From:	Kevin McInturff (Engineering)
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga Proposal
Date:	07/10/2008 02:53 PM

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing in response to the preferred alternative for the Chattooga River – Alternative 4.

As background, I am an avid fisherman and fish most weekends. I also do a considerable amount of paddling (not nearly as much as I fish), and probably my very favorite pastime is combining my two hobbies by fishing while paddling, so I feel that I am more than qualified to respond to the Alternative 4.

I think the proposal has a few absolutely fatal flaws.

1. Why does this proposal still ban boating below Burrell's Ford? The section below Burrell's Ford is an outstanding resource that should be shared by all. There is no logical basis to keep the paddling ban in place on this section.
2. The minimum flow requirement is arbitrary and will be impossible to enforce as well as impossible for a paddler to adhere to. What if a group of paddlers put on the river at the minimum flow level and the flow drops while they are on the river to below the minimum? There is no way to predict what the mean flow for the day will be without extensive hydrogeological predictions.
3. The very worst provision in the entire proposal is the one that limits the number of groups per day. I understand the maximum number of people in a group, but limiting the number of groups during a day is another provision that will be impossible to enforce, and will be completely impossible for paddlers to follow. If a couple of paddlers drive four hours to paddle the river only to find that the four groups are ahead of them, are they just supposed to turn around and drive four hours back home? Are all the paddlers in the southeast supposed to call each other up the night before a rainstorm and figure out who is going and who is staying at home? Keep in mind that there will be no way to issue a permit system, like on Tallulah, since the upper Chattooga's flows are based entirely on unpredictable rainfall rather than predictable dam releases.

The main point of the alternative seems to be trying to limit the conflicts between boaters and fisherman. A much better compromise to limit this conflict is to establish the Chattooga and its tributaries upstream of Hwy 28 as a seasonal trout stream, like many other streams in Georgia, and allow boating anywhere in the watershed upstream of Hwy 28 when trout season is closed. This compromise will mean zero conflicts between trout fisherman and paddlers, and will probably improve the trout population's health, size, and numbers. There is no need to set

water level limits as paddlers will establish their own limits. Keeping the group size down is fine, but limiting the total number of groups in a given day is a very bad idea with no way to implement. The very nature of the run will limit the number of groups.

Please feel free to contact me if you wish to discuss further.

Thanks,

Kevin McInturff, P.E.
770-983-5768
kmcinturff@hallcounty.org