From: Kent_French@vfc.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 07/10/2008 09:11 AM

CC: Senators Elizabeth Dole, Richard Burr - NC

The Sumter National Forest area incorporates the Chattoga river, which has its headwaters in North Carolina. It has been designated a Wild and Scenic River by the US Government, yet is being tightly held by one user group, at the expense of others that would like to have access to its beauty.

7/10/2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I am a manager in a large multinational corporation whose headquarters are in Greensboro, NC. Having lived here more than 15 years, I have found that the Carolinas are a beautiful place to live and raise my family.

One of the things that make the Carolinas unique is the access we have to beautiful rivers, forests, and mountains, found in few places within the US. I am a kayaker that enjoys the beauty and excitment of the rivers within our area.

That access, which has been great within most of the forest service areas in the Carolinas, is being unfairly restricted within your management area.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) 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. Please consider the following concerns I have regarding this issue:

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 I refered to above is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. A federal appeal decision brought on by a suit filed by American Whitewater required a user capacity analysis. Where is it?

You have offered alternatives in the EA, but all are unacceptable because 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.

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.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Sincerely, Kent French
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