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The selected preferred alternative (Alternative 4) is absolutely ridiculous and amounts to a what might as well be a continued illegal ban on recreational boating on a wild and scenic river system. Allowing boating on one-third of the river between December and March only when the mean flow is greater than 450cfs is totally asinine and unreasonable.

How exactly do you propose to manage this shortsighted and foolish plan? No where else in the US are whitewater boaters banned from Wild and Scenic River corridors. Fundamentally, there should be almost no interaction between boaters and fishermen since neither group wants to be there when the other wants to be on the river. Boaters don't want to be on the upper with a flow less than 400cfs, trout fishermen don't want to be there unless the flow is less than 400cfs. No one except whitewater boaters are excluded from accessing the upper Chattooga. This is discrimination and bigotry of the most common kind.

After having read the draft EA I can only conclude that you have totally wasted the last 13 years trying pander to the interests of the trout fishing community and the efforts of adjoining property owners to garner exclusive use of a public resource. The public should have the right to float on public Wild and Scenic Rivers regardless of who owns the land along the river. That is the policy on every other Wild & Scenic River Corridor in the US. There is no reasonable basis or justification to continue to prohibit private boating (kayaks & canoes) on the upper Chattanooga River. The new EA basically states that the river has a capacity of ***zero*** boating and unlimited capacity for hiking, angling, and camping. How on earth can you actually claim that that is equitable? Hikers, campers have a far greater impact on the ecosystem than boaters that are passing by.
The AW appeal decision required a user capacity analysis. The EA is not a user capacity analysis and does not reference one. 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. How can you say that you have looked at the alternatives when you have specifically omitted unrestricted access for private boaters from being considered.

I sincerely, hope that the Forest Service will come to grips with reality and establish a user policy that is consistent with the rest of the Wild & Scenic Rivers in the United States.

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