From: Matt Bohler
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga alternative plans
Date: 07/08/2008 02:41 PM

To Whom It May Concern.

Good Day.

I spend a good amount of time on the Chattooga in the affected area and enjoy hiking and fishing the remote areas along the river between Burrell's and the 28 bridge. I hope Alternative 4 is selected as it will provide some paddling for those who want to do so but will reduce the amount of encounters between paddlers and anglers. A continued boating ban is actually my preferred choice but I see little possibility of it being kept in place in this day of lawsuits and litigation.

I enjoy both forms of recreation and can see both sides of the issue. Alternative 4 is not a perfect solution but is probably the best one to allow all parties to participate in their chosen recreation and should discourage bad encounters between the two user groups. The fishermen get to use the river for most of the year and the paddles can use it when the levels are good for that and fewer anglers are fishing.

Keeping the boaters up above Burrell's Ford is a good idea. As a paddler I find it somewhat puzzling that the boaters want to paddle the upper section so bad. I have found that most years the levels are too low for decent paddling. You will do a lot of dragging under those conditions. That is no fun.

I have encountered "bootleg" paddlers in the section below Burrell's Ford on two occasions. In one instance they were totally unprepared for the Big Bend falls and the Rock Gorge and had no idea what they were doing. They ended up hiking their kayaks out of the river and back up the trail to the Burrell's Ford bridge. The second encounter was with 2 "extreme" (their word) kayakers who were very rude and obnoxious when I pointed out that paddling was not allowed in that area. I got 'the finger' and a rude "F---you!" in response as they proceeded to paddle right over my fly line and then

“played’ in the pool I was fishing. I caught not one single fish after they passed by. Up to that point I was slaying them. It made me mad to say the least and does nothing to encourage me to support any plan that includes opening more of the river to boaters.

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely, Matt Bohler

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