From:	Crane, Frank
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Upper Chattooga access
Date:	08/15/2008 10:18 AM

I wish to express my support for alternative number 8 of the options for future boating access to the upper Chattooga.

I frequent Overflow Creek, a branch of the same watershed. If you'll check out the stream banks along Overflow you'll find numerous spots of erosion on extremely steep streamside banks caused by fisher people, but I challenge you to find any impact from boating.

Overflow does not suffer from overuse by boaters, and the only conflict I've ever witnessed between boaters and fisherpersons is when a for-hire guide was standing with his client under the Overflow bridge practicing casting and complained to our party when we passed under the bridge. The sport is very self regulating depending on weather and water conditions which largely eliminate the two users groups from being there at the same time.

In spite of its world class status Overflow is not heavily used. This is because when it is running a host of other streams are also running, so the numbers on any one stream are mitigated. This would be even more so on the upper Chattooga sections because of the length of the trips and the large amount of flatwater between big rapids. That level of boater does not like flatwater and their boats are not designed for traveling efficiently across it, so many will not undertake the effort.

Please don't use my observation that many great creeks exist in the area to argue we don't need the Upper. The argument is not whether it is needed, but rather whether it is fair (not to mention legal) to exclude us. When I look at all the resources and money the USFS puts into fishing and supporting TU I am appalled that you are spending my tax dollars to resist my right to float a W & S river. Your programs of stocking exotic fish species, even at the peril of a native trout species and generally exploiting the ecosystem for the benefit of a few well heeled Orvis clad gated community dwelling politically connected users is insulting to other users of the resource. And the nerve of their argument that boaters will destroy the wilderness experience- when your organizations cooperate to fly helicopter missions up and down the river at treetop level for stocking is about the most ironic thing I've ever heard of.

My apologies, as you can tell I get a little emotional. I have friends in TU, friends in the USFS, and I'm a fisherperson myself. But as a boater I would never try to exclude other users from the streams I float, and I've never felt that the 10 seconds it takes me to float past a fisherperson is particularly degrading on his experience. It's not like he's going out there and not seeing another person all day- that doesn't exist even on the Upper. So what if I happen to have a boat under me? But the bottom line is that there simply won't be that many occurrences of such interaction since he'll be at home watching the super bowl on the day the river is up and I'm boating.

Please implement Option 8 and keep me posted on further discussions and action.

Sincerely,

Frank Crane
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