From:	Robert E. Smith
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Chattooga River Project Comment
Date:	07/31/2008 10:06 PM

Dear U. S. Forest Service:

I'm adding my voice to those who oppose the opening up of new areas of the Chattooga River to boating, rafting, kayaking—any and all. Why when you have carefully, apparently, restricted the use to just a few days in winter, would this be a problem? There are ramifications from what will happen with any use, as I have expressed my opinions below, to the reality that this won't stop them for requesting more usage days. The proposal is so ridiculous, from this aspect, that a future request to open up more days is a given. The way to stop that is to say "NO" all use now.

I am quite familiar with this area of the Chattooga. It is simply not suitable for boating activities, even though I'm sure your staff put considerable time and effort into making a proposal to satisfy all. To me, the least considered aspect of boating is that boaters need access, and this will mean parking areas, paths to gain access, much wider paths that those which hikers use, and exposure to what boaters leave behind. A visit to many put-ins on the southern "boat-able" sections will reveal the impact. This area will be ruined. At your proposed upper put-in, at Norton Mill Creek, for example, the nearest road, Whiteside Cove Road, is 2 miles of trail from the river—2 miles which will become a road for boaters. Probably, they will make a new trail/road. The entire experience of this trek to a beautiful swimming hole through wonderful wilderness will be ruined. Of almost equal impact is what boaters will do while on their "trips." I don't really expect them to retrieve any lost items or used items—do you? I expect them to make the river what they want it to be, and that is not what it is. Which leads me to a last point: I cannot begin to understand what this proposed portion of the river offers boaters that they can't get elsewhere—except it's there. That's all; it's there.

To open up a pristine portion of this valuable river to their wants is putting the river and surrounding area in jeopardy, and their wants ahead of the need to protect and hold safe and sacred this area. I have to insist that this not be done. If there is any place in the eastern US, or in the Southeastern US, or in the southern Appalachians to draw the line, this is that place.

Thank you for consideration of my opinion and my hopes for maintaining a truly wild and scenic, unspoiled Chattooga River.

Sincerely yours,

Robert E. Smith

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