From: Jennifer Koermer
To: comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject: Chattooga River Project Comments
Date: 07/31/2008 08:46 PM

[INSERT DATE]

RE: Chattooga River Project Comments

Dear Sumter National Forest,

I am a USA citizen, who happens to enjoy spending time in nature while hiking and white water kayaking. I am an IT professional working and living in New Jersey. Although, I live in NJ, I often spend my free time traveling around the World finding new places to kayak. It is not unheard for me to drive 10-12 hours for a long weekend of kayaking. I would like to have the opportunity to explore some of the best whitewater that the East Coast has to offer.

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment regarding the recreational management of the Chattooga River. I strongly support an alternative very similar to Alternative 8. The Chattooga and it's tributaries are a public resource to be used and shared by all of us. It should not be limited by race, sex, age, or if I would like to boat, fish, or hike. Alternatives 1,2, and 3 completely ban an entire community from accessing this fine river, this is a public waterway - it is not fair to ban an entire community from accessing this gem. How can you even consider banning boating in Alternatives 1,2, and 3 without first determining what impact allowing boaters would actually have on this public resource. How can the environmental impact of floating on the water in a river be worse than walking along the River bed and dragging fish out of their natural environment, not to mention the impact of actually adding additional fish into the environment so
that fisherman may come in and kill them. Alternatives 4 and 5 allow boating, but have many limitations. Alternative 4 is based on allowing boating on about 6 days out of the year. This allows whitewater boating to occur roughly 1% of the time, as you can really only kayak during daylight hours. This is almost a complete ban of boating, while allowing almost unlimited access to other users. In addition, Alternative 4 and 5 incorporate flow requirements. There have been studies to determine the best flows to catch/kill fish. Has there been a similar study to determine the optimum kayaking flows? Has there even been a user capacity analysis done to truly determine how adding boating would even effect the overall user capacity and encounters. Alternatives 9 and 10 still ban boating on sections of this wild and scenic public waterway. In addition, the flow requirements in Alternative 10 again take the fisherman's view instead of an equal
view.

I understand that kayakers do have an impact on the environment, but I don't think that the impact from kayakers is worse then the overall impact from backpackers, campers, and fisherman. We are not taking anything from the environment, we are not spend a night living off of the land, we are not generally spend a lot of time walking thru and disturbing the stream ecosystem. There may be trails created at various points for portages, but this is really no different then the user created trails from fishermen and hikers. Boaters should not be singled out because we have not had an opportunity to enjoy the use of this gem in 30 years. If there is truly a concern about the extra impact boating will have on this area, the area should immediately be opened up to boating opportunities. The overall effects of this added use should then be studied, and a management plan should be put in place that treats all user equally.

I prefer an Alternative similar to Alternative 8. The Chattooga and it's tributaries should be made available to all potential users. An real encounter study should be done to determine the real user capacity. If changes are required based on a real user capacity study, appropriate changes and limitations should be put in place without singling out boaters. Changes should be made fairly and equitably by all users of the area.

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,

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