky. The recent piece in the magazine suggests the real reason was simply the clout of the locals. I'm sure you government folks by now have become rather expert at dealing w/ user conflicts. When I'm hiking I don't like sharing the trail w/ a bicycle, when I'm mountain biking I don't like to have hikers in the way. On a river I'd rather not see the commercial rafters. When I'm home I really don't like reading in the paper that some more public land has been opened for logging or mineral extraction. In most of these dislikes there are dozens or even millions of folks who share my opinion and just as many that don't. I don't believe that my preferences should be given priority but neither should the others.

Since I've been following white water boating I've heard of a number of complaints against us. The ones that come to mind are public nudity, trespassing and creating dangerous traffic situations when parking along roads. Except for the nudity, none of these are unique to white water. Other than getting on and off the river I've not seen a lot of complaints. This is the case even when rivers are totally on private land.

Seems to me that kayaking the upper Chattooga is a quite legitimate way to recreate. How much negative impact on the area we would have I don't know. Until it's opened I don't see how anyone could say with confidence that the impact in going to be that significant.

If there was negative impact the problems could be addressed. On some foot trails near my house the bicycles are only allowed every other day. On one or two single day river runs in California they restrict the number of folks paddling each day to preserve the wilderness quality.

Boating a river does bother the fisherman and the fish are probably not real happy to have us there either. However I've never heard of boating killing off a fish population depriving the fisherman their activity there. In effect the fisherman / landowner group w/ your agency's help has been able to destroy the recreational opportunity of hundreds of potential boaters.

If the number of boaters becomes large enough there will be problems. It's even possible that the disturbance to the fishermen will be enough to where some of them will prefer to go elsewhere. Well, us boaters have had to go elsewhere for 30 years as we have had no choice.

I'm hopeful that the difficulty of the run itself as well as the difficulty finding the right amount of water will keep the numbers down to a manageable level. If not, I don't have a problem w/ restrictions. On Maui at some parks the surfers get the mornings free of windsurfers. How big a problem could it be if the number of boating groups was limited to say 2 a day. The Selway in Idaho has / had a two group limit and I've managed to run it three times in the last 30 years w/o even trying very hard.

Just wanted to be cast my vote.

Don Sessions  
Bellevue, Wa.

**"John Stephens" <jdt4f@mindspring.com>  
04/12/2007 12:40 AM**

**I clipped this from an article by Mr Cannon about a day on the Chattooga R by two Boaters:**

*"On this day, just two boaters disturbed over 50 anglers as they passed through every sweet spot for 12 miles, putting down the trout anywhere from several minutes to a few hours. Some anglers had to move out of the way and reel in. Most backcountry visitors experienced a negative reaction to their brief encounter with the two boaters, reactions known to Forest Service planners as user conflicts"*

**Please stop any boating on the upper Chattooga River and save this special place.**

John Stephens  
[jdt4f@mindspring.com](mailto:jdt4f@mindspring.com)



Again thank you for your time, I hope you enjoyed your weekend.

Regards  
Michael Bamford

**"mike bamford" <mbamford123@comcast.net>  
05/30/2007 07:07 PM**

The appeal decision noted that Regional Forester did not provide an adequate basis for continuing the ban on boating above Highway 28. It requested the Forester to conduct a visitor capacity analysis and to adjust or amend, as appropriate, the RLRMP. It noted "if it becomes necessary to limit use, ensure that all potential users have a fair and equitable chance to obtain access to the river."

All potential users must include all activities that are not expressly restricted under the Wild & Scenic River Act. Although the current visitor capacity study was designed to either maintain, or modify, the paddle restrictions, the appeal decision clearly advised the agency to consider all potential users which includes tubes, jet skies, commercial rafting, mountain biking, horseback riding, ATV users etc. All these activities are currently restricted from the North Fork of the Chattooga. The scope of the review does not allow alterations in management policy outside of the paddle restrictions, but careful consideration on the affect of current actions toward future management cycles warrant careful review.

Certainly a policy that limits all river craft is more equitable then a policy that excludes all but private paddlers. Access limited to only a single type of river craft could be considered arbitrary and capricious during the next management planning cycle when the next agency policy is scrutinized by the jetski lobby or commercial outfitters. The Forest Service needs to consider the indirect affect a modified policy will have on future management plans. Under American Whitewater's arguments, all modes of water travel should be guaranteed access within an "equitable-to-all-activities"(not users) policy.

Additionally, allowing only one type of transportation vehicle (kayaks/canoes) would be completely inequitable to land vehicles. Horses, bikes and ATV's are all currently restricted from upper Wild and Scenic river corridor. Restricting all crafts except canoes and kayaks would not be considered equitable to the majority of potential users. During the next management planning cycle, all recreational crafts can demand access under an "equitable-to-all-activities" policy.

The Forest Service must determine what is most equitable to the majority of users, not placate the whims of a few thrill seekers. Swimming and boating are separated in many locations including the Davidson's Slide Rock in the Pisgah National Forest. It would not be equitable to have the experience of the many visitors spoiled because a few kayaks demanded access to popular swim holes or trout streams, especially when many alternatives are locally available.

The Forest Service is currently limiting many activities along the Chattooga but does not discriminate against any user. The weak argument that an activity is a user is just more pathetic word-play from American Whitewater. Zoning public lands **by activity** is standard Forest Service policy including policy on the Chattooga. Limiting all types of crafts and vehicles, including kayaks, is the most equitable, and legally defensible, policy for the management the Chattooga. An “equitable-to-all-activities”(not users) policy would probably hurt paddlers the most as motor-craft demanded access to the lower river; The Forest Service should consider protecting other paddlers from American Whitewater’s misguided arguments.

After many years of access restrictions, kayaking of the Upper Chattooga is the first stride down a slippery slope encouraged by the voracious demands of extreme sport enthusiasts. Best we all stay on solid ground.

"mike bamford" <mbamford123@comcast.net>  
06/06/2007 05:12 PM

Dear Mr. Cleeves

The USFS has historical fishing records collected over decades that show when anglers will fish. The USFS should use this scientifically gathered data in the on-going recreational study.

Two DNR angling studies published by the USFS on page H-14 of the 2004 Sumter Forest Service FEIS, reviewed actual fishing usage on the Burrells Ford to Highway 28 reach in 1987 and again in 1999. Both studies documented significant usage above 2.0' (850 cfs) on the 76 gauge.

In fact, the data suggests that the Chattooga is more popular with anglers with moderately-high water levels between 850-1400 cfs (2.0-2.5') then at any other range of water levels. This is likely the result of displaced anglers from nearby boat-filled streams selecting the Chattooga as an alternative. (see chart H-2)

Historical use data clearly shows that anglers often visit the Chattooga above the 2.5' (1400 cfs) flow levels

Chart Source: 2004 Sumter F.S. FEIS page H-14

These numbers were published by the USFS in 2004 and the FEIS was supposedly part of the literature review. Why were these two studies by the State DNRs reporting actual usage over months of data collection ignored and replaced with a casual survey from a handful of anglers during a single day?

In addition to DNR surveys, Doug Adams and the Ruban Chapter of Trout Unlimited supplied decades of actual usage data for the GA/SC Chattooga. These records clearly indicate fishing is popular on the Chattooga up to the three foot water levels at Highway 76, and fishing is more popular at the mid-to-high levels during the Spring and Fall seasons due to the cooler water temperature. This data was also not considered in the recreational study analysis.

Finally the Whiteside Cove Association supplied the USFS and the Berger group with forty years worth of angling data on the NC Chattooga down to Bull Pen bridge. (see email to Berger group cc John Cleeves). The data shows fishing at all water levels including over the 3' water level. This should be of no surprise since the water flow at Grimshawes bridge is less than one quarter of the flow found at Burrells Ford.

<b>CFS measured at Hwy 76</b>	<b>Days fished</b>	<b>% of total recorded days</b>	<b>% of days at each water levels*</b>
< 850	1521	78.1%	75.0%
850-1400	338	17.4%	18.0%
1400-2500	64	3.3%	4.0%
>2500	24	1.2%	3.0%

\* based on USGS data 1946-2004

**It is clear that at most all water levels the North Carolina Chattooga remains fishable.**

The Whiteside Cove information was originally sent to the USFS in June of 2006 and then again directly to the Berger group in January of 2007. The consultants ignored the detailed historical records of fishing over the past forty years in favor of anecdotal evidence from a single day use, and from anglers that reported to have never fished section 00. However the Consultant report was very quick to use anecdotal remarks supplied by the boating community regarding these upper reaches.

The WCA clearly has attempted to cooperate with the USFS to supply useful information for the analysis, all this factual data is being ignored by the consultants.

**Conclusion:**

**There is sufficient documentation on when people fish the North Fork of the Chattooga to conclude that fishing is very popular up to 2.5 feet below BF- the lowest segment of the North Fork- and remains popular at higher flow levels as you move up the watershed. The Sumter Forest Service noted in their 2004 FEIS that the DNR study reports below BF “suggest that trout fishing in the BF-28**

section declines at flows of 2.5 feet or higher as measured at the Highway 76 gauge, "[1] It is clear that fishing remains popular at purported boatable levels.

The two independent DNR studies and the angling logs from the local fisherman corroborate when people fish. These four sources provide similar findings that match each other but do not match the new published reports data.

Although the USFS should collect all opinions on the "fishability" at various water levels, the facts are very clear as to when anglers fish... AT ALMOST ALL WATER LEVELS.

Mike Bamford

**Appendix:**

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

From: mike bamford [mailto:mbamford123@comcast.net]

Sent: Thursday, January 18, 2007 1:18 PM

To: [kklosowski@louisberger.com](mailto:kklosowski@louisberger.com)

Dear Karen,

It was a pleasure meeting you on the Chattooga a few weeks ago.

I apologize for the late reply but here is the information we discussed. Attached is the data from angling on section 00, below is the summary from the WCA. I hope this is helpful

If you would like to interview club members or other local anglers, I would be happy to supply some numbers for these NC anglers.

Mike Bamford

Summary from WCA Logs

The Whiteside Cove Association is a family outing club located near section 00 of the Chattooga. The Association has kept a logbook of family activities including fishing since 1962. The club uses the North Carolina Chattooga and fishes 95% of the time on the Chattooga section 00 (above Bull Pen Bridge).

According to our logbooks there were 1,947 recorded days of fishing since 1962. The days fishing were correlated to the USGS Chattooga river recorded water level. The data is supplied in the attached .xls spreadsheet and the summary is listed in the table below. The table compares the percentage of actual days fished for each water level to the USGS historical percentage of each water level.

	<u>Days Fished</u>	<u>% of Actual days Fished</u>	<u>Historical % from USGS</u>
Number of days under 1.4 feet	468	24.0%	25%
Number of days 1.4-2.0 feet	1053	54.1%	50%
Number of days 2.0-2.5 feet	338	17.4%	18%
Number of days 2.5-3.0 feet	64	3.3%	4%
Number of days over 3.0 feet	24	1.2%	3%

The actual days fished align with the historical water level data. This shows that water levels do not alter the propensity for fishing the Chattooga in North Carolina. Water levels up to three feet are closely correlated to actual days fished over the past 40 years, therefore water levels do not alter "fishability" of the NC Chattooga on section 00. Water levels are just not a deterrent for fishing section 00 until the water is above the 99% or below the 10%.

There were several entries on the club log books that the water was too low for fishing, these numbers were below corresponded to below the 1.0' water levels. There were two notations that the water level was too high (3.9' and 4.3'). It should also be noted that club members normally do not use the river during hurricanes or after large floods; they generally consider levels of over four feet too high for fishing and they alter fishing locations once the water level reaches 3'.

Since the Chattooga above Bull Pen Bridge is much smaller than the Chattooga River at the 28 Bridge (about 1/5<sup>th</sup> the water volume,), the ability to fish this section at much higher water levels is visually apparent and confirmed by the club logbooks.

originally sent to the USFS Monday, June 05, 2006 10:48 AM