

Chattooga River Public Comments  
Dec. 20, 2006 - Feb 12, 2007

**tarp@comcast.net**  
**12/20/2006 07:54 PM**

I want to voice My displeasure in the continued ban to access the upper portion of the Chattooga River. I am appalled at the other groups claims that this section has seen mis-use by Paddlers. The Trash found in this area is predominantly from Fisherman/Hikers who have had access to the area and Not WW Paddlers. The Paddling community I am familiar with are excellent river Stewards, most often reducing the trash in these pristine areas. Also the potential for conflict with the other groups who use the area is most likely to be unseen due to the differences in preferred paddling levels being higher than the other groups use levels. It is very disheartening to see the Forest Service continue to side with Local "Fellows" who have less than honorable plans for the area. I truly hope for the river you and your staff reconsider your actions and the ban.

Tarp

**Robin Sayler**  
**12/26/2006 04:21 PM**

As a kayaker and former resident of Highlands, I would like to add my views regarding this issue. Also I would like to address some comments previously made.

Boating the upper Chattooga is not a new use, but was an established activity years before the ban. I actively kayaked Sections 0 and 1 beginning in the early 1970's. It had been boated well before the Chattooga received Wild and Scenic status. It was a lightly-used run, not a 'popular' run, and lifting the ban would not cause hordes of boaters to descend upon the river.

Friction between boaters and other user groups is a strawman. I have boated this and similar streams and have never encountered another person not in our party. This is primarily a winter season stream, boatable only during high flows, usually during lousy weather. My first trip down Section 1 was during a snowstorm.

Regarding blanket statements made by some proponents of the boating ban, kayakers and canoer paddlers are not purely thrill-seeking daredevils. We also enjoy the solitude and natural beauty of the area. We do not destroy the riverbanks and wantonly litter along the river, in fact paddlers have been spearheading river cleanups. The trash that is now found on the upper Chattooga has been left there by fishermen and hikers.

The statement that we already have enough of the Chattooga to paddle ignores the illegality of the ban, and apparently some users think we have too much of the Chattooga to paddle, and are trying to deny access to sections that have been boated continuously for decades.

Those who want to legally boat the upper Chattooga deserve the same consideration as other low-impact users.

**"Erica Madsen" <erica.schuler@gmail.com>  
01/08/2007 11:14 AM**

Mr Cleeves,

Thank you and your team for opening this project to public comment. I am a 24 year-old kayaker from the Atlanta area who has grown up around Clayton and enjoy visiting the Chattooga many weekends each year. I am also a member of American Whitewater. I urge your team to decide against any plan that bans boaters from the upper sections and headwaters of the Chattooga River.

I respect the fishermen's wish for an "undisturbed wilderness experience," but the argument could be made that fishermen disturb a kayakers "wilderness experience." I am not advocating such intolerance, but instead am trying to show how this argument should not be used for decision-making.

I do not know of any river or creek where kayaking is allowed and fishing is prohibited, unless to protect the wildlife. If kayaking presented any sort of danger to local environments greater than the threat presented by fishermen, then a ban would be logical. However, studies have shown no such threat. Our footprint is much smaller than those made by hikers, backpackers and other users who are granted access to this area.

I also sincerely urge your team to consider the precedent set by banning boaters from a river. Many fishermen have argued that there are many other places to kayak/canoe, but a precedent could begin limiting our access in other areas. Just as fishermen would not want to fish in a stocked pond and enjoy the "wilderness" of the Chattooga headwaters, kayakers/canoers only want to enjoy the same right.

Thank you for your time. I please use my contact information below if necessary.

Erica Madsen  
5156 Apollo Lane  
Lilburn, GA 30047  
678-557-2694

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Erica S. Madsen

**trey coleman <treycoleman@yahoo.com>  
01/08/2007 02:18 PM**

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of opening up the Chattooga Headwaters to kayakers and canoeists. I firmly believe that federal lands such as these, and the waters that they contain, should be open to a variety of recreational users and not the sole domain of one group.

I write this from the perspective of being both a lifelong fisherman and an expert whitewater kayaker. I have fly fished extensively in the Great Smoky Mountain National Park, as well as throughout the Southeast, Pacific West and North East. In all of these locations, fishing and paddling are allowed and the two work in harmony.

I am also a member of Trout Unlimited (have been for years) and a lifetime member of American Whitewater. Thus, I understand the position of both parties, but still contend that opening up these headwaters is the right thing to do.

My primary belief in this is founded in the fact that any good fisherman knows: fish don't bite as well when the river is running high. The trout is a very lazy fish, probably more lazy than most freshwater game fish we have, and when the flow of the river steps up due to rain events the fish hunker down. Yes, they will occasionally bite during a highwater event, but in general the fishing isn't that good. However, for paddlers, higher flows are good and they have no interest in paddling these areas when the waters are low and ideal for fishing.

Added also is the turbidity of the water, which greatly hampers a trout's primary tool in hunting: its range of vision. Simply put, a fish that hunts by sight will not be induced to hunt when the water is cloudy. Once again, when the water is running at the right level for paddling, it's not so good for fish or fishermen.

If you take just these two factors alone, it becomes abundantly clear that fishermen won't have need of the river when its running higher than summer flows. It just so happens that this is the time when the paddlers want on the river. Thus, there is a symbiotic relationship that could exist here, just as we see symbiotic relationships in nature everywhere.

Since fishermen will disagree on topics like, when fish will bite or why, I'll offer the fact that no one has any business wading into waters that are surging after a storm event. Simply put, it is highly

dangerous to be in waders (even with a wading belt) for most fishermen when the water is at a level when the paddlers would want to use it. Thus, there is no real need for the river from the position of safety for fisherman to have the only access to the river when the waters are high: they won't be using it.

In terms of environmental impact, its a 50/50 kind of thing. Both fishermen and paddlers impact riparian areas in varying degrees. Fishermen impact riverbanks getting to and around fishing spots. Paddlers impact similiar areas where they put-in and take-out accessing the rivers. Thus, both parties impart environmental impact when using these lands. One group doesn't do so more than the other and the fact is a naturally-flowing waterway purges most riverbank areas of use through its flood cycles.

In summary, these lands should be opened up for paddlers so they can enjoy them too as when they will want to use them the fishing won't be that good, and what fishing there is dangerous, thus simply the fishermen won't be using them. I appreciate that the folks using them now want to keep them to themselves and not have intruders like paddlers, but the fact is most paddlers are only concerned with being on the water and not tromping around the land. Simply, most of those resisting letting the paddlers in would be surprised at how little they will see the paddlers unless they are up there on a high water day.

Lastly, being a US Citizen/federal taxpayer and an armed forces veteran, I find it troubling that folks who want to use federal land to float down a river have to write letters, attend meetings, while another group of folks have free reign to use the same publicly-owned land whenever they want. This country is about fairness and equal rights for all, please end the discrimination that exists in the headwaters by banning paddling.

Thank you and hopefully a compromise can be reached in this situation,

Trey Coleman  
1300 Willmann Lane  
Knoxville, TN 37919  
865-310-6243

**"Eric B" <ebessette@gmail.com>  
01/09/2007 01:31 PM**

I am very concerned with the illegal floating ban on the Upper Chattooga. Because that section of river has a short boating season and tends to flash, I will probably never run it. However, I will be fighting this ban tooth and nail with my votes, money, participation, etc. because if this illegal ban is not removed then it sets a precedent that any other USFS regional office can use on a whim. In Washington, there are many amazing rivers that flow through USFS land and I will not stand idally by while an illegal ban threatens access to those runs. This illegal ban was made 30 years ago, there is no loss of face to remove it now. Please remove it. Don't wait for the courts to decide, there's no honor in that.

Sincerely,  
Eric Bessette

**Scott Schelter <scott\_schelter@yahoo.com>**  
**01/09/2007 02:17 PM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am sending this e-mail regarding the visitor capacity analysis for the Upper Chattooga River. I twice tried to submit comments using the online form, but on clicking the submit button, received an "Error 500" message.

The Upper Chattooga is what I would call a "destination" paddling river. Many of my Ontario, Canada paddling friends and I would make a trip to your area to paddle this river, and would spend tourism dollars in local communities while there. Currently, we visit other Appalachian whitewater, as well as rivers in Ontario and Quebec. It would be shameful for the current boating ban to remain in place if, as I am led to believe, the ban is not based on sound science, and is further the only such ban in the US wild and scenic river system. I urge you to overturn the current ban and look at other options.

Kind Regards,  
Scott Schelter

**"James Powell" <jpowell@oconee.k12.sc.us>**  
**01/09/2007 03:23 PM**

Mr. Cleeves,

Hi, my name is James Powell and I am a native of Oconee Co. a teacher at Walhalla Middle School, in Walhalla SC. I have enjoyed the Chattooga River all of my life and many of my kin folk are from Long Creek, Mtn. Rest, and the Whetstone community. I have also always been a supporter of the U.S. Forest Service. I am writing this email to express my thoughts on the Chattooga River Headwaters being open to boating. I feel very strongly that everyone (hikers, fishermen, and kayaker/open-boaters) should be allowed to enjoy the headwaters of the

Chattooga. I have kayaked on the Chattooga for many years and have always met people in the sport that care about the environment and never abuse the river bank or put-in areas. Fishing the headwaters is a great activity and I am not against fishing in anyway. I do not think kayakers would detract from the experience fishermen have in any fashion. We can't single out on group and keep them off, if that group poses no threat to the ecosystem. I know that the forest service is doing a good job with this problem, and I support the U.S. Forest Service. Thank you for taking the time to hear my opinion on this issue.

James Powell  
400 N. Catherine St.  
Walhalla SC 29691

[Jamespowell2@bellsouth.net](mailto:Jamespowell2@bellsouth.net)  
864-638-6959

**Mail2edale@aol.com**  
**01/09/2007 04:03 PM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I have just completed reading a report from American Whitewater, presumably authored by Keith Colburn, on the recent boater trials held on the Chattooga River north of the Highway 28 bridge. From this description it must have been a wonderful experience, the first boaters in this area (legally) in thirty years.

I do remember thirty years ago, and (portions of) the Chattooga River at that time, mostly the portion south of the aforementioned bridge, but some to the north also. These sections, too, were beautiful in their relatively pristine setting. Look at these sections now, especially the portions south of the 28 bridge. Is this the way you want this river north of the bridge to look thirty years from now?

I believe your decision as a land manager for the USDA-Forest Service, America's premier land management agency, as to the future of this corridor north of the bridge is a "no-brainer."

Respectfully,

Edwin Dale

(Former) Outdoor Recreation Planner  
Toccoa Ranger District  
Chattahoochee National Forest

**"B Rohde" <b.rohde@earthlink.net>**  
**01/09/2007 05:56 PM**

Dear Mr Cleeves,

I am first and foremost a fly fisher. I am a long time member of Trout Unlimited, as is my wife. We are active members and strong supporters of cold, clean water and wild places in this world. In my younger days I also participated in whitewater boating on rivers similar to the Upper

Chattooga throughout the Eastern states. I have taught classes and lead trips for a number of boating clubs and organizations dating back to the late 70's. I feel that I know boaters and fishermen quite well. I call myself both.

Over the past year or so I have watched the Upper Chattooga boating/fishing conflict. Without debating the pros and cons of each sides positions, I am writing to ask that the Forest Service ends the boating ban on the Upper Chattooga. It is time that the treasure of the Upper Chattooga is shared with all.

As a fishermen, I am ashamed at the positions and behavior of the fishing organizations on this issue. As a boater, I am embarrassed by the juvenile, selfish attitude of some of the boaters. Neither side has the moral high ground. This issue has driven a wedge between two groups that are both advocates for cool, clean water and wild places. These groups should be allies. In the long run, this ban serves the interests of no one, except those who would privatize all wilderness for exclusive use of a privileged few.

Thank You For Your Time and Public Service,  
Bob Rohde  
Raleigh, North Carolina

**"Crain, Jon -- EMI" <jon.crain@ttemi.com>  
01/09/2007 10:25 PM**

Hasn't this silly mess gone on long enough? We all know that keeping something away only increases the desire. I think it is necessary for all users to begin to use this river equally, as to avoid a surge of users to the area by making a big deal about it. Let's go fishing and kayaking.

Regards,

Jon L. Crain  
Environmental Scientist/GIS Analyst

**Anne or Dave Perrin <adperrin@yahoo.com>  
01/09/2007 10:36 PM**

I've just viewed the photos from the trial whitewater run on the upper Chattooga. They represent a magnificent journey through a virtual wonderland. I've been paddling for 30 years and am amazed and stunned at the beauty represented by those photos.

My children are now teenagers and avid paddlers. It is my hope they will be able to paddle this section of the Chattooga. I hope this paddling trip has opened the Forest Service's eyes to these amazing rapids and places only a river craft can take you. Please open it to the paddling public so my children may have the

opportunity to paddle there. This place is a wonder that's been denied to me my entire paddling career. Let's not lose it for another paddling generation.

Thanks  
Dave Perrin  
192 Windy Hill Rd.  
Mountain Rest, SC 29664

**Matt Jordan <matthewgjordan@yahoo.com>**  
**01/10/2007 08:32 AM**

I am glad to hear that the kayaking part of the user analysis went off without a hitch. No fishermen were injured during the experimental kayak runs. That is great news. What else were they worried about? Does this mean that we are on our way to being able to paddle this river legally? I would like to encourage you to lift the boating ban so that EVERYONE can enjoy the upper Chattooga.

Sincerely,  
Matt Jorda

**barnettw3@aol.com**  
**01/10/2007 03:20 PM**

Barnett Williams  
5304 Camelot Court  
Brentwood, TN 37027  
615-371-0131

After 33 years of white water paddling and many trips down Sections III and IV; a great love and reverence for the Chattooga river and a true sense of how the area's natural beauty heals and renews the human spirit, I am now accutely aware that I will probably never be able to see that pristine area through which the USFS has to date arbitrarily denied access. Please don't let that happen to another generation ! Thank you for your time and effort.

Barnett Williams

**Andrew Alan Hiss <ahiss@mix.wvu.edu>**  
**01/10/2007 03:57 PM**

Being from West Virginia and a long time kayaker with interest in steep creeking the Idea of running section 00 of the chattooga is very interesting indeed. I had always heard that there was a ban on the river but never knew why but had always said that the ban had to be illegal and that I would be willing to challange such a ban if the run had the flow during one of visits. Yet I never had the opportunity. I learned of the reconsideration on the ban recently and did some

research on my own to see if the ban was legal and had just cause. I found that it was illegal and that any kind of enforcement of the ban could lead to major legal problems to those enforce the ban because under N.C. state law the section is considered runnable and therefore makes the ban and the No trespassing signs illegal. So the point is lost on the ban according to state law it is legal and should be treated as such. I recently read the letter by the private entity opposing legal use and would like to make some points. The signs in the river are illegal and pose a harm to those who will legally use this river. They are endangering the safety of others and spoiling the scenery. Also the mans comments about safety in the "private owned section" It's more dangerous to climb on the rocks and if it is so remote they themselves should not be down there because of the mentioned complications with it being a remote location. The guy is nuts and the ban is nuts and they should thank American Whitewater for trying to solve this as little legal wrangling as possible because once boaters see the ban and know the law then an any action against them will futile because we have the law on our side.

**Fastprinting1@aol.com**  
**01/10/2007 04:47**

I think it is not right to stop boaters from getting on the Upper Chatooga. The majority of boaters you meet pack out more garbage than they bring in. We do not disturb wildlife in any shape, form, or fashion. The commercial rafting companies are the problems with areas being harmed. I myself would love to boat the Upper Chatooga one day and hope that the dream will come true. In your study you needed boaters and anglers. I am both and would love to help participate in anyway I can.

Thanks,  
Jon Willerson  
GA

**"John Murphy" [murphy.john.patrick@gmail.com](mailto:murphy.john.patrick@gmail.com)**

I am by no means an expert, but I would like to express my feelings towards the boaters' ban on the upper sections of the Chattooga River. I feel that by opening the river to recreational and responsible whitewater enthusiasts, the river and scenic area will no doubt become the focus of greater stewardship and protection efforts. The Chattooga River is one of the prettiest and most respected rivers in the Southeast, and has been for a long time. It has provided countless memories to those who travel upon it. I believe that the entire watershed should be opened up for boaters to enjoy, much like fishermen do today.

I realize that the subject is controversial. I also realize that people have opinions, and both sides of the issue have reasons for holding their ideas. The FUC (Friends of the Upper Chattooga?) holds a staunch position in keeping boaters out of the river. To me (again, I am no expert, here), this seems like a somewhat selfish attitude. "We can benefit from the river in our way, but you cannot." is the message a lot of boaters are feeling from FUC community. Yes, any public use of land (or water) will cause it to suffer a

little. Fishermen leave cans of corn on the riverbanks, Boaters trample a few plants at the put in. But boaters are also renowned for wanting to protect the streams they paddle. As a river gives fish and whitewater to the people, the people return the favor. River cleanups and maintenance are common events in whitewater circles, as I am sure they are for fishermen. Boaters certainly have the potential to cause problems in the area, but I believe these problems can be minimized so they do not impact the area around the upper Chattooga.

For the most part, boaters are on the water. When traveling on the water, they are not really capable of causing damage to the river. The place where I believe you are concerned is where the boaters can cause noticeable damage to the area - the riverbank. Boaters do not want to be walking around the banks, and I am sure you all do not want them to be doing so anyway. The only times that boaters are on land (that I can think of) are walking to the river, stopping to eat on the river, scouting a rapid, walking around a rapid, taking a break on the shore, and in emergency situations. In each of these situations, the boater is on the ground, and has the potential to trounce plant life, cause erosion, or hurt animal habitats. But all these activities can be enacted carefully, so that the effect on the ground is minimal (with exception to emergencies, which are infrequent in the first place).

In conclusion, I believe that boaters are capable of using the upper Chattooga in a way that benefits everyone: the boaters who enjoy it, the Forest Service who collects revenue from it, and the river itself, which receives greater respect, admiration, and awareness through those who experience it. Boaters and fishermen are equal, and we all deserve a chance to enjoy what the Chattooga River has to offer. Again, I am no expert, but I just wanted to share my feelings with you all. Thank you.

-John P. Murphy

**"Jimmy Blakeney" <jimmyb@kayaker.com>  
01/11/2007 08:42 AM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am writing to express my excitement and relief that after all this time the Chattooga Wild and Scenic River has been off limits to paddle sports enthusiasts, it seems that you are on the brink of opening this incredible public resource for paddlers to enjoy. I have long dreamed of taking my kayak down this section of river, and now the idea of it becoming a reality is truly amazing. I know you have heard all of the comments, and don't want to be repetitive, but wow, what a perfect resource for a low-impact sport like paddling to be utilizing! As paddlers we will treasure this resource and diligently work to help keep it the pristine wilderness that it has been for centuries.

Thank you for your time and effort in helping restore access to this incredible place for a group of people who will truly honor and cherish it!

Jimmy Blakeney  
[Wave Sport Marketing](#)  
[Whitewater Park Design Consultant](#)

**"Jon Huhn" <jhuhn@charter.net>**

**01/11/2007 02:47 PM**

Mr. Cleeves,

The upper Chattooga is a very special place to many different people. The paddling community has been denied access to it for way too long. After seeing how much fun the kayakers of the test study had, please allow the rest of the paddling community to enjoy this resource whenever there is enough water to run the upper Chattooga. Do the right thing, LIFT THE BOATING BAN NOW!!!!!! Thank you for your time.

Jon Huhn

**"Kim Porter" <porterkiger@hotmail.com>**

**01/11/2007 03:52 PM**

1. Boating from the Bull Pen Road to Highway 28 should be permitted above 2.8 ft. Conflict between fishermen and boaters would not occur above 2.8 ft. since fishing at or above 2.8 ft. is not practical. Below 2.8 ft. boating becomes marginal (AWA website recommends optimum levels of 2.6 ft. to 4.0 ft.).
2. Group size and number of groups should be regulated to limit impact on other groups, such as hikers, etc. We suggest 4 groups per day with no more than 4 to 6 individuals per group, per Appendix H, Sumter National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, 2004. Why are boaters limited and not hikers and fishermen? Creek boating has really increased in the last 10 years while all other use has slightly increased or remained level. Fishermen are regulated by creel limits and hikers are limited by access.
3. Down and woody debris should not be removed in those sections of the headwaters above the Highway 28 bridge.
4. There should be no new access roads and trails in the headwaters.
5. Boating should not be permitted from Grimshaws Bridge to the old iron bridge because of the potential conflict with private landowners.
6. The Forest Service should commit to a high standard of enforcement regarding the restrictions as stated above.

**"Michael and Georgi" <tribblehill@msn.com>**

**01/12/2007 05:27 PM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I'm writing you in regards to the issue of opening the upper Chattooga watershed to paddlers. I am a concerned paddler and also a trout fisherman. I DO NOT SUPPORT American Whitewaters' push to open this stretch of water. These people want to make everyone conform to their requests like a bunch of spoiled rich kids. I have found from my experience with them (I used to be a member for 15 years) that they are only concerned with their interests and what they can achieve for themselves. Back in 1991 I had an issue with them on the Gauley River in West Virginia, and asked them if they could help me as a member of their organization. I wrote several letters to them expressing my concerns about their prejudice against private rafters,

to which they never had the courtesy to reply. It seemed to me that they only wanted my money.

I started running rivers back in 1972 as a hobby before I decided to become a guide. I have been a professional river guide for over 30 years now, and I can't believe the blatant disregard they have for private rafters. There are plenty of rivers for these people to paddle in this area, and I feel that adding the upper Chattooga would be just another notch in their guns. However, as a member of Trout Unlimited, I find it harder and harder to locate areas where I can go and fish in solitude and not have to worry about some boater ruining all my efforts of trying to catch a wild trout. There is nothing more discouraging than spending over an hour of time trying to convince a wild trout to take your fly, exercising patience and cunning, and then having a group of boaters coming through and scaring the fish down. If I wanted that kind of experience I would go and fish the Nantahala River downstream of the power plant. So please, I beg you to NOT ALLOW THEM TO RUN ROUGHSHOD OVER US ANYMORE!!!

Thank you for your time,  
Michael Hill  
P.O. Box 356  
Barnardsville, N.C.  
28709

**"Gay Kattel" <gmkattel@msn.com>  
01/13/2007 09:08 AM**

Dear Sir,

I have had a home in the Highlands, NC area for the past 31 years. My family has often picnicked on a sandy beach near the old Iron Bridge crossing the Chattooga River in the National Forest. As a retiree, I have now hiked all of the trails surrounding the scenic Chattooga River. I have picked up trash along many of the roads and trails meandering through our forests. It is always worst around boating areas. Please keep the Upper Chattooga River free of boats of all kinds. My grandchildren need to know that there are still a few pristine areas left in our world.

Most sincerely,  
Gay kattel  
580 Edwards Creek Rd.  
Highlands, NC 28741

**"Bryan Hogan" <BHogan@oldvirginaloghomes.com>  
01/15/2007 09:04 AM**

To whom it may concern,  
]

I am writing to you in regards to the head waters of the Chattooga. It is time to lift the illegal boating ban on the Chattooga. This is a recreation area that is currently favoring a few specific user groups.

We boaters have no desire to restrict access to another group, and in reality would have little interaction with any other group. I am sure you have already heard all of these arguments, so I will dispense.

A more proper tact would be to remind the forest service that they are obligated to uphold the law, and I believe that the law is clear on this issue.

We hear about the fishermen's concerns of disrupting their "wilderness" experience. Boaters chuckle at this because hiking for miles with our boats is not uncommon, in order to gain a true wilderness experience.

I think anyone who wants to argue an area with road access and stocked non-native trout is "wilderness" needs to get out a little more. Perhaps we should get rid of the road access, move the parking miles away and not interfere with nature (i.e. stocking non-native). Then we could illegally ban all user groups! Or better yet, let the boaters and fishermen have to hike in. That would reduce use by both groups.

In closing let me make my feelings clear... Lift the illegal ban on boating, and stop giving preferential treatment to certain user groups!

Thank you,  
Bryan Hogan

**Kat Rector <bigsurfwaves@yahoo.com>**  
**01/16/2007 12:42 AM**

Hello,

All this talk about the Upper Chattooga by paddlers and anglers is quite heated. I'm sure you all have been following it. There seems to be no end to the ignorant rants. I, for one, have been embarrassed to associate myself with either community in this feud.

Here is my background:

I am a 29 year old female non-smoker, non-drinker, and I own my own business, called Aesthetic Steel. With 10+ years experience, two certifications, and one degree in welding technology, I started my business, which consists of steel fabrication, ornamental metal, skilled welding repairs, and custom metal art. Some of my best work is a collection of realistic looking steel TROUT pieces, other wildlife, landscapes, and sportsman themed pieces. I sell these in Orvis fly fishing stores. I also work part-time at a kayak/canoe outfitters store.

I have fished streams and researched fish behavior all my life. And I have kayaked whitewater at an aggressive level for almost 10 years. So I feel I have a good understanding of the challenge at hand.

Here are my suggestions:

Please ignore the people who do not understand BOTH sides of this situation. They are ignorant and can not help what they say and think.

Please do consider letting whitewater paddlers have access to the Upper Chattooga, but DO NOT allow all floating to take place. Type 3 PFDs, Absolutely NO motors, No tubes and No commercial use. Do not worry

that paddlers of insufficient skills will be trying to boat this section of river. The paddlers who do paddle it will consider it their responsibility to prevent and assist with problems on the river.

Please allow restricted private paddler use of the upper sections on days that the gauge on the upper reads 1.5 or higher. If it hits that high sometime during the 24 hour period, boating should be legal. Make boaters put in after 10 AM, and take out before 4PM. No float traffic except during these 6 hours. Make them register, and enforce the window (it could even be shorter), so anglers will have the chance to schedule their fishing and hiking times accordingly. Limit the amount of miles a group can paddle per day to limit disturbances. If the river is below 1.5, boating is not allowed.

The only way AW might agree to the 'window' thing is to phrase it as though you are trying to keep sort of a 'nature sanctuary' in there. If you say its for the anglers they will probably complain. Say its for the wildlife. (like the Birds of Prey section on the Snake River in Idaho) The boaters can deal with the window, if the river was dam-released they would have a window of release water, so they are used to time restrictions.

There is a creek near Chattanooga whose corridor is within an organized hunting area. The area and river access is closed when they have these hunts...the same could be done for anglers on the Chattooga to protect certain dates in advance. This would help them have some reassurance that they could still plan a trip or a tournament there and not be worried that if the water is a little high that weekend they will hike in only to have boaters paddle by and spook the fish.

Check out what Idaho does with the rivers that are within the Frank Church River of No Return Wilderness Area and the Selway Bitterroot Wilderness. They have great rules/regulations for managing those rivers and they do a fantastic job. All my experiences on these rivers have been phenomenal. The amount of people that navigate them is larger than you might think, and the impact is LOW. The fisheries are great, and all the users of the river seem satisfied.

I may be a serious whitewater paddler, but I don't agree with AW on this issue if they think unlimited use is the answer for the Upper Chattooga. They aren't seeing it for what it truly is, a fishing area that happens to have whitewater in it. I don't agree with the process that took it to this point, but it is what

it is.

Idaho's rivers are some of the most lush, beautiful, and well managed fisheries in the US and you don't see them giving unlimited access to all boaters on all their rivers. There are some rivers you just have to protect. But they have no rivers where they allow NO boating either. A total boating ban is going too far.

If you haven't already done so, look up the Idaho Four Rivers Lottery information. And look at all of their rules for managing their special rivers.

Thanks for letting me give suggestions. Hope this helps and good luck.

Kat Levitt  
Chattanooga, TN

**<info@streamsidedesign.com>  
01/16/2007 12:31 PM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I'm sure your office has had a record number of responses in the past couple of weeks. Mostly from the user trials on the Chattooga. I am writing to voice my opinion on this matter. Let me start by saying that my life is fly fishing. Literally, I assist in managing a fly shop, I guide, I own a custom rod/net building business (Kootenai Custom Rods), and I tie most of the flies I use, as well as supply the fly shop. I can certainly understand how most anglers feel. however, I don't feel the same way. You see, I was once a paddler too. I don't paddle WW anymore but can still remember the enjoyment I received from the experience. For me it was never about the adrenaline rush. It was about solitude and exploration. I believe and hope that those boaters skilled enough to paddle the Chattooga headwaters will be given the opportunity to do so. I also hope the office charged with making this decision will do so without any bias toward or against a particular user group. I hope that after the trials are completed, there is enough data to determine whether or not the boaters should be allowed. I would also hope that if boaters are allowed, that regulations are set forth to minimize the impact of others and keep unskilled boaters or inappropriate craft off the waters for the sake of safety. You see, I'm also a volunteer SAR TECH, & SAR canine handler. Do the right thing by making decisions based on scientific data, not because of user group pressure.

Sincerely,  
Mark Craig  
[mark@streamsidedesign.com](mailto:mark@streamsidedesign.com)

**Carol Meyhoefer <cherokee\_carol@mac.com>**  
**01/16/2007 02:28 PM**

To echo what I believe and stated several years ago, there is no conflict between anglers and whitewater boaters for the Upper Chattooga. When the water is high enough to boat down, it is too high to fish. When the water is low enough to fish, it is too low to boat. Please give access to all equally. Thanks!  
Carol Meyhoefer

**"phillip foti" <philcanoe@hotmail.com>**  
**01/16/2007 03:40 PM**

Mr/Ms Jcleeves,

What is at stake, is the future of a little over 1/3 of the Chattooga River System (20 of 57 miles). The question is what is best for the River and National Forest as a whole.

I've read both side of the argument. Even Mr. Doug Adams essay, where he alludes to there being 6 anglers per mile on a stretch of water. Even in the height of summer paddling, I will not average seeing six paddlers per mile on the sections I've paddled. The only times you normally see such numbers is on dam released summer runs, scheduled Forest Service runs, or an annual rendezvous situation.

Fishermen's reasoning seem a bit far-fetched to me, at least the cause and effect mechanism of fish "going down". If one is to assume that the trout are going under (shit aren't they always under) then they are responding to something. If this is happening in the Chattooga headwaters, and there is no boating or very infrequent boating, then something else is at work. I don't expect it is an over stressed reaction to being pulled from the water, over and over again. I'd be pretty stressed out, if the simple action of eating resulted in my demise. I'm sitting there unaware; life's good, my natural food choice comes floating by, oh boy a fly... oh shit, not again. Pavlov would have a field day here, so to speak.

Let me see now...Fisherman he's at a picnic table, he turns around, quick put a treble hook in the pan-fried trout, he bites, set the hook... no he ain't worth keep'n. Wouldn't take too many times before, I'd get nervous when eating. Ole Jim, you remember him, he was eating a turkey sandwich and shit now he's gone. I'd hole up too, whenever something out of the ordinary came around. And what's out of the ordinary here. Things float downstream (everyday, all day), seems pretty natural in my world. It's some big footed, hip wader wearing, corn-toting, fly tying sneaky bastard that's unnatural here. I'd go run and hide, if there was the slightest chance he's around.

I'm floating by on top of the water, not harming a thing, and I'm the bad guy. Now here's this fisherman, he is trodden around in oversized galoshers, all along on and in a delicate riparian environment, stepping on no telling what. He's spending all day walking up and down, sneaking through pristine vegetation. Some of the last of it's kind anywhere! He'd rather step into and through vegetation, rather than staying on a trail or existing walkway. Oh, they'll see you otherwise! His goal is to remove living matter from a federally protected area. If we carry out a plant, a seed, a eagle feather, even like the way that stone looked a little to much; then it's illegal for us. But this guy has unbalanced the natural environment to the point, that we have to raise it in a farm in order to have enough. Otherwise the whole eco-system would fail. You can't do it to or with deer, turkey, ducks or any other thing living for that matter. What makes this guy so special??!!!

Also the matter of noise was mentioned, or brought up. A paddlers yell, it startles...give me a break. You can hardly hear over the roar of whitewater. This is where someone would yell. Running water is such a good insulator of sound, that (in the movies) water from a faucet drowns out a listening device. We carry whistles just on order to get someone's attention, and this is someone just on the other side. I routinely startle heron (great blues) not by them hearing, but from getting too close. Sometimes they'll even stand there motionless, not batting an eye, hoping they haven't been seen. Ducks that have been found out, go into the 'lame duck' routine they are famed for. If you just wait long enough, the ducklings start popping up all over the place.

I use to paddle the Chattooga all the time. But as my ability has increased, the desire to paddle the lower sections has diminished. The Chattooga's upper sections are the type of water I'm interested in. The best way to see a natural setting for me is from a boat. From this vantage point, you can see both sides at the same time. You are able to see more wildlife that's partially why hunting from watercraft is illegal. When walking in the Southeast, you don't get the big views. You only see what's around you, and glimpses of the other side. The very nature around you encloses and limits what you can see. You are held captive to the forest floor. From a boat you see it all, including above it all. Both sides, at the same time. I use to hunt and fish, but then I realized it was the whole big thing, the natural setting, the scenery, it was this interaction that I needed.

Maybe in the interest of protecting the natural environment, we ought to protect a few miles from fishermen. I hike, climb, backpack, and paddle. I love it when I don't see anyone. But that's just not a fact, we've done too good a job since Adam and Eve. Maybe it's time for a lottery system for fishermen to enjoy nature, and protect themselves from themselves. This is what the park service has done for boaters. Boaters are not the problem. It's

'Selfishness" that's the problem.

Phil Foti

Philcanoe@hotmail.com  
494 Poplar Lane  
Warrior Al 35180

**"Luther Turner" <zaty@earthlink.net>  
01/17/2007 02:25 PM**

As a descendant of the Hill family who settled in Horse Cove in the early 1800s (near the Iron Bridge), I respectfully ask that you not allow the use of the Chattooga River above Hwy. 28 by kayakers. As a hiker, have enjoyed the pristine trails and woods in that area for many years. In the event of low rain fall, portage of the kayaks would literally ruin the pristine areas adjacent to the river. Additionally, the use of this part of the river would no doubt result in the building of many trails for kayakers only not to mention the fact that much of the area would probably be used by vehicles to provide access.

I know many others who live in this area who agree with me and we ask you to please not allow this to happen

Thank you for your consideration.

Luther Turner

**"Justin Bolender" <jlboles@gmail.com>  
01/17/2007 11:59 AM**

Mr. Cleaves, I am a whitewater paddler from Kentucky. I am writing to show my interest in paddling the Upper Chattooga River. I understand the ban on paddling this section of river has been in place for many years. I feel this ban needs to be eliminated to allow the public to enjoy this gem of a whitewater run. I am a member of the Bluegrass Wildwater Association and I can assure you that our group takes care of the rivers while using them. We are not out there to damage and litter the environment, just enjoy its rapids and excitement. Thanks for your time.

Justin Bolender.  
Whitewater Paddler  
Covington, KY

**"Bob Slayden" <bslayden@wmsengineers.com>  
01/17/2007 05:20 PM**

I have boated serious whitewater in Tennessee, Georgia, and North Carolina since 1973. Although my days of paddling streams as difficult as the upper Chattooga sections is now past, I strongly support allowing boating on these upper sections. The list of boaters that can safely run

this water is small, but it should not be illegal for them to run it. There is no reason that both anglers and boaters cannot mutually co-exist on and along this beautiful and scenic stream.

P.S. I tried to send a comment through the FS web site, but it would not go through for some reason. I would appreciate it if you can enter this comment into the record.

Bob Slayden  
Water Management Services, LLC.  
P.O. Box 17650  
Nashville, TN 37217

**"Lewis Doggett" <lewisdoggett@dnet.net>**  
**01/17/2007 10:30 PM**

Mr. Cleeves:

I would respectfully like to enter my strong objection to the opening of the Chattooga River to use by watercraft.

I am sure that you know of all the reasons that such use would be harmful to the river: increased chances of erosion and siltation, disturbance of wildlife, eventual destruction of the natural log dams, more litter, need for more and larger parking areas with access roads. However, the most important reason would be the change of the atmosphere of the environment. As a child, I went to the upper Chattooga to find peace and solitude (in those days not an easy thing to do). As an adult I have continued to visit the river when I could to restore my soul. Alas, I'm afraid that I do not have too many more visits left for me

Any sport by nature (not intent) causes some degree of damage. (Fishing to me is more a state-of-mind than a sport.) I would hate to see this natural and unaffected part of the river eventually turned into the boating highway that the lower sections have become.

Thank you for your consideration.  
Sincerely, Lewis Doggett

**"Tom Hession" <tchmtnsfnc@dnet.net>**  
**01/17/2007 10:55 PM**

mr. cleeves, thank you for your time and effort in assessing the currant ban on boating on the upper chattooga. as a local (franklin,nc) kayaker and a fisherman i look forward to the hopeful day that I can enjoy kayaking this incredible stretch of the river. i have often casted a line while thinking,' wow, i bet this place would be great at high water in my boat'. i know many of the generals on both side of this fight. every time i speak with one of them about it i remind them of the amount of money and resources their little feud is wasting. could have put some nice commodes out there for half the amount, but seriously..thanks for your time, and please let us boat this section. i truly feel that it is wrong to keep one group of folks out because another thinks we don't belong. i belong to both groups, and see nothing but a one sided ruling interfering with boaters legally using what belongs to all of us. sincerely, tom hession.

**WSHOWLAND@aol.com**

**01/18/2007 08:00 AM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am a resident of Highlands, NC and an avid hiker.

I understand that an additional portion of the Chattooga river may be opened to use by recreational watercraft.

I am strongly opposed to this. The Chattooga is truly "wild and scenic" and allowing watercraft on the currently protected portion of the river would be a mistake in my opinion. There are countless other locations for boating activity. Use of the currently protected portion of the Chattooga by watercraft will increase noise, pollution, silt and erosion, and eliminate one more area that hikers and bird watchers can enjoy in quiet and isolation.

Please protect this portion of the river.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

W. Slocum Howland, Jr.

223 Sagee Drive

Highlands, NC 28741

phone: (828) 526-9097

fax: (828) 526-9383

email: [wshowland@aol.com](mailto:wshowland@aol.com)

**"glendabell" <glendabee1@brmemc.net>**

**01/18/2007 10:41 AM**

Dear Ranger Cleeves,

It has come to our attention that a large and politically enriched group wants to open the Chattooga River to watercraft. This would be a mistake. There are many rivers better suited to this use. This one is narrow, rocky, unpolluted, clean and pristine. Please do what you can to stop the commercialization of this wilderness area.

Boaters bring fuel spills, noise, beer cans and other litter, tire tracks, erosion and speed.

Please help us keep one place that is peaceful and clean.

Thank you,

Glenda and Griffin Bell, Jr

**"Cole Lee" <CLEE@watkinsglenschools.org>**

**01/18/2007 11:35 AM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am contacting you regarding a recent article in American Whitewater concerning the running and closure of the Upper Chattooga. This may seem odd, but as a whitewater paddler, avid hunter, and fisherman for over 35 years I would like to commend you for keeping this area CLOSED to boating. Thirty-five years ago I would have taken exception to the

closure of a river, but now with the huge influx of paddlers (with a skateboard mentality) which brings with it the destruction of wilderness areas like this, I whole heartedly support keeping areas like this closed. There are very few rivers that I paddle on or fish that the rocks are not color coded from the last person who paddled by, some sort of garbage left behind, or a pissed off local person who was treated poorly by a paddler.

Respectfully,

Cole Lee

**flyntf@aol.com**

**01/18/2007 06:10 PM**

To whom it may concern:

I understand that there is a move afoot to open access to our secluded river to boaters in the future. Having seen what such access can bring with it, I strongly oppose such a change. This upper part of the river is PRISTINE and it should be allowed to stay that way. Those carrying boats and equipment in to the area would destroy the riverbanks and the trails, some miles long. We need to preserve the natural environment in the is area. Access has never been allowed before and those who hike this are are so careful to never disturb the surroundings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Fredericka M Flynt  
2216 Cumming Road  
Augusta, GA 30904

**"Holmes, Kenneth" <ken@theholmescompany.com>**

**01/19/2007 10:23 AM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I would like to add my thoughts and comments about the Upper Chattooga access and management. First, I must confess to being a boater and a member of AW. Also, I was a member of the "expert panel" of boaters who were lucky to be chosen to legally paddle the river early January 2007. I grew up in Seneca, SC and have enjoyed the Chattooga area all my life.

Let me start by saying that as everyone else agrees the Upper Chattooga is a unique and beautiful area of wilderness. When I have been there, either by boat or hiking, I have immensely enjoyed it. I can't imagine anyone who has experienced this area wanting anything to happen that might jeopardize its beauty.

I believe that if paddling was to be allowed there will be a natural division of boaters and anglers. Water levels where boaters will be likely to go are levels where fishermen are less likely to go. This does not mean an exclusive division, but there are few days when this reach of the river has adequate flow to boat, and those days are days when I believe

there will be less than typical fishing occurring. A member of the angler panel went so far as to say that he would not want to take people unfamiliar with the Chattooga fishing at the high flows for safety reasons, and that there would be “no reason” to go into areas such as the Rock Gorge at those levels. And certainly the boaters agreed that the lower water levels would not be good for boating.

If the ban were lifted, I think that in the first year or so there would be more use (levels permitting) of the river by boaters, but after the initial euphoria of being allowed to legally boat the river wears off, there will be small usage. First, there are few boaters capable of paddling this stretch. Second, there is a lot of “flatwater” which turns some boaters off. Third, some regions, especially the Chattooga Cliffs area, requires much effort to get to and paddle, and I feel that once someone has done this stretch and seen it, they are less likely to go back due to the effort involved. Myself, I see maybe going once or twice more over the next five years. Certainly one can look at the access and the scheduled releases of water for boating on the Tallulah as an example. At first, there had to be a limit on the boaters allowed because there were so many that wanted to go. Now, a few years later, it is not needed as the “newness” has worn off and the number of boaters is way down.

I also want to mention the issue of solitude. I agree with anglers, hikers, and others who say that if they were to see kayakers on the river that this would lower their enjoyment of the day. I understand completely. Part of my enjoyment in paddling remote stretches of water is the solitude. I have traveled to other states and even other countries to get the experience of kayaking rivers and never seeing anyone but my paddling partners. I think than many outdoor enthusiasts seek the refuge of aloneness in the woods, even though often it is an illusion as you are only a mile or so away from “civilization”. My point is: what is the difference between a group of 3 kayakers who come upon some fisherman or hikers and a group of 2 fisherman who watch 3 kayakers go by on the river? Each group has had their solitude lowered for a few minutes. Should there be stretches of river where hikers and fishing is not allowed so that kayakers can enjoy the solitude? The fact is that we all love the woods and solitude and all wish to have it to ourselves for the day. It doesn't always work out that way. The current ban has allowed some users to enjoy the Upper Chattooga and others are not allowed. To pick and choose among the user groups just seems unfair. We all love the river equally, but just enjoy it in different ways.

As far as safety and trash, I think that on the whole all users are equal. There are bad apples in every group which can give that group a bad name. But I believe that 95% of every group, hikers, anglers, boaters, and others are safe and good stewards of the Chattooga area. The argument that one group is less safe or more likely to leave trash or ruin the wilderness is unfounded in my opinion. All my boating friends are very safety conscience and never leave trash or do other things to harm nature. During the boating study a few weeks ago, we were able to either run the rapids successfully or portage along rocks on the banks without needing a trail or even getting into the woods.

So in essence it comes down to the fact that we all want access to the whole river, but currently one group is denied a part of it. To me that is unfair. In the spirit is cooperation,

my opinion is that a decision by the Forest Service to allow boating at the specific higher water levels, such as when the 76 gauge reads above 2 feet, is a good compromise. We all know that the Chattooga most often runs below that level. Most of the time anglers, hikers, and others would know that there will be no boaters on the river. At higher water, there would be the possibility of boaters. I also believe that the vast majority of boaters would agree to keep the stretch of the river between "licklog" and the 28 bridge closed to boating as it has far less value to boaters and apparently is very high on the anglers list of places to go. While I know that AW appears to be opposed to compromise, there are many of us boaters that are not.

Please take my comments for what they are worth; coming from a boater not opposed to compromise, yet a person who is asking for boater access. The Chattooga area is managed by the government for all citizens, and to not include one group makes no sense. Boaters are people and taxpayers too.

Good luck in your process of making a decision. I know that this will be hard and that whatever the Forest Service decides, there will be folks who think you are wrong. It is an unenviable position to say the least. Thanks for allowing me to have my say.

Ken Holmes  
Chapin, SC

**"Bill and Marjorie George"**  
**01/19/2007 05:01 PM**

I am a Whitewater Paddler, Fly Fisher, Hiker and Camper,

I love the Chattooga and strongly support Paddling only below the 28 Bridge. This upper section of the river is absolutely sacred to me. All it takes is watching the rocks change colors (skid marks from passing boats) to give you a small picture of how the river would be changed with the presence of paddlers on the river. There is plenty of water below the Bridge for me and everyone else to enjoy!

Bill George  
206 Walter Street  
Easley, SC 29642

**"s&a" <sbartus1@midsouth.rr.com>**  
**01/20/2007 02:57 PM**

Dear Sir,

Please protect the serenity and deep-forest experience of the upper Chattooga River. We have enjoyed numerous hikes along the water's edge and fishing from the middle of the river. Both these activities would be altered by the inevitable noise and traffic that would accompany water craft. The pristine quiet from having no one around would be eliminated, as would be the sense of being in the middle of a wild, untamed wood. Please continue to allow boating on the other sections of the Chattooga and leave this small part unencumbered by those of us who are not boaters but do enjoy the beauty, the wild and the clear water of this section of the river.

Thank you  
Scott Bartusch  
Highlands, NC

**"Broemel, W. Davidson" <dbroemel@burr.com>  
01/23/2007 02:03 PM**

i have been kayaking since the 70s and have seen more paddling opportunities materialize on the tallulah, cheoah pigeon, and other rivers. the only exception has been the wild and scenic chattooga upper portions. i would love to run all or part of the upper chattooga before i quit, and would appreciate the same access that fisherman, hunters birdwatchers, hikers nad others now have on the river.

**"jeff macklin" <jmac221@gmail.com>  
01/24/2007 10:45 AM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,  
Paddling belongs on the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River.

In reading user comments at:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r8...705.pdf>

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/forest/projects/E\\_mails\\_july\\_dec\\_2006.pdf](http://www.fs.fed.us/r8/fms/forest/projects/E_mails_july_dec_2006.pdf)

it is apparent that many have preconceived notions and are ill informed about the nature of whitewater kayaking and canoeing.

Paddlers, fishermen, hikers can use this area in harmony.

All wilderness users have a right (per the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act) to use the Upper Chattooga.

Please stop the user discrimination against kayakers and canoeist.

Please communicate pertinent information/questions on this subject to me so that I can forward to our Pittsburgh Area membership of over 400 families.

Respectfully,  
Jeff Macklin

**"ben huneycutt" <bshuneycutt@hotmail.com>  
01/24/2007 04:08 PM**

mr. cleeves:

I am a private kayaker from lexington, kentucky. i am also a physician and father of 3 children. i hope to one day take my kids down the chatooga river and would take great pride in one day being able to show them the upper section, assuming that they have the skills to do so. To neglect their rights as US citizens by denying their access to such a wonderful place would be criminal. I truly believe that our nation is great because of our right to vote, our work ethic, and our national parks. please don't deny my family access to this marvelous resource.

**"Jamie Burkitt" <jburkitt@hemlocklandscapes.net>**  
**01/25/2007 07:46 AM**

Dr. Mr. Cleeves,

I was surprised and disappointed to learn of the ban on paddlers on the Chattooga River. As a relatively new and *avid* boater of 3 years, I would very much like to voice my opinion on this subject. Although I have not had the opportunity to paddle this body of water as of yet, I feel strongly that all rivers are for EVERYONE'S enjoyment, not simply a select few. It is in all of our best interest to respect the rights of others and to understand that we all share common areas for pleasure. We must ensure that the Chattooga can be ENJOYED and appreciated by paddlers, hikers, and picnic'ers.

Please work to keep paddling on the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,  
Jamie Burkitt

**"David Hill" <pkohehs@earthlink.net>**  
**01/25/2007 09:40 AM**

John,

It is obvious that 2 sides to the story are being actively discussed regarding who should have access to this beautiful area. While I have not personally been there, I have seen pictures and read about this special place.

We all lead lives that require us to take a "time out" to recharge our batteries and provide some solitude. For some this is achieved by hiking, fishing, or some other activity. For me this activity of choice is paddling. I enjoy flatwater, whitewater and ocean kayaking. Paddling provides me an opportunity where I can see the world from a different point of view; whether it's sitting in a river eddy, floating on ocean swells watching dolphins, or paddling a lake. All of these could not be achieved without a hand powered boat.

Most paddlers find local spots to enjoy their recreation, and I highly doubt that throngs of paddlers will decent on the Upper Chattooga to paddle it. Besides, higher flows will be required for kayakers that may not coincide with fishermen. However if the two parties are experiencing the river at the same time, most paddlers are conscience of fishermen and polite during interaction. I have been in this situation many times on trout streams and always try to respect others' experience. We can all live together and share the resources.

Most paddlers are always cleaning up the river as we paddle, whether its bait containers, general trash or whatever; we are stewards to the river. I'm sure that "most" fishermen are the same. Paddlers for the most part are environmentally active and try to limit our impact on the planet not just during our time on the water. We regularly participate in river cleanups, outreach projects, resource conservation, etc. because that how we are. We love the planet and cherish the special places so that others will have an opportunity to do the same.

Just consider our point of view as we do of others, and let's share this special resource TOGETHER. Thanks for your time.

David Hill  
Director EH&S  
Park-Ohio

**pat x <rkyrvr1@yahoo.com>**  
**01/25/2007 11:01 AM**

Good morning,

I just want to ask that you actively work to permit kayaking on the Upper Chattooga river. As a citizen of this great land, I believe that the National Forests and other national assets belong to all citizens and should not be held only for the use of specific groups. I am sure that a compromise can be worked out that would satisfy the needs of boaters and fishermen alike.

Thank You ,  
Patrick D. Guzowski

**Timskrbelieve@aol.com**  
**01/26/2007 11:50 PM**

To Whom it may concern.

I am a kayaker with 25 years experience paddling the Chattooga. I simply do not understand the issues of conflict between boaters and fisherman above Hwy 28.

There will be very few days with high water for paddlers and good fishing conditions.

I think that access should be allowed to kayakers.

Thank you

Tim Ray  
170 Hidden Valley Drive  
Montevallo, AL 35115

**"alakayaker@netzero.net" <alakayaker@netzero.net>**  
**01/28/2007 04:06 PM**

Mr. Cleaves, I am writing you to encourage you to recommend that the illegal boating ban be removed from the upper chattooga river. This ban should have never been put in place by the USFS because it restricts access to one specific group of people which is wrong. National Forests and Parks and other Government lands should never deny any citizens from access or use of them unless it is detrimental to the land and paddling is clearly not nor is there any proof that it would be. Please remove this ban and thank you for your time.

Chris Voegele  
Fayette,Al 35555

**"Lea Richmond" <lrjr@alltel.net>  
01/29/2007 10:02 AM**

Boaters are distorting the issue. They are not excluded from the river above the 28 hgwy bridge. Their boats are. As defined in the dictionary boats are a vehicle. If they are given access what vehicle is next? I am 84 years old and can still get up into the restricted area and love it. What vehicle will I be able to use in a few years? I hope none. If boats are allowed where will this stop?

Lea Richmond MD

**Mark Musselwhite" <markmusselwhite@hooverprecision.com>  
01/30/2007 11:29 PM**

I am writing to let you know that I am in favor of the current zoning of the upper Chattooga. This happens to be the place where I caught and released my first trout – 10" rainbow. Please do not allow this sacred place to be desecrated by lifting the boating ban. The fight for access to a restricted portion of a North Georgia river is only the 'beginning.' Before long, it will be proposed that we no longer allow prayer in the public school system and the Ten Commandments will be stripped from our courthouses. Someone must care...

Best,

Mark Musselwhite

**"Jonathan Janoski" <jej15@uakron.edu>  
01/31/2007 09:34 AM**

Dear John Cleaves,

I am an avid whitewater kayaker, and have fished all of my life. I have paddled on chattooga sections III and IV, and camped near bull sluice. These sections of river are beautiful, and it is a shame that the upper stretches of the river are off-limits to kayakers. This issue has been framed as a debate between fishermen/birdwatchers and kayakers, unwilling to share this wonderful

resource. From the kayakers perspective it seems as though exclusive rights have been granted to fishermen and birdwatchers.

On rivers across the country, fisherman, kayakers, and other outdoor enthusiasts enjoy many of the same areas with little or no conflict. This does not have to be an either-or scenario. This publicly owned stretch of river should be open to the PUBLIC.

If kayakers have to hike to put-in and take-out to reduce impact, that's fine. There are several stretches across the country where this is the norm. The impact of fisherman is likely much more significant than that of kayakers.

Please allow kayakers to enjoy this stretch of river,

Jonathan Janoski

**"Michael Tholen" <michael.tholen@cbeyond.net>  
02/01/2007 09:39 AM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I have been paddling the Chattooga for over 7 years, and spent two full seasons on the river as a guide, trip leader and safety boater. Opening up the headwaters of this beautiful river needs to be done as quickly as possible. We have been denied boater access to this river for too long. When the water is high enough for boaters to be on, it is not safe or feasible for other recreational users to access the river. With elevated water levels, there is no way that an angler would be out fishing, or for hikers to be in the river corridor. The purpose of the National Forest Service is to provide access to the backcountry to ALL U.S. citizens, not to a select few. I would greatly appreciate your consideration in this matter. As boaters, we are often stewards of the river, and will pick up trash or make sure that the river is kept in its natural state, everyone benefits from this attitude.

Sincerely,

Michael Tholen  
*Customer Solutions Advisor*

**mbilz@ccwa1.com  
02/01/2007 10:24 AM**

Mr Cleeves,

My name is Matt Bilz. I am 26 years old and I live and work just south of Atlanta. My love in life is my family and enjoying the outdoors. I have been kayaking now for 5 years and I have to admit it's somewhat addictive. There aren't many sports that you can enjoy in such pristine beauty while doing them.

One of the most beautiful locations that I have ever seen is the upper section of the Chattooga river (headwaters). This as you know is illegal to navigate by boat so I had to enjoy it from the banks. I know that you have a big part in deciding on whether we will ever be able to kayak or canoe this section of the river and I among many others would love for you and your constituents to be fair to all on your decisions.

Thank you for your time. Have a great day.

Matthew R Bilz  
Water Distribution Coordinator  
Clayton County Water Authority  
154\*21\*2755

**Bryant Smith <bryantsmith24@yahoo.com>**  
**02/01/2007 01:33 PM**

Dear Sirs or Madams:

I am writing to support the opening of the Upper Chattooga to private boating, for three reasons:

1.) It is fundamentally unfair to restrict one type of recreational activity in favor of another on public land, unless some threat to public health or safety is clearly demonstrated (such as allowing motorized off-road vehicles on hiking trails.) No evidence exists to show that canoes or kayaks pose any safety threat to persons hiking or fishing the river. Someone boating occasionally having to go around or past someone fishing or the person fishing having to occasionally delay a cast for a few seconds while a boater goes by is a small inconvenience, and nothing more.

2.) There is no credible evidence to demonstrate that either whitewater boaters, hikers or persons fishing has any greater impact on the river environment. Sadly, some persons in all of these groups have been know to act irresponsibly on occasion, and leave litter behind them. To argue that participants in one of these activities are any more guilty of this than the others is useless name calling. All persons using public land have a duty to all of their fellow citizens to do so responsibly, and to challenge other users (regardless of their particular activity) to do likewise.

3.) In practical terms, it is very clear that the opportunities for conflicts over use of this section of the river will be minimal, for 2 reasons:

a.) There will be relatively few boaters on this section, due to its being a very difficult, "experts only" class IV-V run, and nobody is proposing opening it to commercial rafting.

b.) During the times when the water level is high enough to make the river practically and/or desirably boatable, the fising conditions are very poor.

It is very clear from all the discussion and email posts that the whitewater boaters, hikers and fisherman may share great love for rivers, they have very little love for each other. This is truly sad, since generally speaking all of our interests run in the same direction. Although we might look and talk rather differently, especially when engaged in our respective sports, our similarities as specialized and highly skilled outdoor sports enthusiasts far outweigh our differences. Our shared desire to enjoy and preserve our wild

river resources, albeit in our different ways, should create at least a little better regard for each other among us.

Bryant Smith  
Stone Mountain, GA

**"Lawrence Austin" <laustinsr@hotmail.com>**  
**02/01/2007 02:27 PM**

Dear John, As a member of a hiking group, it concerns me to have watercraft on the Chattooga up stream from NC28. It would be a definite detriment to the whole area. I have been coming to Highlands for 73 years and spend 5 months a year now. I hike in this area quite often. It would be ashamed to let boaters invade this area. It would creat all sorts of problems--- noise, parking, trash, and probably disturb the wildlife. I so enjo hikes through the woods and along the river. Please see if you can help this assault from happening. Thank you, Elizabeth Austin. Highlands and Savannah , Ga

**Sean Davis <sdavis@o-publishing.com>**  
**02/01/2007 05:49 PM**

Mr. John Cleeves,

It was with great pleasure that I read about the first legal descent in some 30 years of the Upper Chattooga river. Americas Wild and Scenic Rivers should be an open resource for boaters, hikers, and fishermen alike. As a professional guide on the Cache La Poudre, the only Wild and Scenic river in Colorado, I have seen first hand how many different user groups can peacefully co-exist on the same river. I have also seen how little impact rafts, kayaks and canoes have on the river environment. The majority of impact that is seen in many wilderness areas is caused by careless hikers and campers who bring guns and booze and then leave trash and destruction behind them. The paddling community is well known for its adherence to the principles of leave no trace. Further because whitewater paddle sports require expensive specialized gear and training those who choose to paddle the class IV-V rapids of the Upper Chattooga will generally be very capable and aware stewards of the area.

I urge you to fully open the entire Chattooga to recreational kayaking, canoeing and rafting.

Respectfully,

Sean Davis

**MchDrn@aol.com**  
**02/01/2007 06:56 PM**

Hello Mr. Cleeves,

I am a kayaker and I know the impact that we have on an environment and a forest service road. I feel that some portion of a wild and scenic river should be left without big loudly colored boats coming down it and people getting out of their boats.. walking all over the delicate ecosystem to scout and/or portage rapids. Also, the forest service roads in those areas would get flooded with an increase of traffic, which adds wear and tear to the roads. If any thing only allow paddling the upper sections on a handful of days in the spring and summer. I know I am beating a dead horse, but I wanted to send the forest service my support as an environmentalist and an avid whitewater boater (especially on the Chattooga)

Thank you,  
Michael Dorn  
Seneca, SC

**"Lee Bardin" <leeburfw@comcast.net>  
02/01/2007 07:43 PM**

Dear Sir,

I understand that you are a public official with the responsibility to protect our resources and our interests.

My two sons (24 & 23) my daughter (19 - Rutgers U) and I are all trained, experienced kayakers, as well as State of Maine registered professional white water guides.

We are members of American Whitewater and we are all interested in our right to access wild scenic whitewater rivers.

Please consider our devotion to these majestic resources and the mutual benefits we bring to these rivers and we receive from them. We as a community of river running enthusiasts watch over our rivers and protect them as well as enjoy them during our visits.

Please help us protect and enjoy the Chattooga forever!

Respectfully,

Lee Bardin

**"Phyllis Gricus" [Phyllis@LandscapeDesignStudio.com](mailto:Phyllis@LandscapeDesignStudio.com)**

Writing with my request for your support of allowing paddling on the wild and scenic Chattooga River.

Please vote to banish the ban.

Phyllis Gricus  
Landscape Design Studio

**David Zebuhr <dzebuhr@yahoo.com>  
02/02/2007 08:47 AM**

The team of adventurers from American Whitewater clearly proved, Jan. 6, 2007, that this river is indeed navigable. Please do what you can to lift the ban on use of this wonderful recreational resource.

Thanks,  
David M. Zebuhr  
Cranbury NJ

**"John W. Keefe, IV" [john\\_keefe@ksg08.harvard.edu](mailto:john_keefe@ksg08.harvard.edu)**

Dear Sir,

I am well aware of the challenges facing the U.S. Forest Service in their effort to guarantee stewardship and conservation of our national forests. One such challenge, however, should not be enforcing a paddling ban on the headwaters of the wild and scenic Chattooga River. As a concerned kayaking enthusiast, I urge you to remove this paddle sport prohibition, and to reinstate our right as American citizens to enjoy all of the opportunities that our well-managed national forests hold for us. Thank you for your time and your service.

Best regards,

John W. Keefe, IV  
Master in Public Policy Candidate  
John F. Kennedy School of Government  
Harvard University

**"John M. Shea" <[jshea@ece.ufl.edu](mailto:jshea@ece.ufl.edu)>  
02/02/2007 01:29 PM**

Dear Mr. Cleeves,

I am writing to encourage you to follow up on the recent portion of the user capacity study in which a group of kayakers was allowed to paddle Sections 00, 0, and 1 of the Chattooga river. Based on the successful trip, I believe that there continues to be no evidence for the FS to block kayakers from paddling these sections when there is adequate water. The trips were conducted safely and I do not believe that they interfered with the other users of the river.

The ban on paddling is arbitrary and unjustified, as indicated by the Chief of the Forest Service's statement, "The Regional Forester does not provide an adequate basis for continuing the ban on boating above Highway 28." This study has only confirmed that there is no basis for the ban.

I would like to conclude by indicating that I will not stand to benefit in any way from changing the ban on boating. I am a former kayaker but have given up the sport since moving to Florida 8 years ago. I am writing only in the interest of fairness and equal access to one of the Southeast's prize natural areas.

Please do not hesitate to contact me via email or phone at 352.219.3401 if I can be of any further assistance in your resolving this issue.

Best regards,

John Shea

**"Matt Henry" <mhenry@pacific.edu>**

**02/02/2007 07:46 PM**

I have just read the American White Water article on the exploratory descent of the upper Chattooga. I think it is great that paddlers are getting to experience this run again. It is my strong opinion as a White Water Guide and coordinator of a University outdoor program that this stretch of river should be opened to paddling. Thank you.

Matt Henry  
Coordinator Outdoor Recreation  
University of the Pacific  
Stockton, CA

**Todd Johnson <solsticeconstruction@yahoo.com>**

**02/04/2007 10:35 PM**

Dear Sir,

I am sending this email to register my support in the efforts by American Whitewater to remove the boating ban on the headwaters of the Chattooga River. Boaters and anglers are coexisting on wild and scenic rivers across the country, I believe we will be able to share the the Chattooga above hwy 28 as well. The boating ban on the Chattooga is inconsistent with the management of every other wild and scenic river in the US. Whitewater boaters are very good stewards of river corridors. We practice leave no trace wilderness ethics and often pack out trash left by others. Thankyou for your consideration.

Todd Johnson  
Asheville, NC

**Kenn Rymdeko <kennrymdeko@yahoo.com>**

**02/05/2007 10:20 AM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I recently discovered through the American Whitewater organization that the USFS has neglected to reverse the illegal decision to ban boaters on the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River.

As a white water boater, outdoor enthusiast and tax payer, I feel it the responsibility of the USFS to take action to correct this situation. Many areas across the United States have greatly benefitted from whitewater boating activities in financial ways. Several towns in Pennsylvania alone, my home state, rely solely on whitewater boating as a means to their existence. Their tourism has increased as well from day hikers who enjoy watching the boaters go through the rapids. I would hope the towns in the surrounding area of the Chattooga would desire these benefits as well.

Please do what you can to uphold the courts' decision to reverse this ban.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Kenn Rymdeko  
Pennsylvania Whitewater Boater

**"Wingfield, Walter" <Walter.Wingfield@sablaw.com>**

Dear Mr. Cleaves,

I am writing in support of continuation of the boating ban on the portion of the Chattooga River north of Highway 28. I am an avid hiker and nature lover and enjoy pristine wilderness areas. There are too few such areas today in our country. As I understand it, one of the purposes of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act is to preserve these areas around waterways for future generations of Americans. I also understand that the upper Chattooga River, which passes through the Ellicott Rock Wilderness Area, is one of the few wild and scenic rivers where the wilderness experience cannot be disturbed by activities such as boating and kayaking.

Boating would seriously disrupt the solitude that a wilderness area and a wild and scenic river provides for hikers, backpackers, fishermen and bird watchers. We unfortunately know from past experience that such boating activities result in noise, trash and damage to the river bank, particularly at river entry points, causing siltation and erosion. Also, boat access and the need for access to perform rescues will no doubt require more roads in the area. The upper river area has low water levels most of the year and is filled with rocks and fallen trees that cannot be moved, presenting greater than normal risks of injury to boaters.

The upper Chattooga is a special place for solitude -- a place to enjoy nature as it was created and not as man has made it over. Please preserve this special place for present and future generations by continuing the boating ban north of the Highway 28 bridge.

Sincerely yours,

Walter H. Wingfield

3660 Hickory Knut Gap Rd.

P.O. Box 1888  
Highlands, NC 28741

**"christineboyter" [christineboyter@bellsouth.net](mailto:christineboyter@bellsouth.net)**

Paddling belongs on the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River  
===== ALL Of It=====

Thank you  
T. Boyter

**"Mark Gollwitzer" [Mark.Gollwitzer@gyltec.edu](mailto:Mark.Gollwitzer@gyltec.edu)**

My wife and I are avid kayakers and the Chattooga River is our favorite river by far. We are interested in paddling the upper sections. We don't normally paddle section II unless there is over 2 feet so I don't imagine we would be up there often even when it becomes legal. As a child I went camping up there and would like to see it again.

As a kayaker I comment often on the fact that boaters don't carry to much down to the river whereas people fishing often carry supplies down to the river and leave it for us all to see.

I would say that if you put me any ware on the river and in minutes I will find a blue worm container.

I don't have a problem with fishing my wife and I try to fish often. But if we carry it in we carry it out.

**"Randy Estes" <[randyestes@gmail.com](mailto:randyestes@gmail.com)>  
02/08/2007 02:09 AM**

Please do whatever you can to open up the first section of the Chattooga river. Having paddled the Chattooga many times, my friends and I would love a chance to enjoy the full beauty of this river.

Randy Estes

**"SMITH, JOSH" <[SMITHJO@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:SMITHJO@mailbox.sc.edu)>  
02/08/2007 01:18 PM**

Mr. Cleaves:

Concluding the recent posting concerning the Chattooga Headwaters (on the American Whitewater website) was a call for public comment on the current situation, and an instruction that I may direct these comments to you. As an initial manner, I recently finished writing a paper for both my law school graduation requirement and submission to the Southeastern Environmental Law Journal. So for the last five to six months I have immersed myself in all the applicable legal aspects of the controversy, as well as many policy, scientific, special interests, and resource management resources in order to ascertain a few things. First, I sought to explain the factual background, prior attempts to open the section, etc. Following this foundational establishment I endeavored to explain why the USFS has banned hand powered floating on the Headwaters since the designation of the river under The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1974, and figure out the reasons for continuation of the ban. Specifically whether there were any valid reasons for the past, present and/or future ban and if the management approach comported with

the applicable law. Ultimately I came to the conclusion that the factual and scientific reasons were scant to say the least. More importantly, these factors, among others, attributed to my determination that the ban (past and present) does not comply with numerous statutory provisions which govern management of wilderness areas, national parks, and designated rivers. As I am sure you are aware (because AW has made the similar assertions both prior to and during the recent litigation), the main focus pointed to violations of The National Environmental Policy Act, The Wilderness Act, The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, National Forest Service Management Act, and the APA. I know that Gloria Manning ordered the use capacity study to allow the USFS to conduct an adequate assessment of the impacts introduction of boaters into the area would have. And I am aware that the District Court for Northern GA dismissed the recent action brought by AW et al. alleging the statutory violations noted. However I urge you to consider two things.

First, keeping with the legal aspect of the manner, the District Court dismissed the action on standing grounds, and the USFS was saved by AW's overwhelming restraint at litigating the issue until recently--thus triggering a bar on the action via the statute of limitations. These things are essential procedures and safeguards in the law utilized for an array of purposes, yet the fact remains that in ruling as such the District Court did not deal with the statutory issues presented. I am not asserting the court's ruling was incorrect in any way. The reasoning and factual basis were sound legal reasoning. However, you are not bound by such formalistic constraints and I believe you have a duty to comply with the applicable law. In order for the USFS to fulfill its duties to Congress, the citizens, and the areas under its control, it must adhere to the rules, powers, etc mandated. The management of a designated wild and scenic river must promote the ORVs for which the river was designated (WSRA Sec. 10(a)) and the fact is clear that the Headwaters were designated mainly for the area's whitewater opportunities. The Senate Report by a designation committee explicitly states that the main, if not only usage of many stretches of the Headwaters is whitewater paddling. The previous observation concerning only one duty under the WSRA is among many which all point to noncompliance with other statutorily proscribed duties. When I took the mandated duties and applied them to the facts; the outcome was quit negative for the USFS. The point I want to make here is twofold. The USFS has predominately acted in ordinance with the prevailing notions of what is proper resource management at any respective point in time. The Headwaters should follow this trend, and yet it has diverged greatly from it for over thirty years. Secondly, following the completion of the study process and issuance of the agency's final decision, the door for litigation swings wide open. If the decision is not based upon the requisite level of scientific and factual data, does not take in the proper considerations, fails to follow any required procedure, etc. AW and other interested parties no longer face a standing barrier.

The second and final point I want to address mainly concerns the facts, specifically as to the user groups most interested in the outcome of this controversy. After extensive research, analysis, and so on, the inevitable conclusion that I came to was that trout fishermen's interests have taken precedent over those of the whitewater community. I am fully aware that whitewater paddling dominates the lower stretches of the river, namely Sections III and IV. I spent my undergraduate years at Clemson, and paddled Sec. IV at least of once a week. I love the Chattooga, and highly value the beauty of the river corridor. The absolute last thing I wish to see is lax management of the resource that causes the degradation of such a wonderful area. With this said, I plead for you to logically consider the bare facts, which lead to a finding that introducing paddlers into the Headwaters will have little to no effect on the ecosystem of the area or the other user groups. Specifically, the alleged trout fisherman v. whitewater boaters conflict has been overstated and in practice would lead to very little actual conflict. When you take into consideration the river flow data provided by the USGS (and contained in USFS Director's previous decision) and couple it with when fisherman and boaters respectively would most likely use the river; there are very few days when they would even be there at the same time. Boaters favor markedly higher flows than

fisherman. For dedicated boaters such as myself, cold and other weather factors are a not much of an issue if the river is flowing right. The USFS reports, along with all the other resource materials I examined, stated that fishermen preferred much different conditions. All this comes down to the obvious factual inference that boaters and fishermen will not encounter one another often at all. When these two groups do in fact interact with one another, there is no reason to believe that it will be a negative occurrence. Trout fishermen are a normal occurrence on many area rivers, and those boaters likely to paddle the section have much experience with such instances. Leave it up to maturity, respect for other users, and mutual affinity for the scarce resource to deal with these issues. Do not unjustifiably oust one group in favor of another. Besides the somewhat adolescent war cry of unfairness, this goes back to violating the law. I assure you that no where in any statute does it allow user group preference save an extremely specific showing of the areas compatibility with one use and not with another. Thus, fishing, paddling, hiking, etc. are to be treated at equal and the USFS need do so.

Please open the Headwaters to private boater usage with the most minimally necessary restrictions. I recognize and encourage regulations that are needed to preserve and ensure the endurance of the area, but nothing more is needed. Banning boaters is an overt, unnecessary, and illegal management practice. You and the other decision makers have the ability to remedy this, and I urge you to do so with your decision. Do not let this be another resource management issue decided by the courts, but let your agency make the right call. The USFS has greater, more detailed, expert knowledge of resource management that a court lacks, and therefore is the most adequately equipped to ensure the necessary measures are taken to allow access while preserving the area.

Cordially,

Joseph Smith

**"Matt Jordan" <mattmces@alltel.net>  
02/09/2007 12:18 PM**

Hello Mr. Cleaves,

I think I have sent in my opinions before, but I frequently get error messages when I try to contact you through the Forest Service website.

I heard that a group of kayakers made a successful decent of the upper Chattooga. And no anglers were hurt in the process? What else needs to be determined?

I hope that you can come up a with a new user plan that doesn't exclude the lowest impact users of this beautiful area.

Thanks for your time,  
Matt Jordan  
Mill Creek Environmental Services, Inc

**"Heather Robinson" <hrobinson@madison.k12.ga.us>  
02/09/2007 01:08 PM**

Whitewater boating should be allowed on the Chattooga headwaters. The ban is illegal and favors one form of recreation over others. Fishing and boating aren't incompatible. Just ask all of the fishermen on section IV. Thx. Joe Moore.

**"Beau Trivers" <beautrivers@bellsouth.net>  
02/11/2007 03:30 PM**

Mr. Cleeves,

I am a long time resident of Atlanta Georgia (36 of my 40 years.) I would like to voice a preference for opening the Upper Chattooga to recreational boating.

The Chattooga river gorge is an amazing watershed (I've paddled sections I – IV during my 15 years as a boater / fly fisherman.) I've boated and fished in many parts of our country and I know from these travels that each day on the Chattooga offers a national treasure of a wilderness experience. Citizens of our state and other individuals who travel long distances to experience this wonderful area should have the option to enjoy it by whitewater craft.

Land use is a complicated issue and it seems our planet is shrinking by the minute on some days. Certainly I've seen a tremendous change to the Atlanta area in the last 4 decades. I appreciate the need to conserve and to ensure that we have a balanced policy. It is my perspective that limiting the use of the Upper Chattooga from recreational boating should be reconsidered. I look forward to a more accommodating policy in the future.

Thank you.

Beau Trivers

**"jeff" <info@rmselectricalcontractors.com>  
02/12/2007 10:47 AM**

Hi John;

I'm just voicing my support as a kayaker on the issue of reinstating paddling on the Chattooga River.

We are a bunch to be trusted not to spoil the wilderness and 99% of the time no one would even know paddlers are using the river ie graffiti, trash, destruction of habitat.

Thank You for your time.  
Jeff Roberts

**Evan Fleetwood <ewf318@yahoo.com>  
02/12/2007 01:12 PM**

Hello,

My name is Evan Fleetwood and I am a senior at North Georgia College and State University majoring in political science. I have to write a policy analysis on any subject, and I choose the boating ban on the

Chattooga. I have looked at all the data on your website and the American White water website but can not find the cause for the ban. So if you could point me towards any additional information it would be appreciated. I'm trying to get an unbiased view of the issue, and your input would be most helpful.

Thank you

Evan Fleetwood