From:	vanlear1940@bellsouth.net
To:	comments-southern-francismarion-sumter@fs.fed.us
Subject:	Comment on Chattooga boating issue
Date:	08/08/2008 04:57 PM

Dear Sir:
I am a recently retired professor of Forestry, after 35 years of teaching at Clemson, and an avid fisherman of the Chattooga and many other rivers. Yesterday, I read a couple hundred comments on the FS website about the boating issue on the Chattooga, and felt compelled to comment on the situation and the process. It appears to me that:
1. The FS has bent over backwards to hear all sides of the debate. **Thank you for your patience and willingness to hear everybody**.
2. The boaters are apparently going to reject anything other than complete freedom to float the whole river--a completely selfish and childish attitude. They think the User Capacity Analysis was unfair. I disagree. Thank you for conducting a fair analysis.
3. Comments are coming from all over the country from the boating community at large in response to calls from national boating organizations. **Many of these people have never been on the Chattooga, or if they have, only a time or two.** They don't really have a vested interest in the Chattooga, **nor have they bonded with the upper river**. Please realize this when you are making your final decision -- local fishermen who have fished the upper Chattooga for decades and others who walk into the area have bonded with the river and consider it a special place **whose backcountry values deserve special protection**.
4. The boaters are not listening nor will they listen to reasonable responses from the other side. **What is the ultimate goal of the boaters?** Do they want unrestricted boating on all waters, **including rivers in National Parks?** They are already dominating the lower reaches of the Little River in GSMNP where a fisherman does not have a chance any more.
5. The boaters believe they can win by the power of their numbers, rather than the logic of their arguement. **The Forest Service must use good management principles, including the use of zoning, to regulate users in the case of a scarce resource.** The outstanding backcountry values that the Upper Chattooga provides deserve special protection status. **And zoning is a legitimate, established, and essential forest management tool.**

Looking at the boating issue from a common sense point of view:
1. **The boaters already have the majority of the river, and its tribs, and many other rivers in the area, for their use**. What percentage of the Chattooga, other than 100%, will satisfy them?
2. There are few places in the eastern U.S. where you can **walk in** to a

relatively wild place and fish for wild trout. The north fork of the Chattooga is one of those places now, but will not be if boaters get their way.

3. The Forest Service is mandated to protect the **Outstandingly Remarkable Values** of the Upper Chattooga River. Please take a stand and do that. Be proud of yourselves for being a leader, rather than letting one group of recreationists push you around and dictate policy contrary to the wishes of so many other groups, i.e., hikers, birders, swimmers, anglers, and others.

4. In Alternative 4, the Forest Service has conceded to allowing boaters to float down to Burrells Ford under certain conditions. This is a compromise that the boaters (based on their comments) are rejecting. While I do not personally like that compromise, I am willing to accept it because it will not result in conflicts between anglers and boaters.

5. There will certainly be conflicts between boaters and other river users, especially anglers, **if the river is opened up to even more boating than that allowed in alt. 4.** I have fished the Chattooga for almost 40 years and have personally had boaters float over rising trout that I was fishing for, and put them down, ruining my day. This is not right -- it is an example of different interests not being compatible. I have had this happen to me on other rivers as well, including the Chattahoochee and the Nantahala.

6. Please end this seemingly endless process and make the right decision-- **one that is right for the river and its resources, and not a concession to the wheel that squeaks the most or the loudest.**

Thank you for listening.

Dave Van Lear