From:	Doug & Susan Sheeks
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Upper Chattooga River Opinion
Date:	08/16/2008 11:02 AM

Dear Sirs,
Please consider this opinion when deciding the fate of the upper Chattooga River above the Highway 28 bridge. Within the past 4 years, I have become a fly fisherman. I live in Greenville, SC and have enjoyed the limited number of trout waters in our state.

Unfortunately, these waters appear to be decreasing every year. The Middle Saluda will soon lose it's wild trout population due to run-off and insect infestation. The Chauga has become more difficult to successfully fish because of the increased footpath traffic. The lower Saluda seems to be losing a battle with non-native, aquatic grasses. This combined with the proposed boating on the upper Chattooga displays a disturbing trend in the available trout waters of South Carolina.

I am not opposed to sharing the Chattooga with boaters per se. I myself am a kayaker and sailing enthusiast. However, I am opposed to the increased "wear and tear" on the Chattooga's access points and more remote locations. More cars and trailers at the Burrell's Ford bridge means more human traffic. The paths become wider to accommodate kayakers, canoes, participants, and on-lookers. This leads to increased erosion and habitat decline. It also, unfortunately, means more break-ins, stolen property, and litter.

To me, the Chattooga is opportunity to hike in to remote locations and still have a "large" river fishing experience. Most of the cold water hike/fish locations in South Carolina are on small creeks and streams. Those great but different.

In conclusion, it would naive to think that boating on upper Chattooga would have a minimal effect on the river. Once allowed, more access would be deemed necessary. More access means more trashcans would be installed, more restrooms, more maintenance, and more cost to the taxpayers. Boating is already allowed on the more desirable sections of the river. Why do we need float the parts of the river that are less exciting from a boating standpoint? Do we really want recreational tubers in the remote "canyon" section? I think it would be a grave decision.

Please continue to regard the upper Chattooga as the natural gem that it is. We are already losing a significant portion of our cold water fisheries. We do not to be out of the business altogether.

Thank You,
Doug Sheeks
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