From: Jason Harris
Reply To: kayak2live@yahoo.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chatooga River Project
Date: 08/15/2008 10:33 PM

U.S. Forest Service

Chattooga River Project

4931 Broad River Road

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comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

15 AUG 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest ,

My name is Jason Harris, I'm 37 years of age, a certified teacher and father. I am sending this letter because I truly care about the Chatooga River. I learned to kayak on the Chatooga in 1994 and had a near death experience on it in 1996. I was fortunate enough to work for a canoe outfitter in Florida whose owner always took his managers on an end of the year trip to the Chatooga for some fun on the river. Those trips on the river were a catalyst that propelled myself and two other friends into the wonderful world of white-water boating. In fact, all of us (six) are reuniting this September for a kayaking trip to North GA and TN. The trips that I took with my friends have remained a constant in my life since they started. No matter what, I always knew that the river would be there. We often spoke of what was above Section One and what it would be like to kayak it.

I would like to think that one day I will be able to run the Upper Chatooga and to able to show my son the joys of a truly wild and scenic river. I understand that there are limited resources available to a population that

is always increasing and that demands on those resources will take their toll. As an avid outdoorsman who enjoys hunting, fishing, hiking and other sports I beleive that resources can be managed to allow all users a chance to enjoy a particular resource.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River . I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. Both treat me and my community of river enthusiasts unfairly and your proposal would not meet my interests. Please consider the following concerns I have regarding this issue:

- The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling on the Chattooga and has found *none*. It is time to open the river to boating.
- The EA is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. The AW appeal decision required a user capacity analysis. Where is it?
- No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries – without any justification.
- The EA and preferred alternative are not equitable or protective of the river because they consider boating to be the only management variable, while other larger more impactful uses are not seriously considered for limits.
- The USFS preferred alternative includes a total ban on 2/3 of the upper river, a ban on tributary boating, and allows only 0-6 days of limited boating on the remaining reach – while allowing all other wilderness conforming existing uses in unlimited numbers.. This is not equitable and not acceptable!
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits
- The EA lacks a full range of alternatives
- The EA is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money
- The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input
- The 450 CFS average daily flow trigger in the preferred alternative is a flawed measure that should be eliminated from any considerations. There is no way a paddler can know this number and will be an administrative burden for the agency.
- Paddlers prefer an alternative similar to Alternative 8 that 1) fully

allows boating on the entire Chattooga River below Grimshawes Bridge, 2) allows paddling on tributaries, 3) includes encounter standards based on a real user capacity analysis, 4) will *equitably* limit *total* use only when encounter standards are consistently exceeded, and 5) will do so using all available indirect measures first.

- The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
- All aspects of the "Outstanding Remarkable Values" of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

Thank you for considering these comments. Please consider conducting a real user capacity analysis and immediately allowing boating in the same numbers, places, and seasons that you allow existing users. Paddling should be allowed in a similar manner to your alternative number 8, except on the *entire* Upper Chattooga River and its tributaries.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Sincerely

Jason T. Harris

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