From: Karl Koon
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Upper Chattooga Environmental Assessment
Date: 07/15/2008 09:05 AM

Karl N. Koon

177 Jones Cove Road

Asheville, NC 28805

July 14, 2008

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

RE: Chattooga River

Dear Sumter National Forest,

As a native and lifelong resident of Western North Carolina, I have had the pleasure to grow up experiencing the natural resources that this area affords. For the past 37 years I have enjoyed the unique features and experiences that the Chattooga River provides and have been introducing my family to the special area that is the North Carolina section of the Chattooga River.

With the release of the Upper Chattooga Environmental Assessment, I feel compelled to provide my comments to ensure that the experiences I have enjoyed can continue for my children and future generations. Having kayaked the Chattooga in the past, I strongly believe that there is currently ample opportunities for paddling the river and do not think it is in the best interest of the river or the myriad of users who do not adopt paddling as a pastime to further expand boating on the river.

I understand that the proposed alternative is a compromise to address the needs of many different users. I believe that three important points needs to be included in the final Assessment for clarity and accuracy.

The first point is that angling above Bull Pen was never studied, and as a result the fishing at higher water levels on the upper river is greater than the Assessment reports. I have been able to find excellent fishing above Bun Pen at almost any water level and at any time of year.

Secondly, the Assessment assumes that the river is impacted by flows equally along the entire length from Highway 28 up to the Sliding Rock in North Carolina. This is

not true. The river decreases in size as you move upstream and the biggest issue I face in fishing the upper reaches of the river is insufficient flow, not excessive flows. By using the flow analysis from South Carolina, North Carolina anglers are being punished. By beginning boating below Bull Pen, anglers can be protected on the North Carolina section of the Chattooga.

Lastly, the Chattooga is the only stream in the area that is being managed to lessen the disturbances created by boating. Allowing any additional boating should be assessed with the understanding that this will eliminate the only option available to anglers to enjoy their recreation at boatable water levels.

I ask that in reviewing the Environmental Assessment, you consider the impacts to North Carolina anglers caused by basing the assessment on South Carolina data. A policy that starts boating at Bull Pen would allow al least one segment of the river in North Carolina to remain protected.

Thank you for including my comments in your final Environmental Assessment.

Sincerely,

Karl N. Koon

Cc: Senator Richard Burr
Senator Elizabeth Dole
Congressman Heath Shuler