From: John.D.Pruitt@jci.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 07/09/2008 05:41 PM

Dear Sumter National Forest,

My name is John Pruitt and I live in Atlanta Georgia. I learned to paddle 10 years ago and my first few trips down a river was on the Chattooga. Even before I was a paddler I spent many weekends fishing on the upper stretches of the river. I love the Chattooga River and look for a reason to go as often as I can.

When I first started boating I always found it odd that there was an imaginary line between what I could and could not boat. Not because of private property but because the government felt like I might get in a fight with a fisherman (and since I fish that means with myself). I was excited to learn that I would have an opportunity to boat the upper reaches and have even more reasons to visit a river I love.

But all those hopes were crushed when I read the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River that was issued a week or so ago. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. Both treat me and my community of river enthusiasts unfairly.

Here is a summary of a few of my issues:

It seems that you have limited my right to use the river but no one else. Can fisherman still use the river when it's "boating season"? If so that even makes less sense

The way the boating is allowed will limit the number of users so severely that no one other than people who live within 15 min of the river will be able to use it. I would assume you tried to allow boating in your decision because you knew it was the right thing to do but you put so many restrictions on it you really have continued the ban for myself and many others.

What if we have a huge rain and the river is running in the middle of July. Why can't we boat it? I there is no valid reason for limiting boating

The average daily mean flow is only know after the fact so that is not a valid way to tell if I can run the river. If you followed this rule you would have to wait and see what it was after the fact and if it was too low arrest people that were

on the river. This needs to be taken out.

How will you control the number of groups on the river. How do I now if I'm group 1 or group 5. I definitely won't know till I get there.

There still is no basis for limiting boating listed in t he decision so the ban still does not make sense

I would prefer an alternative similar to Alternative 8 that was purposed earlier in this process

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

John Pruitt
Account Executive
Johnson Controls, Inc.
1350 Northmeadow Parkway, Suite 100
Roswell, GA 30076
Phone: 770-870-2634
Fax: 770-663-1490
Cell: 404-867-2262
e-mail: John.D.Pruitt@jci.com

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