From:	Michael Jacob
Reply To:	riverotter@limo.net
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
cc:	kevin@americanwhitewater.org
Subject:	Chattooga "Alternative4"
Date:	07/16/2008 04:06 PM

Dear Forest Service,

Recently Kevin Colburn of American Whitewater contacted me on the USFS proposed ban on Chattooga river. I've been involved a number of sports including whitewater for a number of decades. I've witnessed (with very few exceptions) that paddlers are the best river and forest stewards of any group I've been associated with. Those of you that work with paddlers have got to know this too.

We all know the American Whitewater wants to keep the Chattooga open for paddlers. And justifiably so… it is about the only organization that represents the widely diverse independent paddlers. These are the paddlers that pick up all their own trash and then a little bit more. Paddlers that spend their own time and money to become wilderness first responders and lean swift water rescue just so they will be able help you and me if we need help in the wild. This is the only sport where a paddling acquaintance would willingly risk their life to save yours. The neat thing about paddlers is when they bring new people into the fold, they teach them these attitudes and skills.

Forest Service, it seems to me that paddlers are the very group of responsible forest people that we would like other groups to be like. Imposing river bans directed at paddlers will certainly affect their numbers and enthusiasm to share positive forest attitudes and skills. Instead of river bans, please consider supporting paddling groups. I think you will find their eco friendly enthusiasm will spill over to other user groups. This would be win-win for the USFS for protecting our natural resources for future generations. This is what we all want.

Sincerely,

Michael Jacob
President, Willamette Kayak & Canoe Club (former)
Corvallis, Oregon