From: ejuday@juno.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: RE: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 07/15/2008 12:31 AM

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212.
RE: Chattooga River Project Comments
Dear Sumter National Forest,
As a long time outdoors enthusiast I feel compelled to write regarding the Chattooga River Headwaters. As an avid outdoors enthusiast I have been fishing and boating for more than 35 years. I have been on more than 100 different rivers and creeks.
Being on the water for water ever reason is a passion for me.
Chattooga Alertanaive #4 is not an alternative it is still a ban on boating
There are sections will not be open to boating. If one section can be opened up when water levels are above 450cfs because that's too high for fishing then all sections should be open for the same reason.
The decision is not based on scientific data, if it was, then the highest water months of March and April would be open to boating. Why would March and April be excluded from boating above 450cfs? If they intend to open up for boating when it's not good for fishing then March and April should be open for boating because those months have the highest average water levels.
Determining when levels of the river are above 450cfs is a management nightmare. There are no other rivers that use this type of restriction. Mainly because you can't predict accurately what water levels will be in the future. The only possible way to determine what a day's level will be is at the end of the day.
The only reason for maintaining this ban on boating is perceived conflict between anglers and boaters. Historically these conflicts have included local anglers attacking and harassing boaters with verbal assaults, throwing rocks, slashing boaters tires and pulling firearms on boaters. The boaters were victims of these events and the local Forest Service Sumter Office victimized the boaters even more by banning them from the Headwaters sections. This ban is just a continuation of this government sponsored discrimination. Seems the local Sumter Office may have the anglers in their pockets if not the least in their favor.
These perceived conflicts between anglers and boaters exist no where else in the Forest Service lands. Not on any river or creek. Not on any river outside of the Forest Service lands. Nowhere! Not even on other sections of the same river. The lower section of the Chattoga has no documented conflicts and anglers and boaters share the same river. Why are other rivers and other sections of the Chattoog conflict free but not the Headwaters?
The EA does not address the damage done by the anglers to the river corridor. There is lots of documented data that the anglers do the most damage to the banks and the river bottom. The stir up the river bottom destroying the native trout habitat, create user trails that erode the banks, leave trash and fishing debris.
The EA is not viable and breaks many basic rules and laws for preparing such documents. It is quite clearly not a scientific document; it is a philosophical and political one. It flies in the face of the successful AW appeal decision that required a user capacity analysis (which has not been conducted) and equitable treatment of all users if limits are needed to protect the resource. The new EA essentially claims that the river has a capacity of zero boating and a capacity of infinite hiking, angling, and camping. That is hardly equitable. The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input
The proposed management action on the Chattooga will influence the management of rivers across the country and would create a selfishly motivated precedent that would negatively impact rivers, managers, and recreationist. Private landowners are seeking a monopoly on a Wild and Scenic public river, the Forest Service is seeking to strip basic

protections from Wild and Scenic Rivers, and other stakeholders claiming zero-tolerance of paddlers are seeking to have paddling prohibited. Boaters are irrationally being singled out for adverse treatment, even while the Chief of the Forest Service directed that all users be treated equitably.

The Chief of Forest Service overturned the previous decision and sent it back to Sumter Office with a directive to allow all users equal treatment. The new alternative fails to achieve that goal. It is still maintains the 30 year ban on boating.

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

Eric Juday
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High Point, NC 27265

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