From:	Kevin Colburn
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga Comments
Date:	08/18/2008 05:54 PM

Dear Sumter National Forest,

While I was the lead drafter of comments for my employer, I would like you to consider the following personal comments.

I am an environmentalist. I am a Wilderness advocate. I am a river ecologist. I am a river advocate. I am a paddler. I believe that paddling should be allowed on the entire Chattooga River and its tributaries. I believe that paddling will have fewer impacts than other existing uses, and that uses should be limited equitably if needed. For me, there is no substitute for a specific river. All rivers, like all people (perhaps more so), are unique, powerful, and potentially life altering. For me sitting along a river, hiking along a river, fishing a river, or otherwise visiting a river is like looking at a beautiful and flavorful meal - paddling is like eating it. The only difference of course being that when I am done the meal is just as perfect for the next visitor. I simply do not connect with the Nature of rivers on a deep level unless I paddle them. Your ban on paddling prohibits me and others like me from connecting to a special place that was set aside by congress specifically for people to connect with in our boats.

Your position on the management of the Chattooga has done more to fracture, distract, confuse, and waste the resources of the river advocacy community than any government agency action I am aware of. You are not protecting the river, you are not protecting the experience of the river, you are not doing anyone any favors, and you are not doing the right thing. You have created a mess and have now decided to make it worse with renewed effort.

Please select a modified alternative 8 that allows floating on the ENTIRE chattooga river and its tributaries to the same degree, and held to the same standards, as other wilderness compliant uses are allowed.

Please start complying with the Wilderness Act and the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

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