From: dillakilla3@yahoo.com
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cc: burch@gon.com
Subject: Save the Upper Chattooga River Comments
Date: 08/18/2008 10:11 AM

The following comments about saving the Upper Chattooga River were submitted via the Georgia Outdoor Network website at www.georgiaoutdoornetwork.org

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Comments:
With a career in Forest Engineering, a lifetime of hunting and fishing experience, and more recently, a new found enjoyment in whitewater kayaking, I have a good background to study the issues at hand with the Chattooga Headwaters. I have come to realize that whitewater boaters care about the rivers in the south far more than any angler or hunter that I have ever met. Their organizations, such as American Whitewater, are responsible for countless dollars and hours spent saving the integrity of our rivers. Who are we to say that they have no place to boat on public land? What is even more absurd is to insinuate that kayakers would "ruin the wild and secluded feel of the river while degrading stream quality and trout angling opportunities." Working in the field of Civil Engineering I can see that whitewater kayakers hurt stream quality far less than fishermen. They have one entry to the river and one exit, therein degrading the streambanks far less than fishermen who tr!
 od up the banks multiple times in a day. Kayakers also stay on top of the river; they do not trod on the bottom all day, churning up sediment. As for the issue of the scenic feel and the quality of the fishing, I have personally witnessed people catching fish from under my kayak, and I have even caught a few myself while in my kayak. A river can feel just as scenic with kayakers, as it does without. I would rather fish and have a kayaker pass by me for a few seconds, than have a hiker playing in the water, or another fisher just upstream ruining my view. I hope that the forest service realizes what a valuable ally the whitewater community can be, and bases its decision to support outdoor recreation for all parties.