From: Michelle Burnett
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@FSNOTES
Subject: Fw: Equitable access to Upper Chattooga
Date: 07/15/2008 10:37 AM

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----- Forwarded by Michelle Burnett/R8/USDAFS on 07/15/2008 10:37 AM -----

Carol L Forney/R8/USDAFS

07/15/2008 08:16 AM

To Michelle Burnett/R8/USDAFS@FSNOTES
cc
Subject Fw: Equitable access to Upper Chattooga

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----- Forwarded by Carol L Forney/R8/USDAFS on 07/15/2008 08:16 AM -----

"E. Douglas Pratt, DSW, LCSW"
<ppr_edp@bellsouth.net>

To <cforney@fs.fed.us>

cc

07/13/2008 05:25 PM

Subject Equitable access to Upper Chattooga

Please respond to
"E. Douglas Pratt, DSW, LCSW"
<ppr_edp@bellsouth.net>

To: US Forest Service;

I am a voting Georgian and a frequent whitewater paddler and hiker. For over 20 years, I have hiked, camped and paddled in the Chattooga Wilderness Area.

I have reviewed the current Environmental Assessment regarding recreational management of the Chattooga River. It essentially continues the ban on paddling the Upper Chattooga. By "paddling" I mean low-impact canoeing and kayaking. The small window for some paddling is so restrictive, almost no one will ever get a chance to float the headwaters of the Chattooga legally.

Of course, justifiable restrictions on all user groups to protect the wilderness, similar to those in place on lower sections of the Chattooga, are desirable. However, in following this issue closely for many years, I have never found a sound reason to ban paddling on any section of the Chattooga River.

Not only is a ban illegal according to The Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, this ban is discriminatory to one group that wants equitable access to the Upper Chattooga wilderness experience.

Some hikers, certainly not all, blaze their own trails; some campers trample an area; some fishers damage the banks or deplete the fish; the small number of paddlers who would make the effort to float the Upper Chattooga are likely to be the most environmentally careful of all. In addition, we know that forty-plus years of boating on the lower

Chattooga and neighboring Overflow Creek has not harmed the environment.

After all these years, it is time for the Forest Service to do the right thing.

Sincerely,

E. Douglas Pratt, DSW, LCSW
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