From: FNutria@aol.com
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Paddling banned on the Chatooga
Date: 07/16/2008 04:51 PM

Dear Forest Service,

I am surprised to learn that the USFS intends to implement the policy of keeping kayakers and canoeists off the upper Chatooga and its tributaries except a few days during the winter. As an outdoors man who fishes, hunts, hikes, camps and paddles, I can understand limiting the numbers of people in area to prevent overuse or making some area wilderness so that no engines are used. What I find offensive is that there is no clear result backed by science in the Service's policy or clear impact to be avoided. Rather the Forest Service has given in to pressure from one group of users.

I've read the comments of the those who are against allowing paddling on this Chatooga. What the narrow group interest has proposed is that the Forest Service operates a private club dedicated to a single activity. To join a private and exclusive club is certainly permissible any American, but to demand that the government pay for such an institution is obscene. The "pure" fisherman demand that the government keep away other activities because it "disturbs" the them to even see others doing any other activity. Any set of regulations designed to protect the terrain, plants or animals, such as keeping channels open, access to fragile areas, preventing litter, noise limits, etc. would be reasonable but are not the goal of this one exclusive group. It's not the outdoors experience that the ban is designed to preserve. It is so that one group of people does not have to be in the company of those who might be different.

When some fishing members of the public wish not to be part of the public, they have done the following: they bought sections of land with private lakes and non-navigable streams. They collected dues, erected fences and kept all of the people they did not like out. The Forest Service is not obligated to do that for them. The laws empowering the Forest Service and the laws giving the public access **to streams the public owns** in fact do the opposite. Members of the public who can comply with laws about use (burn bans, engine bans, noise and litter control regulations) should not be told what ways they are allowed to enjoy the outdoors. Also, the body of law that allows the public access to navigable streams is older than the Forest Service and none of the law that allows the public to put boats on navigable streams have been repealed. Finally, the desired of a small section of the fishing community to keep boaters off of "their" river is extremely short-sighted, because laws allowing the public the recreational use of navigable streams are the laws used by sportsman across the country to fish in public waters throughout the country. The narrow prejudice of a few

threatens the lawful activities of the many. The Forest Service should not spend my tax dollars so wrongly.

Sincerely,
Steven Ford
Benbrook TX

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