From:	willis nessle
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga River Project Comments
Date:	07/16/2008 10:20 PM

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212.

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

July 16, 2008

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

My name is Willis Nessle. I'm a mechanical engineer currently residing in southern California, but planning to move to the Southeast relatively soon. I've been kayaking and canoeing my whole life. I consider it an essential part of my existence. I love it so much because it it's fun, self-powered, and exhilarating, and it enables me to explore beautiful forests, mountains, small towns, rural country-sides, and remote river valleys. In my 15 years experience I've paddled dozens of rivers and creeks across the entire country, with dozens, maybe hundreds of different paddlers. During this time I've never once encountered on the river a paddler who has littered, created a disturbance, defaced the river bank, damaged private property, or been anything but respectful of the environment and others who might be enjoying the river. Therefore I can not understand why unfair restrictions on paddlers are planned for the Chattooga.
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.
- The USFS has spent thirteen years searching for a reason to limit paddling

on the Chattooga and has found *none*. It is time to open the river to boating.

- The EA is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. The AW appeal decision required a user capacity analysis. Where is it?
- 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 consider boating to be the only management variable, while other larger more impactful uses are not seriously considered for limits.
- The EA offers no basis for the boating bans and limits
- The EA is no better or different than the last one, is at least a year late and has wasted millions in tax payer money
- The USFS hired qualified consultants and then ignored their input
- 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.

Thank you for considering these comments. 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

Willis Nessle
8206 Palo Verde
Irvine, CA 92617