From: Robert Forster
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 07/16/2008 09:23 PM

U.S.ForestService
ChattoogaRiverProject
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC29212

comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us

July 16, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I am an avid kayaker that lives in Connecticut and work as a real estate investment manager in Manhattan. My son and I have traveled up and down the East Coast enjoying the beautiful outdoors including the rivers. Kayaking is a very special and low/no impact means to enjoy the rivers and their surroundings. These rivers have fostered a passion in my 16 year old son that will lead him to the trials for the U. S. Junior Freestyle Team next Spring.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment 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 proposed alternative will negatively impact protections granted under the Wilderness Act and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act on the Chattooga and other rivers nationwide.
* No alternative is acceptable because they all include boating bans on the upper Chattooga Cliffs reach and on tributaries – without any justification.
* The EA and preferred alternative are not equitable or protective of the river because they considers boating to be the only management variable, while other larger more impactful uses are not seriously considered for limits.
* 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 wilderness conforming 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.
* The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river.
* All aspects of the "Outstanding Remarkable Values" of Wild and Scenic Rivers should be protected on the entire river, not just in some areas.

Please consider conducting a real user capacity analysis and immediately allowing boating in the same numbers, places, and seasons that you allow existing users. Paddling should be allowed in a similar manner to your alternative number 8, except on the entire Upper Chattooga River and its tributaries.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Sincerely

Robert
Forster
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