From: admin@alphahomeinspection.net
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River
Date: 07/16/2008 02:42 PM

U.S. Forest Service
Chattooga River Project
4931 Broad River Road
Columbia, SC 29212
July, 16 2008
RE: Chattooga River Project Comments
Dear Sumter National Forest,
My name is Scott Sather. I am an owner of a home inspection business. I also am an avid kayaker. It is absurd to state that kayaking leaves a foot print on parks (compared to hikers). For the first thing we travel the water leaving little or no trace we where even there. Only the put in and take out see my feet and these spot are already used by hikers. You have never been hiking along the tails of the Chattooga River or you would see that it is the day use hikers littering the trails with beer cans, diapers, illegal fires and such. If you would visit the Ocoee or other rivers where it is boats only, (you would ban hikers) you would see that there is no trash on or near the river accept that thrown by motorist.
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:
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- 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 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 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!
- 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
- The 450 CFS average daily flow trigger in the preferred alternative is a flawed measure that should be eliminated from any considerations. There is no way a paddler can know this number and will be an administrative burden for the agency.
- 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

Scott Sather
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