From:	Bill Hicks
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Subject:	Boating on the Upper Chattoga
Date:	07/15/2008 08:07 PM

I **oppose Alternative 4**, which would open the Upper Chattooga to boating, but **support the no-boating Alternatives 2 or 3**.

• The proposal does not appear to ensure the solitude and other "outstandingly remarkable values" required by law to be protected over all other considerations in the Ellicott Wilderness.

• The EA and the Alternative 4 proposal are geared toward the preferences of boaters and anglers, but ignore the needs of the many people who visit the Upper Chattooga corridor for traditional pastimes like swimming, hiking, camping, hunting, botanizing, nature photography and "getting away from it all for that rarest of experiences, solitude."

• The Forest Service proposal for boating does not clearly commit the law enforcement and resource protection personnel necessary to regulate a new, intrusive form of recreation and to educate the public about the new rules in this part of the river corridor.

• The proposal does not consistently and properly prevent the removal from the River of large woody debris (which is essential to the natural functioning of the river and the health of fish and other aquatic life; boaters like to cut these down trees out of the way); nor does it protect the various sensitive native plant species also found in the corridor.

• Whitewater enthusiasts and "creek boaters" who are pushing hard for the new access already have miles and miles of challenging white water nearby on the 36 miles of the lower Chattooga, on Overflow and Holcomb Creeks, and on the West Fork, where boating is already legal and permitted.