From:	Brent Steadman
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga River Project Comments
Date:	07/09/2008 10:15 PM

July 9, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I am a physician from Winston Salem, NC. I started kayaking 12 years ago when I was in college at Furman University. My first and favorite river was the Chattooga. Over time as I became a more experienced and capable kayaker, I came to learn about a 30 year ban on kayaking the upper reaches of the Chattooga River. I asked "How can that be when it is a wild and scenic river?" The answer was a bureaucrat in the NFS made an arbitrary decision in the 1970s to ban flotation in the upper Chattooga to the exclusion of all other outdoor uses permitted within the confines of the Wild & Scenic Act. This was and is unjust.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I disagree with your analysis and your proposal. Both treat me and my community of river enthusiasts unfairly and your proposal would not meet my interests. Your proposed Environmental Assessment is unjust, period. It denies privileges to one user group to the exclusion of others. Other words describe this type of action: **RACISM, SEXISM, BIGOTRY, CHAUVINISM**. It surprises me that such actions can still be found in our modern government. Perhaps it can be expected from a NFS based in South Carolina. You make me sick to be from the South.

Consider these points:

- The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling on the Chattooga and has found *none*. It is time to open the river to boating.
- The EA is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. The AW appeal decision required a user capacity analysis. Where is

it?

- No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries – without any justification.
- The EA and preferred alternative are not equitable or protective of the river because they considers boating to be the only management variable, while other larger more impactful uses are not seriously considered for limits.
- The USFS preferred alternative includes a total ban on 2/3 of the upper river, a ban on tributary boating, and allows only 0-6 days of limited boating on the remaining reach – while allowing all other existing uses in unlimited numbers.. This is not equitable and not acceptable!
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits
- The EA lacks a full range of alternatives
- The EA is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money
- The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input
- The 450 CFS average daily flow trigger in the preferred alternative is a flawed measure that should be eliminated from any considerations. There is no way a paddler can know this number and will be an administrative burden for the agency.
- Paddlers prefer an alternative similar to Alternative 8 that 1) fully allows boating on the entire Chattooga River below Grimshawes Bridge, 2) allows paddling on tributaries, 3) includes encounter standards based on a real user capacity analysis, 4) will *equitably* limit *total* use only when encounter standards are consistently exceeded, and 5) will do so using all available indirect measures first.
- The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
- All aspects of the "Outstanding Remarkable Values" of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

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

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