From: Michael Holmes
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga
Date: 08/18/2008 05:28 PM

August 18, 2008

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212

RE: Chattooga River Project

To Whom It May Concern:

I am an ardent promoter of the environment and someone who utilizes Sumter National Forest every year.

While I support your efforts and by extension what the Park Service stands for, I find it hard to accept the notion that such a noble organization may be playing into the hands of special interests.

The issues regarding the upper Chattooga River are frightening to me, not only because of the local and instant ramifications, but for the reckless precedent that would set were the ban to be upheld.

I therefore disagree with the arbitrary analysis used to justify continued closure of the upper stretches of the river.

The best way to promote a sustainable future for our national lands is to allow visitor use. I understand it is a tricky process of continued mitigation, but is nonetheless a vital one. By preventing people from connecting with such a splendid place as the entire Wild and Scenic Chattooga River, you consciously loose the long-term champions of the very environment you are charged to protect.

The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling on the upper Chattooga and has found none. Let's stop running in circles and end this senseless debate once and for all.

On behalf of posterity, rather than a handful of land owners wishing to hi-jack such a natural treasure, may you devote yourself to resolving this important issue.

Sincerely,
Michael Holmes

Michael Holmes
781 Rutledge Street
Spartanburg, SC 29302
(864) 415-9007